

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Critique of Conventional Masculinity in Tawfiq Al- Hakim's *The Song of Death*

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Central

Department of English in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Rita Kumari Upadhyay

Reg. no. - 6-3-19-951-2007

Roll no. - 228

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Rita Kumari Upadhyay has completed this thesis entitled, “Critique of Conventional Masculinity in Tawfiq Al- Hakim’s *The Song of Death*” under my supervision. She carried out this thesis from July, 2018-April 2019. I, hereby, recommend her thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Shankar Subedi

Supervisor

April 22, 20

Tribhuvan University

Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences

Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Critique of Conventional Masculinity in Tawfiq Al- Hakim’s *The Song of Death*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Rita Kumari Upadhyay has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

_ External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

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Abstract

This thesis is a critique of conventional masculinity in Tawfiq Al-Hakim's The Song of Death being based on gender studies. The research presents Hakim's challenge to the masculinity especially in Arabian Islamic culture that is guided by revengeful motive of mother. Tawfiq was born in 1898 in a wealthy Egyptian family of Alexandria. He studied law in Cairo, graduated in 1925 and before died in 1987 translated and written so many articles, plays and books. Ahl al-Kahf, One Thousand and One Nights and ISIS are his exemplary plays. Being woman, Asakir is guided by the patriarchal motif of revenge i.e. eye for an eye. It is Asakir, a widow who ironically thinks that version of masculinity has to be preserved by her in order to do so she makes her son Ilwan take revenge of her father's murderer but in vain. Ilwan is reflected as one of the modernists guided by social norms, decorum's and laws. In order to critique the conventional masculinity the research makes use of theoretical insights of Judith Butler, Judith Halberstam and some more ideas of Glover and Cora Kaplan. Finally the research concludes that Hakim is critical of conventional masculinity. The mother is presented as a strong advocator of masculinity but her failure at the end of the play ironically displays the implacability of gender based roles in modern society like that of Cairo.

Key Words: Gender, Masculinity, Tradition, Islamic culture, conflict, gender role.