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Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's

The Song of Death

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Tawfiq al-Hakim’s *The Song of Death*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Ramesh Shrestha, has been approved by the undersigned member of the research committee.

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Abstract

The present research entitled “Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Tawfiq al-Hakim’s *The Song of Death*” explores contradictions, conflicts and shows disagreements and disparity prevalent in the mid-twentieth century Egyptian society. The concept of younger and older generation of the then society comes in to clash in many aspects of their life such as thinking, behavior, treatment and lifestyle. The playwright takes character of new generation as agent to get exposure to the modern values, which he tries to apply in the traditional rural Egyptian society. In doing so, there arise problems of clash between two different values as well as in the life of the characters. University education, free life, individualism, social law and justice and some of the values are associated with modernity, which the main character adopts in his life but these values do not go with the conventions of the traditional rural Egyptian society. The consequence is further suffering. Older generation is represented by Asakir and Mabruka and younger generation by Ilwan and Simeida. Ilwan always hopes for new ideas and gives priority to social law and justice and modern way of thinking over the rural Egyptian orthodoxy culture and tradition. But older generation especially Asakir is against it and opposes Ilwan in many aspects of changes. Ilwan hopes to change orthodoxical thinking of the then society by adopting modern way of thinking and social law and justice. To study these issues, the research takes the support of primarily the theoretical concepts of modernity. The research explores how conflict comes in to existence among the people of the society because of modernization.

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I. Al- Hakim's *The Song of Death* as a Critical Evaluation of Life in Cairo and a Remote village

This project focuses on Tawfiq al Hakim's *The Song of Death*, which challenges the existing tradition of rural Egypt dealing with the social issues like the status-quo. Egyptian older generation people like Asakir and Mabruka and younger generation like Ilwan have the contradiction on their one another's beliefs. Older generation people like Asakir and Mabruka want to stick with the Egyptian norms and values but younger generation like Ilwan tends to shift from tradition to modernity. This research explores younger generation, Ilwan's intention to bring changes in his village and intention of establishing new norms and values like westernization and modernization. This project shows the ongoing conflict between two ideologies. One is of older generation of people who want to remain and preserve old Egyptian tradition and other is new generation of people who believe that the Egyptian rural society can do better in dealing with different problems of people of rural Egypt with help of modern way of thinking. The present study seeks to analyze the characters tending them to bring into the frame of critical analysis that represents the tendency to the then Egyptian rural Society.

The Song of Death is a play of Egypt set on a domestic context. The play is a story of revenge and a generational conflict between a mother and her son in the Egyptian family. Asakir, the main female character of the play wants her son Ilwan to revenge his father's murderer. But her son strongly refuses her. The disappointment leads the mother up to the stage of killing of her own son. Asakir orders her nephew, Simeida to kill her son, Ilwan. Asakir's husband is killed. The Tahawi had killed him for killing his father. It means that the revenge is set as a culture to the generation to generation between the two families, Azizes and Tahawi. The tern of revenge comes

to Ilwan but he wants to stop this revenge culture and wants peace, prosperity and harmony between the people. The generational conflict seems apparent here in understanding level of mother and son. There is not any sufficient proof that the Tahawi had killed Ilwan's father. The mother just blames Tahawi as her husband was suspected the murderer of his father. The mother believes that he chopped his body up and put it in the saddlebag—his head on one side and the rest of his chopped body on the other side. The Tahawi placed the saddlebag on the back of its owner's donkey. The donkey carried his master's mutilated body back to his house. Afraid that the killer would kill her son, too, the mother sent her son, Ilwan to Cairo.

In Cairo, he was joined to apprentice in a butcher shop, so that he could become skilled at using the knife but Ilwan left the shop to become a student in Al-Azhar University. Seventeen years later, Ilwan returns to the village and to his mother who has been waiting for his return to revenge from his father's killer. Ilwan comes back to his birthplace with a different agenda. He seeks to make better the living conditions of his fellow villagers. In conversation with his mother he says, "It's most important for me to meet the villagers. Haven't I just told you that I have come to do something truly great" (I.ii.286-87). The line of his speech also proves that Ilwan wants modern life in his village as like he spent his seventeen years in the city, Cairo. But at the same time his mother is taking 'something great' in different way, for her 'something great' is to take revenge of her husband's murderer. He finds his mother in a discourse she could not care less to understand. Her dream of her son avenging his father's killing seems to fleet away when her son rejects her proposal. Al-Hakim draws the universal value of generational conflict and the conflict between tradition and modernity through recycling the Egyptian narratives.

The protagonist of the play, Ilwan represents the modern and educated man on the other his mother, Cousin and his Aunt represent the traditional and uneducated people. They give the important value to the revenge and familial dignity but Ilwan gives value to the modern way of life, humanity and peace, is the main contradiction between them. Every society has the feature of contradiction between two generations in different levels. Here in this play the conflict between tradition and modernity is seen particularly in the case of revenge.

In the play *The Song of Death*, the playwright presents the clash of the Old vs. the New, the Country vs. the City, and the family Law vs. Social Law. Ilwan, who rejects his own traditional culture, stands for modern progress, for enlightenment and a social order. He has modern view towards the society and disagrees with the blood feud in which the responsibility for justice is transferred from the family to the civic community. But on other hand Asakir and Simeida brought up in the vendetta tradition who simply cannot envisage any other way of life. For them, family honor is the supreme value, the value of 'shame' culture loss of respect in the village and family is the ultimate misfortune. This is a 'Mediterranean' *Old Testament* and middle-eastern concept of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" is deeply rooted in them. This play is built on the clash of two projects. Asakir has waited for years for the one murderous action that will restore honor and avenge of her husband's death. She had planned for Ilwan to become a butcher in Cairo and so learn better how to kill effectively, but Ilwan, brought up and educated in Cairo has turned to religion and law. Ilwan, as the son escaped the village, believes in brotherhood, not vengeance. This tells us a lot: that the intellectual life of Egypt, Cairo was being affected by political movements, such as feminism and socialism, also taking place in Europe. The play is built upon a set of opposition contained in the attempted evolution from

tribal to civic life. Asakir, blind to anything but her unyielding passion for vengeance, destroys her own family, (Ilwan and Simeida), more effectively than her supposed enemy, Suweilam Tahawi ever could have done. She has wiped out the new generation of menfolk so the family line has come to an end. She is 'tragic' rather than hateful because she is true to the logic of the tradition that created her. Her seventeen years of constancy to her one project vengeance is heroic over many years suffering humiliation from her enemies in order secretly to raise her avenger, Tahawi, safely in exile. Because of Asakir's one sided notion of taking avengement against suspected murderer of her husband, Simeida's future is entirely ruined. He is certain to be punished, perhaps executed, for the murder. So that, he is an example of a lost generation denied the chance of the enlightenment of the new ideology of the state and the city. In Simeida we see the relentless pendulum logic of the tribal vendetta law. This research tries to explore the typical feature of modernity and tradition. During the course of drama Ilwan had tried to bring 'an alternative way' to the traditional, vendetta culture of the village, and had been sacrificed for his idea. This study focuses on the issue of modernity vs. tradition, the clash between the modern way of life and the traditional beliefs from the two main characters Asakir, the mother and Ilwan, the son in the play.

Ilwan, the central character of the drama is pioneer of shift or transformation and it is he, who brings unprecedented conflict between tradition and modernity. Ilwan becomes so much frustrated with the traditional values of his village and prepares himself to go his village even he finds people hanging in the past and he dislikes them too. Plot of the play tells us that he becomes irritated with his mother. He seems irritated with his mother but in depth his irritation is not with her rather it is with the traditional values of rural Egyptian the then society, which he thinks is the

barrier to Egyptian advancement towards modernity. Ilwan hopes a lot for changes and transformation of Egyptian rural society and to establish new societal order based on social justice and transformation. His mother has not seen him for many years and is now very much eager to see him in her village. She wants to show the society that her son is still alive and he is ready to avenge his father's murderer which she thinks reestablish her family's honor. Ilwan seems to be in irritation; therefore he seems in dark and melancholic mood. Ilwan was forced to leave his home and forced to return to the Cairo after rejecting the proposal of his mother. Ilwan always hopes for the change and newness within his mother and society around him, but it is not easy to discard the traditional values, people have followed from unknown time. This project claims that the clash between mother and son is because of the setting they grown up. The mother lives in a rural village and her son lives in city. Because of the rural setting mother adopts the traditional beliefs, on the other son, Ilwan brings modern concept of enlightenment and a social order, justice and a wholly new way of life from the modern Cairo. So, this play is not the clash of Good vs. Evil, or even right vs. wrong, but of the new World vs. the old.

Ilwan does not like traditional rules, values and ideas therefore; he wants to change the status quo of the society. He regards all the ideas represented by adult generations are local. Younger generation being university graduates, have been influenced with the consciousness of the time and globalization in every sector. Ilwan longs for change as per the pace of time, but he finds out that older generations are on static position by dead values and attitudes.

Whenever and wherever Ilwan goes, he always hopes for new social structures and mechanism. Ilwan arrives at his village with his vision of modernity but he finds himself alone because of his family's pressure to avenge his father's murderer. He is

the representative of modernity but his mother is the representative of older norms and values, she wants him to follow her project and involve in honor Killing. Here it hints that modernity, as we know in the beginning phase of modernity there is the tussle between tradition and modernity as represented by Asakir and her son Ilwan respectively. In its depth, we can assume that their dual is not physical one rather it is the dual between the old and the new attitudes, norms, values, social structures and mechanism.

In the same way, Ilwan undergoes with different experiences while hopping for change. Ilwan is of the opinion that people and society should run as per the change of time. In the process of implementing his new vision of social order and justice he himself gets victimized by traditional thought of vendetta culture. Every society has the clash between two generations. There is the vast difference in the way of thinking, the use of language, fashion, beliefs and even in Arts and Literature between old generation and new generation. So, we can say that the issue of generational conflict is universal. The same issue and the theme has been shown in the play, *The Song of Death*. The play writer gives modern role to Ilwan and gives traditional role to Asakir, and Mabruka in the play. What the strong beliefs that make the main character who rejects his mother's wish and in the same way what makes the mother that she declares her own son as a coward and enemy of his own family and orders to kill him? The primary objective of the study is to show the generational conflict of the contemporary society of Egypt through the play, especially through the main characters of the play *The Song of Death*. How and why they have the generational conflict is the main purpose of the study. But it also focuses on the ideological beliefs of the characters they live in. Although this study makes significant use of concepts developed in modernist scholarship, it does not offer a

comprehensive analysis of modernist literary theory. As the tendency of modern way of thinking and the traditional way of thinking is different, it makes its analysis on the basis of the view of modernity and shows its difference tradition over modernity.

Thus Tawfiq al-Hakim demonstrates that conflict in the drama between mother and son is the conflict between modernity and tradition; younger generation people seek transformation, whereas older generation resists the changes.

The Song of Death is considered as one of the prominent works of Tawfiq al-Hakim. It has received various criticisms from different angles since its publication. Regarding this play, Jill Leahy on his essay, "The High Cost of Family Honor" comments:

The Play highlights the universal themes: family conflict and revenge versus forgiveness. The work explores the idea of revenge killing as a way to restore a family's honor—a mother expects to avenge his father's murderer. While honor killings must often occur in paternalistic societies, against women who have "shame" their family by breaking a prescribed code of sexual behavior, notions of honor and shame to justify killing are not unique to any one culture or religion. Modern audiences may view this as an Eastern, Arab, or even Muslim cultural issue, but it is important to understand that the teaching of the Quran and Islamic Law strictly forbid honor killing. (127)

In this way, Jill Leahy takes this play as a family conflict on the issue of revenge. He also gives the concern on the issue of honor killing to restore the family's honor. He thinks that the honor killings are not unique in paternalistic societies. He warns the modern audiences that not to take the honor killing is a Muslim, Arab or even Eastern culture.

Another critic, Leke Ogunfeyimi focusing on the protagonist of the play, Ilwan, asserts:

There is discord between two families in Upper Egypt which claims lives of the most successful figures in both families by assassination. It tells of the challenges a young scholar, Ilwan, who attempts to put an end to this discord: his mother who has waited patiently for him to return from where he has gone to study and kill the man who kills his father, is not happy with him. She has kept the same knife with which his father is killed for him. Ilwan, who realizes the implication of these succeeding assassinations, decides to take the road not taken in both families to make his people live together as a people. (65)

In this manner, Leke Ogunfeyimi gives his concern to the play, *The Song of Death* for its family's discord and the challenges for the protagonist of the play who wants to end this discord. By taking the character of Ilwan, the critic tries to justify his concern the conflict of a mother and son on the name of family's discord. Further, it is better to cite another critic Brian Johnston who puts remarkable line of the main character, Asakir with Simeida from the play, "Simeida, are you a man?"(I.iii.417) on his consideration reviews on the character of Asakir:

This is Asakir's trump card. Her definition of a 'man' is tribal and it is in conflict with the universal 'brotherhood' of Ilwan. This clash between tribalism and civic law is enlarged into the cause of Pan-Arabism vs. nationalism, and within the various extensive communities of Islam and of Christianity. Islam, like Christianity and early Judaism, is a "conversion religion" which welcomes all races and so embraces all humanity. Therefore, it cannot be limited to the tribe or the village,

race or nation. Ideally, it would seek the same “religious commonwealth” that the medieval Christian Church once sought before the later advent of nationalism in Europe. (3)

In this way, Brian Johnston compares the clash between Asakir and Ilwan view of ‘man’ with the Pan- Arabism vs. nationalism. They have the clash between tribalism and civic law. On the one hand, Ilwan is in the favor of conversion religion which welcomes all races and embraces all humanity on the other Asakir favors the tribalism and hates other people who are belong to another tribes. So, Ilwan’s longing for nationalism is like the medieval Christian Church’s sought before the later advent of nationalism in Europe.

Taking all the above criticisms into consideration, this research explores how the play, *The Song of Death* is a conflict between tradition and modernity. Moreover, how the play writer projects his characters to show the clash of two generations, the Old and the New of the then society of Egypt on the way to modernizing the society. Therefore, I have made an attempt to make an analysis of the play from the perspective of modernity.

Modernity is the condition of the newness and also consciousness of time. It shows the post-tradition and, post-medieval historical period, which came into existence with the rise of industrialism, capitalism, secularization in Europe. Modernity is said to be started with the emergence of enlightenment. Modernity is a process that has developed and changed overtime. Therefore, modernity is a crucial issue with several debates of the contemporary critical theory. In fact, it is multidimensional process involving changes in all aspect of human thoughts and activities. Modernity is used to define with different perspectives. At the psychological level, modernity involves a basic shift in values, attitudes, and

expectations. Socially, modernity tends to supplement basic group whose roles are vaguely defined such functions are much more definite. Economically, there are differentiations of activities as complex one replaces a few simple occupations. While talking about modernism Vivek Ghosal argues:

The term modernism denotes a phase and features of culture and literature of a particular or general tradition. Modernism is the discourse of western art and culture is twentieth century phenomena, which can be seen continued even in the contemporary times. Modernism is contested, varied, plural features of cultural condition expressed in the art, philosophies, and other disciplines. Modernism is also the feature of any culture in space-time. (5)

In European context modernism is the continuation of thoughts, ideas activities and perspectives of enlightenment of late seventeenth and eighteenth century. Different people mark in various ways to indicate the origin of modernism. Some people mark modernism has clear link with the romantic tradition and some say it has well connection with the avant-garde movement in the field of painting of the early twentieth century such as futurism, Dadaism, surrealism, expressionism and constructivism.

Modernity began as a critique of religion, philosophy, ethics, law, history, economics and politics. The principle concepts and ideas of modernity are progress, evolution, revolution, freedom, democracy and technology. Modernity is the evolutionary and difficult notion, which, bears a number of meanings as per the context and it, also rejects the status quo pattern of western thought.

Modernity is interlinked with the tenets of enlightenment, which is a cultural impulse for secular reason. It has been started with the Renaissance and extending up

to the enlightenment, which is the significant point of separation of modernity and Christianity. Therefore, modernity is an epoch which opens the new horizons of attitudes, concepts and ideas which is also the consciousness of time. Mary Gluck gives her view related to modernity and Christianity in this way:

The association between modernity and a secular view of the world has become almost automatic. But as soon as we try to set modernity in one historical perspective, we realize that this association is not only relatively recent but also of minor significance when compared to the relationship between modernity and Christianity. (59)

It is significantly described that the Renaissance was self-conscious and saw itself as the beginning of a new cycle in history. Its whole philosophy of the time was based on the conviction that history has specific direction, expressive not of a transcendental, pre-determined pattern, but of necessary interaction of immanent force.

Modernity is tied and affected by the condition of globalization. The ever increasing abundance of globe connections and our understanding of them constitute globalization. The compression of the world can be understood in terms of the institution of modernity. George A. Huaco views: “capitalist modernity does involve in element of cultural homogenization for it increases the level and amount of global co-ordination” (462). However, mechanisms of fragmentation, heterogenization and hybridity are also at work. It is explained that institution of modernity are said to be inherently globalizing. This is because they allow for the separation of time, space and the lifting out of social relations, which are developed in one locale and their re-embedding in another Globalization is that commodities which are subversively used to produce new hybrid identities. In this regard, M. E. Rupert opines:

Globalization is important to the post modernization thesis, reflecting an increased concern with questions of a spatial as opposed to temporal organization. Indeed, the crisis of socialism itself was exacerbated by cultural and economical globalization, as the autarkic growth model unviable and planned economics were followed out through linkage with the global system. Globalization further creates an interaction of social events at a distance from locales, an intersection of the local and global rendering earlier notions of social development within integral national boundaries problematic. (549-50)

Modernity is characterized variously by strains of nationalist or even racialist superiority narratives, by the valorization of authoritarian moderns of social orders and by the pursuit of capitalism organized in terms of derivative modernity formulation.

More territorialized version of modernity has been offered by Arjun Appadurai in his book *Modernity at Large* 1996. Appadurai is an approach that might appear totalizing migration electronic media as too globalized features of modernity. He views:

Modernity belongs to that small family of theories that both declare and desire universal applicability for itself. What is new about modernity, what is new about the enlightenment may have creates, it aspired to create persons who would like to hang on logical fact, have wished to become modern. This self-fulfilling and self-justifying idea has provoked any criticism and much resistance, in both theory and everyday life. (1)

Modernity is both a time consciousness and a theory of a history, an epochal concept. It is conceived in a way that express the new ideas and demonstrates the departure from past to present. It penetrates to all sphere of knowledge, which indicates cultural-aesthetic, capitalistic-technological and ethno-political aspects of change. These sorts of change pervade in art, culture and literature with the new influences that reveal the trace of modernity.

Another modernist scholar Dilip Parmeshwar Gaonkar in his essay, “On Alternative Modernities” asserts:

To think in terms of alternative modernities is to recognized the need to revise the distinction between societal modernization and cultural modernity that distinction is implicated in the irresistible but somewhat misleading narrative about the two types of modernities, the good and the bad, judgment that is reversible depending on one stance and sensibility. (1)

Modernism is now everywhere, it has given the alternative way of thinking to the people on different aspects of society. It gives the multi-dimensional perspective on society and culture. Within the modernities, there are the good aspects and bad aspects while modernizing the society. So, the concept of alternative modernity is widely spread as a latest concept in social arena.

This research has tried to unravel the conflict between tradition and modernity on Tawfiq al Hakim’s *The Song of Death*. Ilwan the main character of the play shows different ideas and struggles through the course of the play for changes: he challenges the traditional aspects of rural Egypt but has to sacrifice his life for his resistance to the tradition. Thus, Hakim has presented Ilwan as an agent of modernity who advocates the ideology of the playwright himself. He questions everything of

Egyptian traditions including social norms and values. He does not believe his mother rather he begs proof of his father's murderer so that he can go to the court against case.

The first part of this research makes introduction of the play, issues, problems, hypothesis, literature review and the introduction of the theory. The second chapter of this research deals with the event of *The Song of Death* from the perspective of the modernity as a theoretical tool. The third chapter of the research concludes the major issues that have been raised during the reading of the text from the perspective of modernity.

II. Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Tawfiq al-Hakim's *The Song of Death*

This research examines the attitude and beliefs of the then Egyptian society through the analysis of Tawfiq Al-Hakim's one act play, *The Song of Death*. Tawfiq Al Hakim tries to show how the old generation and young generation are in confusion and conflict while transforming from agrarian life to the urban life in the mid twentieth century Egypt. It is conflict between old values, norms, culture and new ones. However, in the play in period of this transition Ilwan, the representative of young generation tries to change and accept new values of modern Egypt but becomes the victim of his own new opinion towards the modern society. The old generation cannot accept his concept of society in the modern age. Outside of the village, the modernity affects the thinking of the people but in the rural village people have deep rooted beliefs on tradition. So that, the protagonist of the play, Ilwan has to sacrifice his life on the name of tradition and culture of revenge.

Egyptian society in the mid-twentieth century was in a big flow of cultural conflict. There was conflict and mental tension within oneself whether should remain with Egyptian old beliefs, values and norms or should change and adopt western modernity. People had a big dilemma whether to remain with their religious limitation or go with modern social justice and technology invented by western society. On the one hand, there was old generation of people who always wanted to remain with their own religious, cultural, social, political and familial values and on the other, there was new generation of people who always sought newness and attracted towards the invention of modern way of thinking as well as the new beliefs of westernization and modernization. Therefore, it is obvious that we can see big conflict between these two generations on beliefs.

New development has been seen in the urban Egyptian society especially in Cairo, social structure has been completely change, especially in educational improvement, boomed and it is enough to younger generation of people to lead themselves towards new concepts of social development; that is the real product of the modernization and westernization. Agriculture had to be done in changed way. Traditional way of farming had to be displaced by new technologies and land reform programs had to be introduced. Moreover, it had to be helped a lot to the Egyptian economy of that time. The Egyptian society has been totally walked its long feet towards industrialization and urbanization. Small villages were slowly transformed into townships and small towns were into the big cities.

In addition, there is the relationship among gender, mass and public culture as well as the socio-cultural transformation in the context of Egyptian society in relation with global periphery as reflected in the play, *The Song of Death*. It comparatively deals with the challenge for traditional people to construct a new mode of modernity that seeks to balance the cultural values and beliefs and freedom from social stigma of unequal cultural justice derived from the tradition of revenge. On the hand, urban Egyptian are entering into the public life in offices, media, School, Colleges and industries due to the enrichment appeared in the people's education and social consciousness. On the other, the separating role of education makes rural Egypt obliged to live the life of social stigma of tradition. As every society has to face the conflict between two generations, the same conflict has been seen in Egypt with great zeal and great intensity. Jelena Patkovic in her research concludes about the conflict between traditionalist and modernist in the following lines:

The most noticeable conflict between traditionalistic and modernistic social values can be seen in people that live in suburban settlements. In

their choices, they are sometimes nearer to urban and sometimes closer to rural respondents, as the state both positive and negative attitudes towards some segments of cultural differences. (9)

In the above lines the writer gives his concern on the cultural values of traditionalistic and modernistic beliefs in the people in suburban settlements. We can say that there is the vast difference between the people who live in rural setting and the people who live in urban setting on different aspects of life. But in the case of suburban people sometimes they seem in dilemma that whether to follow the tradition or to follow the modernity. As Jelena Patkovic describes in the above lines, the main character in the play seems in the state of confusion that whether to follow his mother or to follow his beliefs on modernity. Because of his confusion he goes to his village to convince his traditional mother. Ilwan, the protagonist of the play represents himself as the modern man, thinks he can persuade his mother on modern values but on the other his mother thinks that she can also convince her son on her side of traditional beliefs.

Urban people represent themselves as modernist and rural people as traditionalist. Even within the people themselves there we can find a kind of quarrel whether they should call themselves as modernist or traditionalist because those new urban people sometimes identify themselves as urban people and some other time they get nearer to rural values. The discrepancies with new values and old values were seen in Egyptian Societies in the mid twentieth century. On the one hand, Urban Egyptian Societies were taking their feet towards development with the help of the western inventions of the science and technologies. On the other hand, this kind of development intensified dismantling of past Egyptian ethics and values like its cultural beliefs had been shattered, ethics of the society were changed, patriarchal norms and values were changed and in total old Egyptian norms and values were

displaced, which made old generations unhappy, so that they resisted against the young generations. In this modern world, everyday lifestyle of human has been changing largely. People have been inventing something new to have a better standard of life. However, the more they are advancing further the more they are trapped in the conflict between tradition and modernity. In this regard, Kasturi Mishra, in her article, “Is tradition an obstacle to progress?” views:

Tradition invokes the principle that old ways of doing things are safer, more reliable and hence better than new, which are based on untested ways. In short old is gold. In tradition, old practices and values simply because they provide a sense of continuity with the past. In contrast, modern concept of progress discards tradition as obsolete and disproven. (1)

Therefore, in the view of the Egyptian old generation like Asakir, the traditional ideas are good ones. Indeed, they must be judged according to the time when they were originated. Likewise, the newer scientific ideas are good in their own ways, how old generation of people discard them. Hakim shows this kind of quarrel or disagreement explicitly in his play *The Song of Death*. In the play, Askir wants to continue the tradition of revenge which she thinks is a very honorable for her family. So, she says to his son, “Of course you have not come here for food or drink. You have come to eat of his flesh and drink of his blood” (I.ii.156-57). Here in her speech we can easily know that she wants to continue the tradition of revenge which is very easy and safe because of the culture of revenge they had been practicing for a long time. It is the reason that she directly tries to convince her son to revenge his father’s murderer. But the son asks for the proofs of his father’s murderer, says to his mother, “I know you have told me that. You have told that name to me over and over again, whenever you

came to visit me in Cairo. I was too young to think then or to argue. But now my reason needs to be satisfied. What's the evidence? Did the police ever look into the crime?" (I.ii.180-83).

On the consideration of the speech of the main character in above, gives us the view of modernity as Ilwan is asking for the evidence and he also raises the question to his mother for civic advocacy that the people can take help from the police to investigate on the any case of murder. This clarifies that Ilwan is in the favor of social justice and supremacy of law. This type of beliefs is developed within him while he is studying in Cairo as these beliefs are known as the values of modernity developed in modern Europe, spread all over the world.

In the play, the kind of conflict between old generation and new one is set between mother and son as the representative of the two different generations but it is Ilwan, who seeks the total change and hopes to lead other people towards modernism. In this reference he says, "It's important for me to meet the villagers. Haven't I just told you that I have come to do something truly great?"(I. ii.286-87) Mother, Asakir is always seen faithful to Egyptian Culture and her tradition, and she is unwilling to accept western modernity, but younger generations specially her son, Ilwan is attracted towards modernity and he has shown disregard to the old Egyptian traditional values. The theme of the generation gap is patterned out impressively in the play, *The Song of Death*.

The concept of 'modernity' reflects the notion of a shift or transformation from old to new though area might be various. In this sense, the social and cultural transformation or modernity is also an inevitable process of every society. Socio-cultural transformations have tendencies to break with past and to be oriented towards future as the ongoing process in society. In this regard, Habermas says: Every earlier

present had the tendency to do away with the past and to put limits on the future. In our day, for the first time, the forces of the present have the objective power to close the horizons of the future irrevocably and cut off the past. (18)

As Habermas describes in above lines, in the play, Ilwan, the representative of young generation wants to cut off the present from the past. He is the advocator of modernity and always longs for social order, social justice and the better life of every people in his society. As an advocator of modernity he wants to break the past and want to lead his society towards modernity. He really wants to implement his modern education in the practical life in village. So, he says:

I will tell them what I have come here to say. I have often thought about my village and its people, in spite of the long time I have been away from it. There, at Al-Azhar, when the classes were over, we—the students, that is—we would gather together and read the newspapers...And we often worried about when our people in the countryside would be able to live like human beings, in clean houses where they wouldn't share their meals with animals. When the roofs of their houses would be something better than dry stalks of cotton and maize and the walls painted with something better than mud and the droppings of their beasts. When the water pot would disappear and there would be clean pipe water in the house. When electric lights would replace the oil lamp? Was that too much to ask for our people? Don't they have the same rights as others? (I.ii.293-305)

The above lines are the insightful thought of Ilwan about his village and his plan of reform of his rural village. Ilwan, who studied at Al-Azhar in Cairo wants to embrace his social responsibility. This kind of feelings and responsibilities that he wants to

take for the betterment of his society, that is all because of his longing for modernity. Ilwan internalizes his social responsibilities as a social animal but his mother, aunt and his cousin never take their social responsibilities. They only worship for their familial dignity and culture as their God. But for Ilwan, God is social justice, law and order, which are the most celebrated aspects of modernity. That's why we can say Ilwan doesn't only read and study about the modernity rather he tries to implement his theoretical knowledge in the practical life.

The urban societies of Egypt are inclining towards modernity through the process of modernization. However, the rural societies and old generation people of Egypt, due to the lack of development, adjustability and knowledge, they feel hard to follow the modern culture easily. On the other hand, young generation people seem over conscious about ever-going competitive world. They are not only sensitive about themselves rather they are sensitive about their whole society's competitiveness. They fear about their career and future as it would come to them, which are unconventional to their preceding generation. They have also fear about their society's development too. The people of new generation are adaptive to current trends because they have to keep changing themselves according to changes around them. The old generation does not like to change them so fast and readily. Overall, despite the ostensible differences in the notion of modernity, some of the critics characterize modernity as a deconstructive spirit, which analyzes the traditional social orders and a traditional set of beliefs. Modernity adopts empiricism and rationalism as the touchstones to critique or judge, the old, religious, cultural beliefs, social norms and values as well as the position of man in the universe. Therefore, there is always a conflict between old and young generation in the society. However, tradition works at its top to dominate the modern that create conflict in any society.

Actually, there was the clash between urban educated people and rural uneducated people during the mid-twentieth century in Egyptian Societies. The urban and educated people want to adopt the modern western values in their life but rural people want to live in traditional culture. Before that time, Egypt was considered purely as a country of Villages but at that particular time Egypt started reform herself and took her feet towards modernization and urbanization through new plans and programs in different fields like politics, social structure, cultural stand, and religious ethics and especially agricultural cultivation. In the play, different characters represent different stream of Egyptian thinking during that transition period in Egyptian History. Especially old generation is represented by mother Asakir, is deeply rooted in Egyptian traditional and cultural roots, and unwilling to see modern changes in society. In addition, she only thinks and remembers about her husband's killing by a suspected murderer, Tahawai. She says, "And sacrifice to his spirit the kid and the calf" (I.i.140). The speech refers to the spirit of her dead husband, and she thinks only by avenging her husband's murderer his soul will rest in peace in heaven. This shows that she still longs for her past and she is firm not to change herself and does not want to see her society changed, and Asakir is proud of her tradition and culture of her family. On the other Ilwan as young university pupil thinks differently and want to see his society be changed and Ilwan replies to his mother as he says, "I said that God the Mighty avenger is merciful to us; he offers to relieve us of this burden without any cost to us" (I.ii.272-73). He means that, God the Almighty himself will punish the criminal and gives mercy to them. So that, they should not worry about the avenge. Modern thinking and behavior is radical and unacceptable to the old generation of the people anywhere in the world and so as to Egypt. Modernity is in the words of Graham Murdock, "The words, 'youth' and 'modernity' sometimes

become almost interchangeable; and if modernity meant anything, it meant a change of taste, decor and style” (1). To note this subject matter from the text:

Ilwan: This is what the people of the village ought to know. And those of us who were educated in Cairo –it’s our duty to make them see and realize their human rights. It should not be difficult for them to achieve this aim: if only they would unite, join hands, and co-operate. They ought to set up a council. Elect a council, that’s it, from amongst themselves. And they could tax those who had money enough to pay. They would form a team of able-bodied men to spend those long hours when there is nothing doing in making dykes and bridges and other constructive things. Not wasting time in squabbles and feuds. Why if they worked together like that, if they would only make the effort, we would make this a model village. And it would soon be an example for all the other villages in the country to follow. (I.ii.307-17)

In above quoted lines the youth minded, Ilwan has the vision of the development of his village. As a youth he incorporates the modern aspects of human development. He wants to reform his village as a model village. He wishes to fulfill his social duty as a youth and educated man. He visualizes his long term developmental vision for his undeveloped traditional village where people are living in an uncivilized manner. He wants to set the modern culture in his village which he thinks will be an example for other villages.

Egyptian young generation during the mid-twentieth century longed for newness in every field and every stream of their life. As in the play, while rejecting his mother’s proposal to revenge his father’s murderer, Ilwan says, “My hand was not made to destroy a human being” (I.ii.346). Obviously, Ilwan wants newness in his

mother's thinking. He tries to change his mother's thinking according to the time change. During the time of the play was written, the above words show clearly radical view the younger people of the Egypt like Ilwan who never stands for dead habits of revenge culture. The people of old generation of Egypt think they have to retain their old cultural beliefs anyway and anyhow but younger generation has had a different thinking and they radicalize old thinking and they advocate for social justice and accountability of the society. They advocate for the rights of common people. Egyptian youth have different vision and different ideas then their parents during the mid-twentieth century. They want to modernize their society through modern means of social values, though; they have contradiction within themselves. As in the play Ilwan is healing different views about the social order and says, "God! What am I to do with these people?" (I.ii.335-36). This speech shows us the contradictory situation of Ilwan in the play. However, old generation of people as Asakir and Mabruka do not have any consideration about social justice rather they hang on their past. In this connection, we can highlight the words of Colin Campbell from his excellent new book on *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* that goes like following:

The cultural logic of modernity is not merely that of rationality as expressed in the activities of calculation and experiment; it is also that of passion, and the creative dreaming born of longing. Yet, more crucial than either is the tension generated between them; for it is upon this that, the dynamism of the west ultimately depends. The main source of its restless energy does not derive from science and technology alone or yet from fashion . . . but from the strain between dream and reality, pleasure and utility. (12)

From the above mentioned lines, it can be understood that the modernity does not mean merely the logic of rationality that is expressed in the form of experiments and practices in the social activities. It is an intense desire for newness and for creating something unique. In the modern world there is even tension within the people are the pioneer of creation. Confusion is created because of the conflict between tradition and modernity. No doubt, this conflict exists in the societies due to the tussle of two perspectives prevalent in the society. The people of new generation oriented towards western invention of science and technology, and it is contradictory to their own old and traditional values and life styles. This modernity for younger generation as a fashion for day to day life but to older one, it is like iron beaten rice to chew. Therefore, this modernity makes life of people very easier to live on the one hand but at the same time it also spoils their root and it even makes difficult for the adoption to older generation of people.

In the play, there is a tussle between mother and son, it is not only because of generational gap but also because of western modernity has taught new generation about the easy way of life. They have dynamic thinking and concept about life and society. However, old generation of people always think in their own way, they have still hanging on the ghost of their past legacy and they judge people according to their noble birth and serfdom birth. They think that if one is born in aristocratic family, s/he has a big mind and deserves great respect; but one who is born in peasant family has nothing but to suffer. Nevertheless, around the mid twentieth century Egypt was in change and younger generations of people have no respect other than western modern social values. Old generation people do not have any respects to the new generation and only they respect the people who have wealth and power. To support this view it is worth to bring the arguments of Yogendra Singh opines:

The distinction between modern values and tradition values may be maintained on the ground that modern values, like science, being evolutionary universal, might not be typical to anyone particular cultural tradition, whereas traditional cultural values may be particularistic and typical. (51)

In the above lines, Singh tries to explain about the differences of modernity and tradition.

Modernity is universal so sometimes it cannot address the values of typical culture but on the other tradition is typical and particular in its nature. In the play, we can examine this fact as the following:

ILWAN: Yes. What did you say to the Public Prosecutor?

ASAKIR: Public Prosecutor? The shame of it! We say anything to the Public Prosecutor? We the Azizes do that? Did even the Tahawis ever do that?

ILWAN: Did not the Public Prosecutor ask you any questions?

ASAKIR: Of Course. But we said we knew nothing about the business, that we had seen no corpse. Meantime we had buried your father in secret under cover of darkness. (I.ii.185-91)

In the above conversation of the mother and son, mother tells the typical culture of their family. She did not say anything to the Public Prosecutor because she wants to avenge the case of murder. She thought that Public Prosecutor would stop her in avenging her husband's murder so she concealed the event. But on the other, as an advocator of social law and order son wants to take the case into the court, he thinks that the responsibilities of Public Prosecutor is to give punishment to the criminal not the general people like him. So, he asks his mother whether her mother appealed for

the Public Prosecutor or not in the case of her husband's murder. Ilwan brings universal concept of modern standard of law and order but her mother went to the concept of 'an eye for an eye' which the two families set as a culture. This is a typical traditional culture of the then society of Egypt.

Another, poignant of the modernity in clash with traditional thinking is expressionism. Younger people like Ilwan expresses whatever they think and feel in a different way than older generation of people like Asakir and Mabruka do. New generations think and act different from old ones. They behave differently, express things differently and use to do things differently which is directly against to the behavior of older generations. As in the play *Ilwan*, the leading character is in direct contradiction to Asakir and Mabruka. Old people like Asakir thinks for culture and family background; and younger people like Ilwan use to think for modern norms and values and mental sharpness. Kokovic Dragon sees disparity between tradition and modernity as like this, "There is a foe that lies in us, in our relation and opposition to the change itself. Refusal of change, or incapability to adjust to it, the fear of the new and the unknown, are all very frequent causes which make difficulties, and sometimes they in incapacitate social progress" (56). He sees that there is enemy of change and new development within us; that is refusal to creativeness or our incapability to adjust yourself to this new arena. In addition, our fear of facing difficulty while trying to develop society and reforms our culture is to contribute a lot to our resistance to modernism or newness. Therefore the question, which is the process of coordination of tradition and modernization is very important, concerns the way in which traditional elements can incorporate an adjust to demands and needs of modern development. All that could be done if an adequate way is found to overcome and out power traditional mistakes, which can be a disturbance in the process of

modernization and in further social advancement. This view can be proved by Asakir in the play, who orders to kill her own son because he tries to convince her in modern way of thinking. As he is always in the side of social harmony and justice, he rejects his mother's desire of taking revenge, which is one of the bad and unkind tradition. The mother's order to kill Ilwan is an action of disturbance in the process of modernization and social advancement.

Another major difference between tradition and modernity is the attitude of people. There is the vast difference in attitude of young generation of people and the old generation of people. In the play too, we can easily notice the difference attitude of two generations of characters. The young character, Ilwan's attitude towards humanity and life is very different than his mother's. The mother takes the family law is the supreme law of the world whereas Ilwan takes social law is the valuable law as the world is changing the span of time. Modernity brings equal justice for all human beings. It creates a system which gives equal opportunity to all people. As an educated man Ilwan tries to behave as per the modern standard but his mother is an uneducated does not know how to behave as per the latest development of modern values. This is why Ilwan advocates for Public Prosecutor in the case of his father's murder. He wants to begin his plan of social reform from his own family. So, he rejects the tradition of revenge, takes this tradition as a dead practice of his society which he thinks stop the progress of the society.

Egyptian modernity emerged due to the changing attitudes and behavior of Egyptian people towards their bad tradition, for instance in the play, Ilwan rejects his mother's familial law of tradition in the following conversation with his mother:

ILWAN: [raises his head and takes courage] Mother, I will not kill.

ASAKIR: [tries to conceal her distress] What do I hear?

ILWAN: I will not kill.

ASAKIR: [in a rough voice] The blood of your father!

ILWAN: It's you yourselves who left it split and wasted by hiding the crime from the government. It's up to the authorities to punish.

(I.ii.339-44)

In the above conversation Ilwan does not only reject his mother's plan rather he blames his own mother for concealing the case from government authorities. As a modern man he wants the punishment from legal court. So, he dislikes the culture of blood feud. Furthermore, at the particular time of transitional period in Egyptian societies, there was on going transformation from agricultural state to semi-industrial state, village growing into the big cities as well as establishment of financial institutions, in a banking sector and many more. As Appadurai argues:

The experience of modernity is local, but locality itself has undergone a fundamental set of changes over the past five hundred years. We are in the process of witnessing a fundamental transformation in the very nature of the world system and global process. Various forms of interactions have always been with us, and so have various forms of world systems. Even before maritime, expansion of the west in the sixteen- century complex global formation did exist, but we are only now beginning to theorize the shift from these early processes to those that constitute global process today. (14)

People's interest increases day by day. They have curiosity to experience new and innovative things. If the new inventions help to make life of people comfortable; they easily accept it. If it becomes hard and difficult to grab they lose it and follow

what they have already have. That is why modern values overcome the traditional values if the people feel easy. However, we are in the process of transformation in the world system as well as cultural system of our own. The main character in the play tries to assimilate the modern values and have the motive of reconciliation between tradition and modernity. However, on the other, Asakir, mother of Ilwan never tries to understand her son's humanitarian vision that he gain from his modern study. Ilwan assimilates the modern values and have the motive of reconciliation between tradition and modernity.

In mid-twentieth century Egypt, on one hand, development of the cities and towns has grown up in a rapid way, and on the other hand, there has been annihilation of Egyptian ethics and morality. Egyptian elite culture has been destroyed because of modernity; no Egyptian young and educated people hang on the Egyptian culture anymore. Although the historic development of towns has been gone hand in hand with the cherishing of elite cultural contents, than with the development of cultural creative activity and institutions such as libraries, theaters, museums, galleries, universities and so on, it also necessary to observe and interpret the contemporary development of urban culture in the context of mass culture.

However, the penetration of mass culture, and the effect of this process on forms and quality of urban lifestyle, which often resulted on urbanizational consequences, is a special theme, which in a very significant way attracts the interest of the society. Different kind of thinking also has been developed in Egypt, in conversation with Asakir, Ilwan expresses, "My eyes can still see animals and their dropping in your houses. The dirty water jars, firewood, and dried stalks of maize forming a shaky roof" (I.ii.163-65). Ilwan casting a look around the room exclaims about the traditional agrarian rural life of his society. Being an educated person in

city, Ilwan wants positive changes in people's life style. So, he dislikes the status-quo. He uses the word 'still' which signifies the unchanging life style of his society. Ilwan, as a young generation keeps update himself with modern thoughts that is why he argues as per the modern way of thinking. In the play, we do have so many instances of contrast between tradition and modernity's characteristics, such as contrast between traditional philosophy and modern philosophy of life. Mother's generation has different way of thinking, behaving and living their life then the son's generation. Mother follows the philosophy of familial traditionalism and she wants to live her life by saving their familial dignity. But on the other hand, young people like Ilwan are living with the new philosophy of life such as realism. Old generation is rigid, they adhere rigidity but people of younger generation are liberal in their dealing with others and they advocate liberalism. It is worth to quote a short conversation as an example of how Ilwan is a liberal person and how his mother is a rigid traditional woman:

ASAKIR: Rivers that stopped flowing only with the death of your father. And that because of your tender age. Years then went past dry as the thirsty season, and people whispered lies and false rumors, while I was writhing in the flames of my hidden anger, waiting for this hour. And now the hour has come, so get up, son, and put out my fire and slake my thirst for the blood of Suweilam Tahawi.

ILWAN: Has this Suweilam Tahawi got a son?

ASAKIR: Yes Fourteen years old.

ILWAN: So I have no more than another four or five year to live.

ASAKIR: What is it you are saying?

ILWAN: ...Only until he grows strong enough to do to me what I am supposed to do to his father. (I.ii.216-27)

In above quoted conversation gives us a clear view of liberalism of Ilwan, who always wants to be free from family pressure of taking revenge. He has the far sighted vision that if he kills his father's murderer, his son will also kill him. He visualizes that he just has four or five years to be alive. On other Asakir, the mother is trying to force him to take revenge. She believes that the river is stopped when her husband is killed. She has the rigid beliefs in avenging. So, tries to inspire her son in blood feud. Therefore, old people always want to stick in traditional beliefs and young people always prefer their new ways of living their life. Any way they don't care the old generation and want to enjoy the comfort and easiness of modernity.

In this connection Arjun Appadurai highlights the words of Gruenberg and Schweisguth about modern issues in the following ways:

Modernism is the system of anti-authoritarian values, valuing individual autonomy and fulfillment, acknowledging the right for everyone to choose one's own way of living, and based on the principle of equality of all human beings, regardless of race, religion sex or social rank. (43)

These writers talk about modern life and the concept of people in modern age. In their words modernism does not like to follow authoritarian values of traditional society rather people like to live freely and people identify the rights and freedom of every person living in the society regardless of their castes, race, religion, sex, class or the social rank and try to create an equal society. Afterwards these two authors led to revise their scale of cultural liberalism and divide it into three sub dimensions: moral standards, attitudes towards authority, and a last dimension they defined as a

Universalist anti-universalist dimension (equal values of all individuals vs. inequality of values). The two first dimensions are, according to the authors, strongly linked: they, “Concern the domains of moral standards and life styles, with one pole being the principle of freedom and individual fulfillment, and the other being the respect of tradition” (56). There is direct contrast between these two things; on the one hand, one has to give his/her credit to the traditional values and, other being one has to try to live freely in the modern society. Likewise in the play Ilwan wants to leave his traditional mother and enjoy the individual freedom.

There is a vast dispute between Asakir and Ilwan about traditional Egyptian society and new modern Egyptian Society. Ilwan opines that traditional and agrarian Egypt today needs to reform herself and its people, should not move ahead with these nonsense traditional old values anymore. Modernity brings not only changes in Egyptian society rather it brings unprecedented conflict. In this connection, it is worth to cite the words of David Lyon:

Modernity is all about the massive change that took place at many levels from the mid-sixteenth century onwards; change signaled by the shift that uprooted agricultural workers and transformed them into mobile industrial urbanities. Modernity questions all conventional ways of doing things, substituting authorities of its own, based in science, economic growth, democracy or law. And it unsettles the self; if identity is given in traditional society, in modernity it is constructed.

(22)

Therefore, modernity is the change and this change is not in only particular thing rather changing in each and everything of the society. It does not only question tradition but it questions every institution of the society constituted traditionally as in

the play, it is Ilwan, who questions all the traditional norms and values, and traditionally organized social institutions of Egypt. As Ilwan questions about the pressure of his mother in case of his father's murder, he questions, "What a price it cost to avenge one's blood?"(I.ii.270). It means that he wants avoid the traditional of taking revenge. So, he wants to show radically different opinion from his mother. In this regards I would to bring the words of Jonna Lakso:

The term modernity is sometimes, used to denote the sense of loss of continuity in urban culture and everyday life-some essential aspects of our life, so it seems to us, is so radically different from the life of our ancestors that a genealogical lineage seems to be inevitably broken, heritage lost, tradition gone. All these phenomena can be subsumed under the term modernity, denoting an era that is characterized by secularization, the disintegration of traditional communities and the rise of the individual as a subject. (12-13)

In the above mentioned lines, Jonna Lakso views that modernity does mean the sense of discontinuity of tradition in people. It means present life of people differ in many aspects greatly from the life of their ancestors. Life of people of new generation is guided by secularism and individualism. Therefore, modernism is a radicalized view where present is not the continuation of the past rather it is different in concept and practices.

Modernity does mean the sense of loss of their heredity, their culture and ethics of their life, old traditional people see how they are going forward is lost, there is no continuity, there is no forwardness of their tradition, it is stopped and new thing is seen in front of them.

There is no particular religiosity rather people have experienced secularism. Tradition has been disintegrating and newness has been established in the society, which means individualism is more important than anything else. In such a way here is the explanation of lamentation of the old generation like Asakir, “I am not your mother. I don’t know you. No son has ever been born out of my womb. No son have I ever given birth to” (I.ii.365-66).

This is to say that people, who are being submerged on old traditional values, norms and principalities are lamenting on the loss of their constant orthodoxy like Asakir in the play.

Asakir in the above quoted lines is lamenting on the birth of her own son when her son rejects the familial tradition of revenge. So, the old generation does not let the young generation to intermingle with the notion of westerners on establishing the newness inside Egypt. They are making efforts to convince young lads not to obtain things regarding them the newness falsifying people of Egypt are so orthodox and traditionally established.

Furthermore, on the same note, Asakir is very distressed about her son as she does not convince him in her project of revenge. At the same time she is able to convince her Nephew, Simeida to kill her own son who finally becomes their enemy. In this context it is very applicable to bring a short conversation between Asakir and Simeida:

ASAKIR: Our hope is now in you, Simeida.

SIMEIDA: A nephew can stand in for a son.

ASAKIR: But in this case the son’s alive. It’s his duty before anybody else to avenge the shedding of his father’s blood. He’s alive...

SIMEIDA: Just try to tell yourself that he’s dead.

ASAKIR: I wish he had really died, drowned in the sluice of the waterwheel when he was a child... I wish he had truly died. We would have been able to live honorably then, and not be wearing our garments of shame. But he is alive, and it has been broadcast in the market places and in the whole neighborhood that he is alive. Oh, the shame. The ignominy. Disgrace! (I.iii.392-404)

As traditional people always try to convince young generation of people in traditional values and beliefs Asakir also tried her son to bring him in her way of thinking but she is failed in her mission. So, she laments about her son's birth and curses to his birth. At that time her nephew comes to support her and said he can also stand as her son in her favour. In this way Simeida seems as a lost young generation who becomes the victim of traditional belief and ruins his brother's and his own life in a vain.

In the mid-twentieth century, Egypt was transforming its traditional agrarian to urbanization where people desire for newness. This is not a drastic change; rather this is the influence of global phenomena. As in the play even in the dress up we can easily notice that the difference between urban people and rural peasant. Ilwan is in gown and turban which is the attire worn by students and graduates of al-Azhar, highly respected as clerics and scholars. On the other Simeida is in woolly skull cap and his smock which is the attire typical of peasants. To quote here Arjun Appadurai is remarkable, "Transitions are the most important social sites in which the crisis of patriotism are played out" (176). This argument on modernity is seen in the case of Ilwan and Simeida too in the play. Simeida thinks himself as a typical Egyptian people as he always wears typical dress of rural Egypt. On the other, Ilwan who was born in the same rural village but brought up in to developed city Cairo thinks himself as a modern man. He represents the transition as he transformed himself from rural

man to an urban man. While Egypt was under the phenomenal transformation; the world was so much towards the progressive paths. In the world around, people were on path of invention of the science and technology that is why the people of young generations of Egypt are regarding, it is appropriate to follow the trend of the world. World around Egypt was going through the drastic changes in the mid-twentieth century but in Egypt people are still hanging on dead habits and traditional culture. So, Egyptian young generation like Ilwan wants change. They want to adopt the modern aspects of law, science and technology, art, culture and literature. Their efforts toward modernity are sounded odd to the old Egyptian people. Young generation of people is so much hungry for inventing newness and they want to create new things in their life. Egyptian youth at that time, did not have any hesitation going against old tradition as Ilwan goes against the tradition in the play.

It is very relevant to talk about cultural modernity here because the Egyptian the then culture was in transitional phase. In the play too we can easily notice the cultural transition as Ilwan wants to adopt the urban culture which he has been internalizing for a long period of time in Cairo. We also see the dilemma in Simeida too; he is in the confused situation whether to support the modern view of Ilwan or to support his Aunt's view of familial dignity. But unfortunately takes the side his Aunt and kills Ilwan who is the powerful advocator of social order and law. Here Ilwan who never surrenders against the asocial values and belief but he sacrifices his life. It seems in the play that the tradition is winning over the modern beliefs but in fact Ilwan rejects the culture of revenge and stops the dead tradition of his society that's why it is a victory of modernity over tradition even though he loses his life. We can only talk of modernity in relation to tradition. Cultural theories of modernity could offer an explanation of how generational conflicts are indeed a manifestation of a

struggle between modernity and tradition. Charles Taylor in his essay, “Two Theories of Modernity” argues:

Cultural theories of modernity tend to describe the transition to modernity in terms of a loss of traditional beliefs and allegiances. Mobility and urbanization are understood to erode the beliefs and reference points of relatively static rural society. The loss may also arise from increasing prevalence of modern scientific reason. Such change may be positively valued, or it may be negatively judged as disasters by those who value traditions and see scientific reasoning as too narrow. (1)

In the above lines Charles Taylor refers to the shift or transformation in the people’s way of life as the cultural modernity. The impact of other cultures makes the people obliged to bring change to their cultural values that lead them to the cultural modernity or shift from its tradition. A major influence in the world is the liberal values of west to lead the society to the cultural modernity. Traditional people think that the transition in culture makes negative impact in their traditional beliefs. They take cultural modernity as the disasters to their conventional beliefs. They judge cultural modernity as narrow concept because it never accepts the unreasonable beliefs which they think are reasonable. It is very important to bring the lines here from the play to prove, how the old generation of people are static and blind in their traditional beliefs, Asakir proves this in the following conversation:

ASAKIR: You are talking the language of books. You can keep that for later. For when you have your evening talk with Sheikh Muhammad Isnawi. He can understand it- I can’t. As for the present, there’s something more important that we have to do, Ilwan.

ILWAN: [Shocked] What is it that's more important?

ASAKIR: No. Don't go to the mosque to pray tonight. Else our plan might fail. Pray here tonight, if you wish to. Go and take off those clothes. I will fetch water from the water pot for you to prepare for your prayers. Put on the cloak and help me sharpen the knife. (I.ii.318-26)

In the conversation Asakir, the mother of Ilwan stands for traditional religion, Islam but her son she thinks is against her religion. So, she says that her son talks about his book but in reality it doesn't work. She tells him to follow her traditional religion in which ritual washing before prayer is obligatory. She is static in the level that she does not believe on her son's study and believes that her son is only speaking the language of the books. Her son Ilwan, changes his traditional religion and becomes Sheikh which the mother never takes positively. Ilwan changes his religion because of the effect of modernity in him. The modernity always keeps everything in trial. Modernity has multiple frames to look at the same thing so Ilwan questions to the tradition of revenge.

Al Hakim describes person like Ilwan as of modern thinking and intellectual one. He uses to read books of different stream of life. Ilwan particularly likes and respects nothing except social justice and order. He does not believe on any tradition and moral order of society, it is because he is influenced by western modernization. The modernity has not only change the life style of human beings rather it also has brought changes in human thinking and concepts. Nationality has been widened multi-nationalism and multi-culturalism has been introduced as a new world order. Every aspect of life new order takes place, for example it is of fiscal, legal, educational, environmental or other human organizational. The old societal structure

has been deconstructed and new one is being introduced. It is way of life of modern people, they are less knitted, less organized than what are they before. Therefore, changeness and newness is the motto of modernity and younger generations of people enjoy it and people of old generation lament over the loss of social structure.

Time changes in its own way. According to time, human willingness and behaviors also get changed. No drastic change occurs in certain period. A change occurs with the passing of time due to the assimilation of tradition and modernity. Modernity is the new, which overcomes and makes absolute through the nobility of the textual style. However, modernity tries to demolish and replace all unnecessary superstitious and social norms and values. It encourages all people to be more open and keeps them away from the worthless social practices and impositions since it is breakthrough from the tradition to modernity. Modernity is the reflection of recent historical development. It makes an abstract opposition between tradition and modern. According to Marshall Berman:

The maelstrom of modern life has been felt from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it: the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge in to technology, creates new human environment and destroys old ones, speeds of the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporates power and class struggle. (15)

Due to the advancement of science and technology, modernity flourished as flying bird in the sky. Modern science, communication, philosophy, industrialization etc. stimulate the progress of human life, moreover, human consciousness. By compare and contrast, people assimilate the things that favor to them. Modernity develops by

compare and contrast with the tradition. Egyptian people like Ilwan in the play are in influence of the modernism and its two great aspects of social justice and accountability. They believe more in facts than their familial norms and values as well as their tradition. But older generation of people like Asakir in the play wants to continue their culture of revenge as a familial dignity. They lament for the loss of their cultural values and try to save their heritage.

In the play, Ilwan wants to be a change agent of the society by bringing new ideas, concepts and thinking from his university. However he has just arrived in his village after a long time of his study he hopes to lead his generation of people as well as old generation of people towards modernity. He speaks new language of the educated and classical Arabic of the University in Cairo that is considered as odd to Egyptian older generation of people like Asakir and Mabruka who speak in a local and colloquial idiom. He advocates for equality for all people in his village. He expects poofs and facts of anything else this is the reason he breaks his mother's wish. He hopes that his people use new language, culture and laws that are influenced by science and technology of modern time.

This research explores the conflict by presenting who stick to traditional ways of life and character who embraces new emergent values, which is seen in mid-twentieth century rural Egypt. As Asakir and Mabruka represent older generation of people who always hang on the Egyptian tradition, culture and conventional beliefs. They are in concept of that, they are losing everything, including Egyptian roots because of western influence of social law and justice and science and technology, and they lament over this loss. On the other hand, younger people like Ilwan are in complete influence of the modernity, therefore they want to change rural Egypt and think everything different from their seniors.

There is conflict between older generation and new generation because old people are attached to their culture, tradition and their roots. This orthodoxy has its own system that cannot be changed overnight. Culture is a way of life and it changes as people change with time. It takes a long span of time to change these beliefs. Generation gap, educational quality, modern inventions are some of the factors which bring the dispute within the people clinging to tradition and modernity. In the play, Ilwan challenges the conventional social concepts of rural Egyptian society by not following the tradition of taking revenge though he is victimized because of rejecting the tradition.

To sum up, though there is conflict between traditional and modern way of thinking. Among different people change occurs at the passage of time. In the play, though Ilwan is an advocate for modern progress, for enlightenment and a social order which interrogates traditional beliefs and rejects blood feud. Because of rejecting the blood feud he is killed in the name of tradition. Though the play ends with tragedy and seems that the tradition has got victory over modernity, modernity in reality has got victory over tradition. When the Ilwan is killed there is no one to take revenge with the Tahawis. There is the complete end of tradition of revenge between the two families, the Azizes and the Tahawis. In addition, young people of the society also to some extent assimilate themselves with old and useless tradition but get their life ruined at the end. In the play when Simeida being the people of young generation following the order of traditional people like Asakir kills his brother, Ilwan and ruins his life as a murderer. Here again changes occur with the passage of time due to assimilation of tradition and modernity. Obviously, the process of modernization tend to break down the remaining vestiges of social functions. The

deep-rooted attitude of Egyptian people regarding their Egyptian tradition gets completely changed at the end.

III. Drawbacks of Tradition in Modernizing the Society in *The Song of Death*

The present research arrives at the following conclusion that, in the light of critical analysis of preceding chapters. The play, *The Song of Death* by Tawfiq al-Hakim presents the conflict between mother and son or between tradition and modernity. The two generations have conflict, confusion and disparities between themselves that is created by time and space. People of new generation adopt the western way of modernity enriching their education, freedom, social law and justice and independence. It also depicts their hardships and struggles. The new generations having modern way of thinking are highly affected by the traditional and conservative society. Attitudes of new generations are highly suppressed by the traditional Egyptian culture. All the new generations have the stories of sufferings, obstacles, hardships and tragic moments due to the traditionally biased society of rural Egypt so it is clear that modernity cannot give justice to the empowerment, betterment and development in the traditional rural Egyptian society. And the generations are being victimized by the traditional norms and values. The people of new generation wish to implement the western way of modernity and freedom but the traditional Egyptian society looks them derogatorily and the people from the society treat them odd. Humankind is changeable and it changes according to time and space. Older generation of people are even in conflict with their mother at their young age and so to new generation of people are in conflict with them. There is certainly conflict between two different generations that represent different time span, and it is there in *The Song of Death*, which seems natural.

In the play, protagonist, Ilwan who hopes to lead other people of his generation ideologically to modernity and its impacts upon his life is in conflict with the people of his preceding generation like Asakir and Mabruka. He is healing a new

kind of philosophy of life. He advocates it even for other people. He hopes to interrogate all the rural Egyptian Traditional Institutions, though it is of education, social, moral, ethical or of conceptual. He wants to change the traditional and conservative norms and values that seem the hindrance to modernity. Ilwan through the adaptation of modernity in rural Egyptian society faces the challenge from culturally restricted tradition. In various aspects, Ilwan reflects the oppositions between modernity and his rural Egyptian society. He thinks that his duty is to disintegrate Old Egyptian social values. So that he questions it repeatedly and thinks to dismantle it. Throughout the course of the play, he is in disparity with his mother and he puts new ideas in front of his preceding generation. Ilwan, who wants to be a pioneer of new philosophy of life that is realistic aspect which questions everything that exists in the society? Older generation of people is attached with their tradition and they hang on it. But they see changes in their sons and lament over the loss of traditional values in them. They think that their Egyptian roots are in the verge of collapse. Moreover, Younger people like Ilwan follows and advocates newness in traditional Egyptian society. But being the part of rural traditional society, Asakir, blind to anything and her unyielding passion for vengeance, destroys her own family more effectively than her supposed enemy, Suweilam Tahawi, ever could have done. She has wiped out the new generation of menfolk so the family line has come to the end. She forces her cousin, Simeida to kill her own Son, Ilwan after being irritated by the refusal of her son to take revenge of her husband's murder. She has waited for years for the murderous action that will restore honor to the family and avenge her husband's death. She wishes Ilwan to be an avenger of family honour. But Ilwan, brought up and educated in Cairo, has turned to religion and law, in other words, from parochial to universal values, believes in brotherhood, not vengeance. He utterly fails

to fathom his mother's traditional values. He misunderstands his own traditional culture, stands for modern progress, for enlightenment and a social order that rejects the blood feud and in which the responsibility for justice is transferred from the family to the civic community. At last in the play, the protagonist, Ilwan is murdered by his brother, Simeida when his mother forces him to kill her own son. The adaptation of modernity in day to day lifestyles does not lead to the positive impact in the culturally restricted society in rural Egypt. The tradition here becomes the curse people and especially for the new generation like Ilwan in traditionally biased society of rural Egypt. Here we can clearly view the effects of tradition modernizing the society. He sacrifices his life while hoping to change his society in the way of modernity and at last becomes the tragic figure because of the effect of tradition.

Simeida is the son who stayed behind and he also is a tragic figure. His future is entirely destroyed by Asakir. He is certain to be punished, perhaps executed, for the murder of his Ilwan. So that he is an example of a lost generation denied the chance of the enlightenment of the new ideology of the state and of the city. In Simeida, we see the relentless pendulum logic of the tribal vendetta law. Here also we can see the clear effect of tradition in the case of Simeida. In the play he is compelled to kill her brother because of the force of her aunt in the name of masculinity. Being of young generation he was compelled to kill other young generation because of the traditionally conservative unyielding passion for vengeance.

Time is changeable and so is humanity; throughout the human history man has experienced different changes. In this modern time, the biggest change in human history becomes possible because of new way of thinking, education, social justice and law and feelings of humanity which bring the biggest conflict between people of different concepts and generation. It is natural, and people who are attached to the

traditional morality have to accept that society cannot develop itself if people do not think according to the change of time. Therefore, change occurs everywhere, in accordance of time, and it brings conflict; because some people resist it and some accept it. Eventually, conflict is needed to make society develop and go ahead according to the demands of time. Al-hakim views that in the course of change in any society it faces conflict and confusion but it is necessary for the change and betterment of the society. People have to face the effects of tradition and follow the modernity and run their life according to the time. In the play though Ilwan has to be sacrificed he resists to follow the tradition of vengeance. He is able to end the deep-rooted traditionalism of Egyptian village life. He has got victory over tradition and has ended the tribal conflict of his family with the Tahawis.

To sum up, in the play, there is obviously conflict between two generations, among their ideas, concept, philosophy of life, way of thinking, way of doing things and behaving with each other. Because of the conflict between two generations, changes occur naturally which are inevitable for the betterment of society. We see the changes in the society while people assimilating the values of tradition and modernity. Apparently, new values of modernity tend to break down the remaining vestiges of traditional functions. And the deep-rooted attitude, beliefs of rural Egyptian people regarding their tradition gets changed for the betterment of their society.

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