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The rule of grisly wars over the twentieth-century world must have had a negative effect upon many nations. The 1950s and 1960s were an era of degeneration for both England and Arab countries, particularly Egypt. The Allied Forces' bombardment of Britain in World War 11 and the military raids on Egypt by Israel and its allies in 1967 caused the two countries myriad material and physical as well as spiritual losses. Steve Padley goes further by averring that one of the 'consequences' of war was the "diminution of Britain's status as a leading power, reflected in a gradually accelerating process of imperial decline" (2006: 8). Countless regional and international literary works responded to that crisis. Both English and Egyptian writers of the time had unsurprisingly divulged, to borrow Ramji Lall's words, "a general feeling of disillusionment and disenchantment ..." (2005: 132). In contrast with many modern skeptical authors, the preoccupation of English poet Philip Larkin and the Egyptian Amal Donqol with transferring stark realities has instigated them to shun any claim of heroism towards the wide desolation of their own countries. Behind the two poets' *prima facie* stance is concealed their derision of the false glamour or glitter of their countrymen. Their disparagement of their own people, social systems, political regimes, and even of themselves has nurtured in them a vigorous and irremovable kind of pessimism, which is aggravated by the omnipresence of nostalgia for the glorious past in many of their poems. Feeling that the moral disintegration of their countries is irredeemable, the two poets appear to be obsessed with death as the sole redemption, even though they sometimes confess it to be inconvenient.

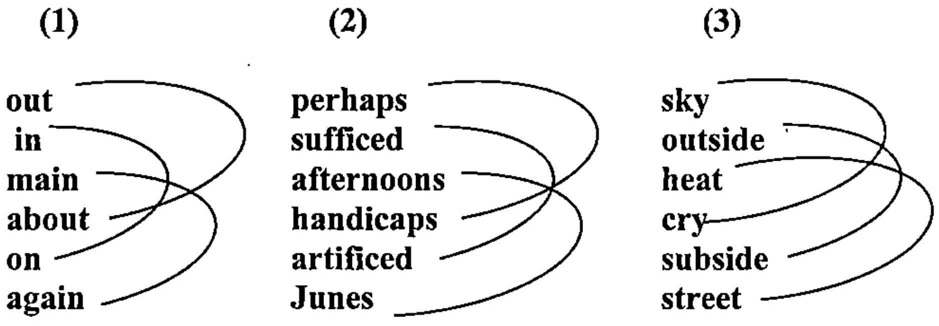
Disregarding the linguistic, cultural or technical variances between Larkin and Donqol, both can be seen to handle most common subject matters in mostly similar and novel ways. They use these subjects to convey their own political and religious as well as philosophical perceptions, which they conceal deeply beneath the surface, sometimes symbolic, meanings of their poems. Since symbolism is a common feature of modern literary writings, these two poets may thus be rated as modernist despite their disdain for modernism by reason of its deviation from certain realities through representing them symbolically and obliquely. According to Larkin, who has strongly sustained the "grim claim of Johnson's Imlac that 'Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed,'" modernism proves to be implausible by the virtue that "it helps us neither to enjoy nor endure" life (Samuel Johnson 1759/ 1977: 33; Philip Larkin 1970: 17). However, Larkin and Donqol often correspond to disparate modernists in that their use of symbolism is not grounded on many myths or other sources of opaqueness, as stressed in, for instance, the works of T. S. Eliot. [1] It is noteworthy that Donqol, unlike Larkin, tends to use certain historical and famous figures as well as ancient literary and cultural heritages in symbolical ways to expound the sharp contradiction between the past and present social life in the Arab world. [2]

Such marks of affinity between these two internationally different poets are not referential but rather coincidental, because there is no documented evidence of the influence of Larkin on Donqol. However, it can be taken as a foundation for constructing a comparative study of their poetic works with a view to verifying that they, unlike several contemporaries, are anti-heroic. Anti-heroism here means nothing other than discrediting the heroic stances that others, ordinary people or writers, have held towards certain issues in twentieth-century England and Egypt or towards life in general. It is worth mentioning that this kind of anti-heroism comes from the adherence of both Larkin and Donqol to stark reality. Since reality is known to contrast with romanticism, this also means that these poets are simply anti-romantic. However, they are quite distinct from the anti-romantics (or modernists) of the time, who could not completely free themselves from the shackles of romanticism in that they show to be honest to themselves and others, even though this honesty sometimes makes them look offensive, and that they never claim the heroic or chivalric role of the knight by trying to settle any of their irresolvable social problems. Contrary to, for example, Cervantes's hero Don Quixote, a model of the romantic knight who has found his overt and covert representation in countless modern literary works, both Larkin and Donqol unearth their bravery by facing the truth but dare not challenge it for they are quite convinced if they do, they will be fighting windmills, as Don Quixote did. The political regimes and modern social customs are far more than can be challenged by helpless and individuated societies, of whom the poets are certainly a part; therefore any claim of standing up to such reality is not only romantic or illusive but also worthless. Essential to vindicating such premises is the following thematic and technical analysis of a number of poems by both poets. These poems are selected by virtue of touching upon this study's focal point.

To begin with Philip Larkin, most of his approaches to politics turn out to be allegorical. Although allegory is not an uncommon literary device, Larkin makes a genuine use of it. His "At Grass" was estimated by a great many post-war critics and writers as the most perfect poem in his early, rather immature, collections of verse. Apparently, it reflects on the scene of horse-racing, yet it is intended to satirize postwar Britain for falling far behind the majestic empire. In other words, Larkin analogizes the past and present of his country with that of the horses. None of the allegorical works tackling this subject matter has sought Larkin's same goal. The poem is composed of five stanzas; each is a rhythmical sestet (six lines). The first discloses two anonymous horses standing in a cold shelter at grass; the second and the third move back to the heroic past of these horses at races on which many different spectators staked their money. The horses were so powerful and appealing that their audience of men, women and even handicapped people cared not about the trouble of watching them every summer, and their triumphs were always celebrated by the press. The last two stanzas turn again to the gloomy present of the horses where they are shown to be frail, nameless and unappealing: "And not a fieldglass sees them home" (Philip Larkin 1988/ 2003: 75) They stand at grass quiescently, only the manes and tails seem to shake the itching flies off their bodies, waiting for their herders to come with bridles in the evening to drag them to the stable. To the contrary of Simon Petch's view that the end of the poem is "in no sense symbolic" (1981: 59), one can state that it signifies the impending end of the horses on the ground that the word 'evening,' which connotes the overhanging of darkness, is most often used in English poetry to refer to death. This is vehemently rebutted by C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson's statement that: "As they are taken back to the stables, it is as if, as with all men, they are submitting to death" (1963: 140-1)

The antithetical past and present of the horses is shown by certain linguistic codes to be analogous to British life before and after World War II. For instance, the words 'anonymous' and 'memories' indicate that the present horses have no identity but still are holding glorious memories of the past that seem to 'plague their ears like flies.' In other words, the horses are the objective correlative for human beings, which is a common technical feature of modernist poetry as originated by T. S. Eliot and imitated by numerous Western and Oriental poets. Notwithstanding this apparent resemblance to Eliot, Larkin's symbolic associations are not so vague as Eliot's; the reader need not consult any outside factors, like Eliot's 'red rock' that symbolizes a church in "The Waste Land," to get to the correlation of an object to another. Thus, with this symbolic connection, the poet may try to impart the melancholic reality of postwar Britain; the empire turned into a decaying state. Even the galloping of the horses at the beginning of the last stanza, which is seemingly figured by the verses as an emblem of the horses' joy in the present moment for being released from the reins and control of the jockeys, is not a projection of the poet's true feeling towards them. This is well explained by the fact that such temporal joy of the horses stands at variance with their generally miserable condition – a condition which symbolically sends them to death in the concluding lines. Furthermore, Larkin's manner of saying it: "Or gallop for what must be joy" does not seem to be only deceptive but also ironic; it may be a transmission of people's feeling, which sharply contrasts with his, towards the old horses' galloping. In fact, many readers have committed the error of misinterpreting the delight of the horses in the poem. To refer to just one example, Bruce K. Martin claims that Larkin's poem is a projection of the idealism of the horses, which people, regretfully, cannot enjoy: "The poem reminds us how hopelessly unlike the horses we are" (1978: 88). Most accurate indeed is Terry Whalen's notion that Larkin's "range of vision is wider than many have perceived" (1986: 7). If these horses, one can argue, look at all joyous, this is not because they enjoy life ideally, as Martin presumes, but because they most likely celebrate the imminence of their end, which is going to disentangle them not just from the control of reins and jockeys but from all the strains of life. Since we are compared to the horses, this simply means that death is the only release from our miserable life. However, death is implied in the final line to be uncomfortable since the groom and his boy, signifying death, are mentioned to come in the evening with bridles, a sign of violence, to take the horses to their lodge (or grave).

In view of the fact that the comprehension of any poem as well as "the reception of its full effect," as George Williamson mentions (1967-84: 17), can never be approached without a full awareness of its technique, we must turn the attention to the structure of Larkin's poem. The poem seems to be well designed to serve the point of view and emotional tone behind the surface of the verses. In other words, the form is logically affiliated with the content. Apart from the stylization of vocabulary, the rhythm and rhyme as well as meter and stanza form are adroitly assorted to the poet's idea and emotion. Such a technique, which is nearly applied to most of Larkin's poems, is worth valuing by Simon Petch as 'subtle and sophisticated' (1981: 11). The lines run on into each other, which is supposed to accelerate their rhythmic motion throughout, but the rhythm is slackened by the recurrence of such consonant sounds as 'p,' 'd,' 't,' 'k,' and 'g' which are known to be hard for their pronunciation takes more time than the liquid quality of other consonants. This technical aspect works effectively in emanating a marked conformity of the shape of the lines and their content. The thematic cohesion is also achieved by the four-stress line (or iambic tetrameter) metrical pattern. Some of the lines, however, follow the trochaic foot, as is the case with the third line in stanza four: "Summer by summer all stole away." But the foot variation is perhaps intended to mark the poet's turning to another, mostly different, angle of the theme he discusses; here he seems to begin the line with a stress on the loss of the horses' strength they used to show at racing every summer, while in the earlier two lines he argues the horses' probable rejection of their present, obviously dull, life: "Do memories plague their ears like flies? / They shake their heads. Dusk brims the shadows." The rhyme scheme is not regular, as it fluctuates between perfect and pararhymes, keeping pace with the instability of the horses' condition and, much more important, with the poet's diverse emotional trend to them. All the stanzas, except for the first and the last, are constructed in a pair of triple rhyming fully and alternatively; the first with the fourth, the second with the fifth, and the third with the sixth. The following first three stanzas are an illustrative example:



The regularly rhyming stanzas hold full sway over the poem's contradictory theme. That is, the regular form of stanza and rhyme is made bound up with the poet's consistent notion that the horses are dragged far away from their glorious past towards impending decay (or death). The rhyme of stanza 2, 3 and 4 is held out systematically, so is the poet's attitude. Standing at variance with these stanzas, the first and last stanzas use full and pararhymes. The first rhymes: a b c(½b) a ½b c, which means that the first line rhymes fully with the fourth and the third with the sixth, as followed in all other stanzas, whereas the second pararhymes with the third and the fifth. This quite obvious inconsistency of the rhyme wonderfully reflects not just the poet's uncertain figuring of the horses standing at grass: "The eye can hardly pick them out/ From the cold shade they shelter in," but also the anonymity of their identity. This is also marked by the punctuation of the fifth verse, which is hyphenated at the beginning and the end (- The other seeming to look on -) to indicate that the speaker cannot take an uninterrupted glimpse of the horses so as to form a clear mental image of them; therefore he comes to state at the end of the stanza that they are 'anonymous.' Inasmuch as the poet's attitude and feeling become more certain in the final stanza, as he now believes that the horses cannot avoid death, this is also emphasized by the rhyme scheme arranged as follows: a b c a b ½c, which is approximately identical to the rhyme of other stanzas, save that the third line half-rhymes with the sixth.

Furthermore, the syntax of the last line ("With bridles in the evening come") is, intentionally, perhaps inverted to produce this little different form of rhyme in the final stanza for the purpose of verifying a tone or an attitude. Philip Hobsbaum sees that the third and sixth lines end with half-rhymes and internally pararhyme with 'groom' in the fifth line "to feel the voice hush and the imagery become subdued." The total effect of inverted syntax and rhyme, Hobsbaum maintains, is to impart "the sense of evening and impending death" (1988: 285 – 6).

Larkin's tone is widely varied, which discredits Andrew Motion's notion, along with some others, that it is 'uniformly depressed' (1982: 60). A comparison of Larkin's early and late poetry may lead one to conclude that his "self-conscious lyricism" in *The North Ship*, as Roger Bowen suggests, has developed, according to Terry Whalen, "to a more mature, 'spare tone' in *The Less Deceived* and other volumes (Bowen 1977: 87; Whalen 1986/1990: 2). All the critics and readers who have failed to grasp the wide-ranging dimensions of Larkin's tone must have reached inadequate conclusions about his poetry. This is to say that tone is part and parcel of the intended meaning of the poem. Alvarez, for example, regards the above poem as a gentle recalling of the early English life, "part pastoral, part sporting" (1962, rpt. 1966/80: 30). Larkin's heroic attitude to the horses' past is palpably countered with his anti-heroic description of their present life. Moreover, he ironically contrasts other people's illusive perception of the horses as still heroic, for they now gallop freely and joyously, with his anti-heroic attitude, which is elucidated in the generally melancholic condition of the horses. He satirizes all those readers who may fail to approach the reality of the horses to avoid entanglement in the sad reality of their own life, as represented by the horses. On a larger level, Larkin's underlying tone shows no resistance but rather a complete resignation to death. This is assumed in the last two lines, where the horses are made to wait passively, without any struggle, for a boy to come in the evening to pull them into the stable, a symbol of the grave. Since the horses are analogous to people, this may reveal the poet's ironic feeling about the postwar British people, who had closed their own eyes to the decadence of their country and pretended it still holds the grandeur (or heroism) of the past. The poet's irony extends to human life in general. Like horses, we are created to grow into vigorous youth, become old and then die. It sounds trenchantly ironic to Larkin that we are created to die. Therefore, those people, both writers and readers, who claim a heroic challenge to death out of the belief that they can make their own destinies in this life, must be, Larkin believes, romantic. Larkin's anti-romantic attitude is also found by David Lodge to exist in his use of metonymy and synecdoche, a feature of the realist Movement poets, [3] rather than metaphors, which are a main characteristic of romantic poetry, as is the case with the third stanza of this poem: "Silks at the start: against the sky/ Numbers and parasols: outside, ..." (1977: 123). Here metonymy and synecdoche are important for recalling the glamour of the past race scene. Gido Latre goes further, suggesting that the reality of the horse, as delineated by the metonymy throughout the poem, is dexterously associated with the true nature of human beings, known to take "a pattern of standstill, incipient movement developing to a climax, subsequent rest and final standstill" (1985: 437).

The poem's overall structure appears to participate in forming not only the meaning but also the total effect. If death is perceived as a deadlocked circle out of which no mortal can escape, there is no reason why Larkin's lines should not move in a circular way. The poem begins with delineating the present of the horses, and then turns to their past life fifty years ago and concludes with a return to the present which is implied to very soon lead them to death. This sequential structure is also a logical transformation of the human life. Once again, we are first created as fragile children, and in time we gradually grow up and become more vigorous, and then decline into old age and fragility. The poet's sad resignment to death is highlighted by some other technical devices applied artfully to the texture of the poem. Specific sounds are intended, but not in an onomatopoeic manner, to reinforce the poem's meaning and sensual images. To mention but one example, certain consonant sounds (e.g. bilabial, affricates and alveolars) are used to outweigh the number of long vowel sounds in every line of verse for the purpose of enhancing the sense of the poem. The quality of these sounds is harsh, or *cacophony*, as Laurence Perrine (1992: 200) puts it. Even the vowels employed are resonant enough to verify the feeling of pain and distress expressed throughout the verses. The cacophonous sounds are supported by the prominent vowels: *ai* (as in 'eye,' 'sky,' 'cry,' 'sufficed,' 'artificed,' 'outside,' 'subside,' 'flies,' 'bridles'), *au* ('out,' 'about,' 'outside,' 'crowds'), *ei* ('shade,' 'they,' 'tail,' 'mane,' 'shake,' 'fable,' 'faint,' 'against,' 'Stakes,' 'gates,' 'away'), and the longer vowels *u:*, *i:*, *oi* ('groom,' 'curious,' 'afternoons,' 'Junes,' 'evening,' 'ease,' sees,' 'joy,' 'boy'). Comparatively, the number of short vowels (e. g. *i*, *e*, *a*, *u*), known to be suggestive of pleasure, is made smaller for the probable purpose of underscoring the idea that the horses' present life is dominated by much more strain than convenience. Thus, the many connotative sounds in the poem do not coincide with the semantic structure of the lines, but rather are deliberate, pointing to the poet's emotional trend.

Notwithstanding all the aforementioned merits of Larkin's poem, it is criticized by some scholars on account of being opaque. Evident proof of this lies in the various approaches of readers to the poem. Some take it literally as no more than a sketch of the history of horse-racing in England, while some others contextualize it into different symbolic associations to mean: pre and postwar Britain, old age, and death. Such a claim, if accepted, can give support to those critics who regard Larkin as modernist because symbolism or mystery is, as mentioned so far, a noted characteristic of modernist writings. Nonetheless, a careful reconsideration of Larkin's poem and general poetry may provide a clue to such a mystery. The reference to death with the word 'evening' in the last stanza, which may look equivocal to the reader, is a common symbol in Larkin's poetry. For instance, his poem "Going," uses the same word as code for death: "There is an evening coming in/ Across the fields one never seen before;/ That lights no lamps." This evening sounds extraordinary not because the speaker has never seen its like, as he directly mentions it, or because of its unusual darkness, which is a commonplace characteristic of death, but for the main reason that it turns in the rest of the poem as an absolute power of devastation. As deceptive as death, this evening pretends from a distance to be as soft as silk, but it roughly steals life from any object it touches. Here it finishes the trees and numbs the speaker:

> "Where has the tree gone, that locked
> Earth to the sky? What is under my hands,
> That I cannot feel?
> What loads my hands down? (Larkin: 51)

A symbolic embodiment of death as such negates Larkin's view of it as a comfortable redemption, as some scholars may claim.

As for the symbolic analogy between the horses and human beings, it is also based on grounds furnished frequently by Larkin. It is noteworthy that the horse(s) is a recurrent object, with the same significance, in his poetry. In a poem entitled "Winter," horses directly represent the defeated men. And that the horses' condition is a further symbol of "mourning national decline and articulating a weary disillusionment with the contemporary world," as Steve Padley suggests (2006: 84), is evidently mentioned in Larkin's other poems. Consider, for example, these lines from "Going, Going": "And that will be England gone, / The shadows, the meadows, the lanes, / The guildhalls, the carved choirs" (Larkin: 134). Throughout this poem Larkin also 'invests' his literal designation of the disappearance of the pastoral scene from England into underlining his severe irony about modern England and "nostalgic yearning for a better world" (Padley 2006: 84).

It is perhaps a strange coincidence to find the famous Egyptian modernist poet Amal Donqol (1940 – 1983) write about horses with Larkin's same vision. His poem "The Horses" regards horses as a symbol of modern Arab peoples, who are far away from their brilliant past. However, unlike Larkin's "At Grass," the poem starts with a nostalgic call for the heroic past of the horses, which are yoked with the Arab men by the twice-repeated simile: "In the past, the horses were like men,/ Widely running in the plains./ The horses were like the past men," (Donqol 2005: 418) and then moves to bewail their appalling, sorrowful present; it closes with Larkin's same imagery of the impending death of the horses and Arabs: "The horses turned into men heading to the abyss of silence/ And men into horses to the abyss of demise" (422). Thus, the conformity of the two poems may show more obviously in their writers' attitude to their countrymen than anywhere else in the text of each. Both poets reveal a pessimistic view of their people for resigning themselves to a shameful end; it is an anti-heroic view springing from a true facing of sad reality and a rejection of the illusions of other people in the two countries.

Taken as a whole, Donqol's poem is, however, longer and richer. It has a wider variety of peculiar images of horses and people. It commences with showing how the Arab horses were militant against the enemies of Egypt during the Mamelukes reign, and how they recorded their heroism with their blood. This image is made to stand in an antipodal position with that of the horses in the modern time. They are now portrayed as unable to run, as they used to do, so fast that they pulled out the green grass from under their hooves and made all the children bend down out of fear. In another scene, the Egyptian kingdom's guardians unavailingly try to recall that amazing past by beating the drums to stimulate the dispirited horses. And in a series of successive images, they are represented as the tortoises crawling about museums, the stone statues erected in squares, wooden seesaws for children, confectionery knights offered for sale at seasonal fairs, and to the drawings and tattoos on the papers and men's bodies. Consider this apostrophe: "Be drawings and tattoos in dry lines/ As dry as the whinny in your lungs" (418). The paradoxical image of the horses is given further dimensions. They are shown to stand in the past not just for power and glory but, much more importantly, for freedom, which implies that they are now enslaved. It is mentioned in the poem that they did not easily bow down to let the conquering knights mount them. Neither did they yield to the whippings of their coaches to their oozing bodies: "The horses were so wild, and they breathed freedom/ As did people in that golden and noble past" (419). On the other hand, they are now shackled and their hooves are shoed with heavy metals. What difference does it make if these horses live or die? The poet seems to ironically ask. It is worth noting that all these various images are threaded together harmoniously by a wide-ranging technique. The poem is divided into three thematically interrelated parts.

Both Larkin and Donqol employ contrast as a principle for organizing the majority of their poems. Regardless of the variation of their images and tones, both poets build their poems on the general contrast between the past and the present, youthfulness and old age, illusion and reality, life and death, happiness and sadness. Both are also alike in being realistic, pessimistic, resigned, grim, and antiheroic, yet Donqol is more critical. The two poets are primarily concerned with presenting the general attitude of others with a view to opposing it. From the contradiction of the past and present of the horses, the objective correlative of people, these writers show to be less deceived than others by the realities of their societies. Rather, they 'strip reality from its cloak,' to use Conrad's phrase in *Heart of Darkness* (1994/ 2004: 53). Their portrait of the social life thus goes in two oppositional ways: self against the other, with the regard for the 'self' as always being realistic and the 'other' illusive. The submissiveness of their people to the wars in their countries and their pretension of rising to the occasion as well as their passive hope of reaching a better future, all are encountered with the poets' divulging of the barely sad reality and permanent pessimism. In other words, others' heroism, if we are to call it so, is challenged by the poets' antiheroic, mostly ironic, tone. If there is any heroism in such a situation, it should be attributed to the poets in their facing the apparently harsh reality. Nevertheless, such heroism is polemic. If the poets blame other people being passive, this may not mean that they themselves are active. Their condemnation of their own societies in the postwar period for one reason or another is not anticipated to change the situation. Neither is it going to alleviate the inexpressible pain of people, but rather exacerbates it. If Larkin implies the irredeemableness of the state of his horses (or, allegorically, men), Donqol comes to directly admit that the decay of Arab horses is accompanied with a generation of knights who will be crying forever for losing a memorable past; the present horses and the knights have lost their dignity and identity; they are as anonymous as Larkin's horses in "At Grass." With this vision, one can claim that the poets feel ironic of others and of themselves as well.

Such an attitude on the part of the poets is indeed another emblem of their influence by the modern literary tradition. Geoffrey Turley (1974), Chareles Tomlinson (1952), Eric Homberger (1977), M. Enani (1994) *et al* have concurred in regarding Philip Larkin as a modernist poet on the account of his resigned tone. Tomlinson (214) comments harshly on his "tenderly nursed sense of defeat," Homberger (74) calls him the "saddest heart in the post-war supermarket," and Enani (61), like Turley (143-4), relates him to the tradition of modern writers, whose works are overshadowed with "the sense of defeat, despair and utter futility which distinguishes the attitude of a twice-disillusioned war generation." Similarly, Donqol should not be denied this feature. Contrary to many critics and analysts, Sayed Al-Bahrawy's essay "Arabic Modernism in the Poetry of Amal Donqol" lays much stress on Donqol's modern technique and content (see Abla Al-Reweiny 1999: 297).

The interaction of the binary image of heroism and anti-heroism is also quintessential to the two poets' debate on death as an absolute natural force in a number of poems. A careful examination of certain poems concludes that their heroic personas are defeated by death. Unlike many other writers, who have revealed a romantic heroism in challenging death, these poets submit their wills to the inevitability of death, which they often regard as the most painful end of all mortals, and sometimes as an honourable kind of redemption for the enslaved persons. Nevertheless, Donqol does not seem to dread death as much as Larkin does.

Larkin's "Next Please" harbors on death with appealing imagery that distrusts any human claim to heroism. It opens with speaking about 'expectancy' as a bad habit. In one sense, all of us work hard, rather heroically, in this life for definite achievements; we delight in suffering on the prospect that success will one day come to bring us relief, albeit our days go off and drag us to death before we can attain any of our hopes. People's heroism is indirectly juxtaposed, through the underlying tone, with the poet's anti-heroism. Larkin's metaphorical representation of dreams to as 'Sparkling armada' moving slowly towards the shore, where people are waiting to unload the goods (symbolically, their achievements), may suggest how much we suffer in this life. These people experience perennial pain and frustration because of wasting time waiting for ships of promises "Refusing to make haste" (Larkin: 50). Their endurance and refusal to resign may be interpreted as a heroic action. On the other hand, the poet feels ironic about their situation; in the last stanza he surprises us with the futility of long waiting for fulfilling certain dreams by giving anchor to only the ship of death on the shore of reality. Once again, Larkin is straightforward in expressing both his death theme and irony. The "Sparkling armada of promises" turns into a "black-Sailed" ship moving in the deadly dark and silent sea to get to us. Although the poet fails to expose death in a concrete image, his final quatrain obliquely refers to it as an appalling sweeping force; it hushes out whatever it touches: "...towering at her back/ A huge and birdless silence. In her wake / No waters breed or break" (50). Apart from the irony related to the forestallment of our hopes, some respect of the poet's irony is also associated with the fact of death as a power imposed upon us: "Only one ship is seeking us..." C. B. Cox seems to agree with this in his comment on the poem where he says: "Illusion is interwoven with all our thinking, for we can never escape from the inadequacy of the present" (1959: 15 – 16). Unlike other writers, Larkin "does not rebel because failure seems to him one of the unchangeable facts of life" (15). In fact, neither Larkin nor any of us can change such facts, of which death is an absolute.

Larkin's linguistic and formal arrangement of the poem may turn out to play an effectual role in unveiling his oblique message. The significance of the poem's title "Next, Please" lies in its imagining us as though we are standing in this life in a queue for obtaining our aspirations, which ironically turn into death that welcomes us, one after the other. The gentleness of death here, as implied in its calling us with the word 'Please,' is an intended reversion of reality for indicating that life is more stringent. The coded diction seems to be a common feature of the whole poem. The italicized phrase '*Till then*' in the last line of the first quatrain stanza refers to the foolishness of our dreams that last 'till death': "Something is always approaching; every day/ *Till then* we say" (Larkin: 50). The poet's mockery of us is heightened in the second stanza through exposing us as blind to the illusive nature of our promises, which turn out at the end of the poem to be no more than 'wretched stalks' or ropes of 'disappointment.' The colloquial adjective 'birdless' in the last stanza is simple and uncommon but highly technical, in that it is most significant for the context of the poem; it suggests *lifelessness*. The silence of seas is most often broken by birds, used in romantic poetry for conveying a paradox of life and death, but in this poem the absence of birds is made to sustain the huge silence of the waters behind the running ship in an attempt to draw a metaphorical picture of death. To draw the reader's attention to the connotation of the most common word 'ship,' Larkin might have felt that it was not enough to call it 'black-sailed' or 'unfamiliar,' for these two adjectives do not allow any connotations and by denotation mean just a different kind of ship, therefore he followed them with the connotative words: 'birdless,' 'breed,' and 'break' to confer upon it the common characteristics of death. It sounds very strange to read in the last line that when this ship starts to move (or 'wake,' as literally mentioned in the poem), the waters do not "breed or break," which is a deliberate reversion of the truth for the purpose of an uncommon image of death. The waters behind the moving ship are given no rise or even break to emphasize the fact that death is a force that effaces life. The word 'wake' at the end of the line before the last functions well in forming an indirect paradox of death and life; since the motion of *death ship*, an image suggested by Terry Whalen as a "faint echo from Lawrence's... 'The Ship of Death'" (1986/ 1990: 37), is entailed with the dead silence of water and birds, this is a covert reference to the full tide (or life) of these objects, which may stand as a representative example of our life.

Multidimensional paradox seems out to be Larkin's general technique. The poem under discussion is principally based on the contradiction of life and death, with many contradictory details such as illusion and reality and promises and disappointments. In other words, the deluded watchers for the ship of promises are adroitly depicted by the verses to be unconscious of the real foil looking out for them, an interesting paradox which vehemently stresses the poet's ironic feeling about people's gullibility. Such dispute over the wide-ranging paradox is resolved at the end of the poem by the implicit triumph of death over life. It seems a common technical feature of Larkin's poems to begin with introducing the reader to a problem and conclude with a solution, a common but logical scientific formula.

Although imagery and symbolic associations undoubtedly help to intensify the poet's emotional trend in the poem, they may be debatable. Larkin's image of death, as illustrated so far, is indeed genuine, albeit problematic. It confines death to being slow, which cannot be taken for granted, for death is almost always known to be swift; countless infants die even before they can pin any hopes on life. The poet's preoccupation with people's illusion in waiting unavailingly for accomplishing their own ambitions, paralleled in the poem with the slow propelling of the ships, might have temporarily taken him away from focusing on death. However, a reexamination of the image may come up with its rationalization. Larkin is greatly interested in jibing at people's imbecility for wasting their lifetime in looking forward to illusive promises, therefore he surprisingly turns the ship into death to underscore the fact that death is deceptive, a fact of which most people are implied to be inadvertent. The poet returns to the same idea in some other poems. "Nothing to be Said," for example, is one of the most pessimistic poems on death, as it stresses that our endless expectations in this life take us slowly to death, in the face of which nothing can be said, as directly referred to in the poem's title. It sounds ironic to the poet that we are predestined to live without much hope.

It should not be ignored that death and time are regarded by Larkin as two faces of the same coin. That is, the image of death should not be considered separately from that of time. Insofar as time finishes our life, it can be regarded as death's agent. Time as an absolute power that drives life into nothingness or 'vacation' is a recurrent conceptual image in Larkin's poetry. This concept is a deviation from the romantics, almost always known to celebrate life. 4 In the volume of verse entitled *The North Ship*, there is an epigram of four lines that ingeniously defines time as: "...the echo of an axe/ Within a wood" (Larkin: 31) Insofar as the echo of an axe in a tree leads to its inevitable felling, this connotes that both time and death cooperate in sweeping life out. Most interesting is that the tree is conceived by Larkin in a poem entitled "The Trees" as an objective correlative of man; it is predestined, as is man, to suffer for some time, and then die. The blooming of the trees is taken by foolish people as a sign of the renewal of their life, when it is really an emblem of their imminent end. Larkin's irony about the hiding of death in life, from which many people are abstracted, is interwoven in his questioning the greenness of the trees: "Is it that they are born again/ And we grow old?" Giving no room for any argument, he answers with: "No, they die too." Hence, the poet's irony culminates in the declaration that the seeming vitality of the tree is in fact "a kind of grief" (Larkin: 124). A similar example is presented in Larkin's "Aubade," a lately published poem which alludes to Richard Wilbur's famous poem "A Late Aubade" (1921). The latter focuses on time as a power that takes people to death. Wilbur's use of the second person pronoun 'you' to directly warn us against wasting our time in doing foolish things implies his quite awareness of time as a consuming power: "Time flies, and I need not rehearse" (Laurence Perrine: 52). However, he does not appear to dread the imminence of his death, as Larkin does. Though the image of time is altered from an echo into a 'soundless dark' in Larkin's "Aubade," it still bears the same implicit sense. The title of the poem points to the song chanted at dawn for rejoicing in the night's end with daybreak, or the dissipation of the dark with the light: "Walking at four to soundless dark, I stare. / In time the curtain-edges will grow light." The speaker's continuous reflection on death drives him, unlike many other people, to see the light of the day, an obvious signal of life's renewal, as a portending death: "Till then I see what's really always there:/ Unresting death, a whole day nearer now" (Larkin: 190). Blurring the line between light and darkness here may sound strange, or a 'novel' complexity as Enani (1994: 72) has claimed, yet it is reminiscent of countless preceding literary works. To take but one example, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* imputes the muddled life of the Africans to the European colonialism through a good deal of the images of light presaging darkness (or death). Larkin comes back to directly ensure the image of time as 'vacation' in the second stanza where he mentions: "But at the total emptiness for ever, / The sure extinction that we travel to" (190). What may really sound irrational is that the speaker in Larkin's poem is entirely engrossed in death and the way to die.

The mature Larkin's approaches to death are varied. In "Myxomatosis" he looks upon death as a comfortable salvation from man's worldly suffering. The poem's persona ends the life of a terribly sick rabbit (afflicted with myxomatosis) by a severe blow on the head. The obvious cruelty of the action may however be mitigated by some readers on the pretext that it is a kind of mercy towards the tormented rabbit. In other words, the reversion of death's ruthlessness into kindness in this scene may not mean that the poet is unaware of the truth of death, described by Motion as a "comfortless blank" (1982: 69), but it only means that he appreciates the rabbit's unendurable misery. What sounds ironic is that the rabbit, like man, is predestined to do away with worldly pain and suffering by death, which may be conceived by Larkin as less agonizing than life. The resigned tone of the persona in Larkin's "Aubade" and "Myxomatosis" is an indication of the poet's opposition to any claim of heroism towards death. In the former, he honestly declares the inevitability of death: "...Courage is no good:/ It means not scaring others. Being brave/ Lets no one off the grave" (Larkin: 191) Even people's heroic enduring of certain troubles in this life in the hope of getting better is also refuted by Larkin in "Myxomatosis." This paradox between the heroism of people, perhaps signaled in their blaming the persona in this poem for not giving the sick rabbit time to heal, and the poet's anti-heroism, indicated in his honest empathy for the rabbit's suffering, is technically expressed through this interesting melodramatic monologue: "You may have thought things would come right again/ If you could only keep quite still and wait" (Larkin: 61). The underlying tone of this soliloquy implies the futility of our pinning illusions on the future. The poet's notion then is that the repugnant reality of death may be welcomed if we only stop avoiding reality. A nearly similar attitude to death is stressed, explicitly, in Larkin's "The Explosion." The poem throws light upon a mine's collapse that results in many deaths. Through the ceremonial words of the priest over the bodies of the dead miners and the reference to the dream of their wives, who mention to have dreamed their husbands to be larger and healthier than they were in life, the poet tries to ensure that death is more a blessing than a curse, especially for those who suffer in life, as the miners did. An attitude as such is mainly based on the religious idea of immortality, hell and paradise after death, which may discredit the notion that Larkin was agnostic. This attitude also disagrees with John Osborne's view that Larkin's perception of death is 'iconoclastic,' in the sense that it "upsets every conventional piety and ideal" (1987: 184-6). Larkin shows, though imaginatively, that the miners are no different from any martyrs who are promised a permanent abode in paradise. The poet's agnosticism is based by many critics on his assault on the customary visit of Christians to Church in a poem entitled "Church Going." It deserves to be mentioned here that Larkin's criticism is not directed at religion or God, but to certain foolish actions.

The image of death as 'emptiness' or 'vacation,' has its finest representation in Larkin's "Ambulances." As signaled by the title, the poem's theme is not uncommon, yet it is made novel through embedding it in certain symbolic associations for conveying the poet's ironic touches on the fact of death. Though it very much seems like a narrative poem, it is in fact a melancholic lyric that tells about the passing of an ambulance carrying a seriously sick man down the main street of a city in England, which comes to stop at a 'kerb' where many children are playing on the sides of the street and a crowd of women returning from the shops with various kinds of food. The spectators, especially the women, are panicked not because of seeing the ambulance transporting a sick person to hospital, but because it reminds them of the imminence of their own end. Brooding over their reality as mortals drives them to profess that their activities and fashions in this life are worthless and meaningless, because death can come in a flash to turn their whole life into 'vacation' or 'nothingness': "And sense the solving emptiness/ That lies just under all we do,/ And for a second get it whole" (Larkin: 104). It is noteworthy here that the simple and common word 'solving' functions perfectly in conveying the intended sense behind the lines; in the sense 'dissolution,' it signifies the women's sense of the looseness of their firm or solid life by death. Thus, the ambulance is viewed by Larkin as a symbol of death rather than of 'a case of sickness,' 'a road accident' or, generally, 'some danger,' as most often thought. Since people always look at passing ambulances while no ambulance looks back "None of the glances they absorb," this may intimate our worthlessness before death; the ambulance scares all of us but it is never afraid of anybody; rather, we always move out of the crowded street lanes to let them pass. In other words, we quit all courage and heroism and eventually turn to anti-heroes in the face of death, a reality which the poet admits even though others refuse to confess. Larkin describes the identity of death as: "So permanent and blank and true." The women's pathetic response to the sick man in the ambulance: "... *Poor soul,* / They whisper at their own distress," is more an emphasis of their concern about the melancholy destiny awaiting every one of them than an indication of familial communion, as some critics think. This momentary horror is capable of making these women, who stand for all of us, into anti-heroes, and turning their entire life - with its "years, the unique random blend/ Of families and fashions..." - into a "sudden shut of loss," as Larkin puts it. The poet returns in the closing stanza to stress the fact of death as an absolute power that changes our life into a dreadful blankness or vacuity: "Brings closer what is left to come,/ And dulls to distance all we are." The distress of our end is marked, in the first place, by the permanently displeasing sight of ambulances, and in the second place, by the poem's such connotative diction as: 'noons of cities,' '*Poor soul,*' 'distress,' 'deadened air,' 'loss,' and 'dulls.' Much more exquisite is the poem's deathly atmosphere; the lines open with the passing of a firmly closed ambulance, like a confession room at Church, across a street full of noisy and distressed spectators, and end with the impending death of all of us. Since ambulances are stressed in the first stanza to drive in time on all streets of the city, standing for the universe, this emphasizes the triumph of death over life, a fact which is accepted, ironically, by the speaker on the grounds that we all are predestined to surrender to death. It should be obvious now that Larkin makes use of ambulances as a symbol: generally, they refer to 'illness,' and especially to the imminent death of all human beings. This symbolism draws our attention to Larkin's use of a genuine technique, namely to pick an ordinary subject or idea with which to verify a universal fact. Once again, the ambulance extends beyond being a mere vehicle for carrying the sick or dead people to hospital to a symbol of death.

There are many other poems by Larkin that harbor imagery of death. "Dockery and Son," "Wants," "The Building," "The Old Fools," "Going," "Nothing to be Said," and "Cut Grass" have an unmistaken tone of abdication, or an 'ironic acceptance of death,' as Enani phrases it (1994: 74). To refer to just one example from *the Whitsun Weddings* volume (1964), "Dockery and Son" may hark back to Shakespeare's metaphor of life as a foolish tale 'signifying nothing,' yet it procreates the same concept in a new vein. The poem holds the mirror up to a state of ambivalence harboring the poet's ironic attitude to life. In the opening lines, the speaker regrets his failure to get married and have a family of his own, and in the closing lines he shows himself to be quite satisfied with his bachelor life. In an attempt to justify this, he gives examples of some of his acquaintances, like Mr. Dockery, who got married and had children but lived miserably. Thus both ways of living are no different, because, Larkin believes, life is rueful. At first, marriage may bring man some sort of happiness, which comes to the climax by having children, as is the case with Dockery, but it later takes him on an endless road of torment since "Our lives... harden into all we've got" (Larkin: 109). Implicit in this is the poet's frustration by the inevitable hardship of life which mars any moments of joy. How can such life make sense? Once again, it is the poet's phobia of death that has most often egged him on looking upon life with blurred eyes: "Whether or not we use it, it goes, / And leaves what something hidden from us chose, / And age, and then the only end of age" (Larkin: 109). The twice use of the word 'age' in the last line underlines the meaninglessness of our life that comes, with all its moments of success and failure and joy and distress, to inevitably collapse on the rock of the end. A dark vision of life as such, which the poet seems to lull us into accepting it indisputably, may bespeak his own failure to love and marry a woman, a fact that might have always invoked him to feel to be unnatural. Nevertheless, this is far from suggesting that he was really glad with his loneliness; beneath his tone of describing the success of Dockery is concealed the bitterness of his failure to make a family of his own, even though he mentions that Dockery's son means 'nothing' to him on the pretext that marriage is more customary than being self-gratifying: men marry, as Larkin mentions in the poem, to satisfy their social habits rather than themselves. Regardless of the accuracy of this notion, it is quite obvious that Larkin does not confer any kind of heroism upon the successful people, which is far from any selfishness or strangeness, because he also could not confer it upon himself.

The mature Larkin's weeping over the corruption of his entire country must have invoked his good and tact sense of death. Once again, the economic crisis entailed the Second World War had to do with this. It is not strange then to find all the poems of his volume "High Windows" (1974) focusing on the issue of alienation, mainly brought about by the disintegration of social values, morals and human relations. "Going, Going" and "Homage to a Government" are among the poems that show death as looming large in the atmosphere about the country, which shocks the poet to the degree of dreading "that England would become the first slum of Europe" (R. Lall 2005: 13). All the personas in "Vers de Societe" are shown to lead an idle life, which symbolizes their complete ruin. Other poems of the volume such as "Annus Mirabilis," "High Windows" and "The Building" signal moral bankruptcy as a result of widespread profligacy.

Amal Donqol's poems on death hold a stance similar, in many ways, to Larkin's; this may not be strange, for both poets are strict advocates of the truth. Several Arab critics have found this in Donqol. As an example, Saffi Naz Kazim (1983: 19-26) has described him as the modernist poet of a painful vision. However, he is different from Larkin in that he never shows alarm at facing death, but rather seeks it in many situations in his life, as is recurrently voiced in his volumes of verse. Heaping praise on the bravery of the poet, Radwa Ashour (1985: 28), states that he is one of her generation who retain their opposition to all passivity in the Arab community until death. They never fear death, strongly believing that death seeks them all, as it does everybody in this universe. Nonetheless, both poets seem alike in resigning their will to death as an absolute power. To be cognizant of Donqol's various images of death dictates the need to consider a number of his poems on the subject.

The conflict of life and death, which is always proved to end with the victory of death, exists nearly in every poem by Donqol. In a number of poems, he mourns the death of his little sister, father, friends, famous men, and soldiers. The images and tones of these poems ensure that death is a supreme power against which any claim of heroism must come to grief. Like Larkin, Donqol most often sets his own voice in opposition to other voices, represented directly by the personas used in these poems, or indirectly through the use of dramatic monologue and apostrophe. His poem "Death in Tableaux," laments the unexpected death of his little sister Rajaa'. The extreme horror and violence of death is explained in the life of this three-year old child ceasing and leaving her mother and brother, who is now the poet, in a state of permanent distress and emptiness, like the wives of the murdered miners in Larkin's poem "The Explosion." The always sad mother still keeps her dead daughter's clothes, shoes and toys in her private wardrobe, and the brother cannot imagine that his innocent sister has gone away forever: "Forgot she's gone away, / She's sleeping I say" (Donqol: 138). This is perhaps a mockery of all English poets, including Shakespeare, who have figuratively referred to death as sleep. To indicate the comfortless blankness into which death forces people, the poet-brother searches his own deadly silent house for his little sister. The use of 'silent,' 'despair,' 'disaster,' 'dim,' and the repetition of the word 'died' three times, all create a realistically gloomy atmosphere of death around the whole poem, an atmosphere capable of evoking Donqol's pessimistic feeling about our endless aspirations in this life, which he tries to conceal behind stressing the continuity of life in the face of death. His resigned tone is a justification of this. In his poem "The Last Paper: The Southerner," which he wrote a few days before his death in 1983, Donqol returns to express his deep sorrow for losing his little sister, father and some other fellows. The horrible death of his father has haunted him till the last moment in his life: "Still remember! My father was bleeding to death; / I still remember that road to his grave" (Donqol: 387-8). The poem "From Abu-Nawass's Papers," 5 presents an exquisite image of death as a painful emptiness or silence through recording the most agonized moment of separation between the mother and her son. She passed away holding him in her arms. When her arms started to loosen gradually, and then became motionless, he quivered and cried out: "Oh, Mother! But he got no response. Consider this ironic personification of death: "Nobody but death replied. He could do nothing other than resign to the power of death: "... I took her in my arms and cried" (333).

Donqol's reference to the death of famous individuals from inside and outside the Arab World in certain poems is meant not just to lament their loss or show their tragic end, as many scholars think, but rather to draw various images of contrast between the glorious and heroic past generation and the weak present generation of Arabs. 6 A vindication of this may exist in the ironic contradiction between the unreachable heroism of Saladin, an ancient Arab Muslim leader and symbol of bravery, and the Arabs in "A Non-Historical Speech upon the Grave of Saladin" (427). A great deal of the poem heaps praise upon this man's successive victories in many combats against foreign enemies. This vision is also sustained by the frequent representation of this same passivity of Arabs in many of his other poems (e.g. "The Horses," "The Birds," "A Townswoman Said" etc.). The historical figure of Spartacus (Thracian slave, gladiator, and insurrectionist) is recalled from the Roman history in a poem entitled "Spartacus' Last Words" to remind us of a striking example of self-sacrifice for the sake of freedom, a characteristic lacking in modern Arab countries, which are repeatedly embodied as broken-winged birds that are tossed up and down by the frivolous hands of foreign forces. However, the failure of Spartacus' rebellion makes him feel pessimistic and ironic about the impossibility of reform in the human world: "Hope not of a delightful world; / After the death of Caesar, another Caesar comes" (Donqol: 93). What sounds most sophisticated here is that Saladin and Spartacus are publicly looked upon as heroes, yet they stand as an example of anti-heroism by reason of their defeat by death.

The finest exemplification of death's most aggressive images is found in Donqol's "End Game." It discloses with a personification of death as a wandering archer who always catches in hand a sling with which he keeps shooting stones at all passers. He never fails to hit his goal. The progression of the poem is skillfully associated with a variation of death images. The bowman-like death is transmuted into a most courageous fisherman who moves to the flowing sea where "He throws his line into water and comes again/ To write names of those caught in his fatal threads" (Donqol: 403). In so far as symbolic associations are concerned, 'water' is a figurative representation of our world, which underscores, as the word connotes, the size of the surrounding mystery and darkness in which death comes to '*fish*' for us. The significance of this symbol lies in highlighting the fact that death comes invisibly to catch us. If our world is likened to sea or water, this simply means that we are regarded as fish, which may sound ironic; like fish, the poet seems to be saying, we are created to be consumed. To verify the aggression of death, it is interestingly explained in the tool - the fishing line – with which it catches our souls. Surely, no line has sympathy towards a fish. Since Donqol's fisherman never takes its line out of water, this signifies the fact that death will take us one after the other. According to Assem M. Amin (2005: 111), Donqol's imagery of death in this poem aims at showing the fact that death can never be governed by any rule or logic; it heads to sea (or, symbolically, our life) at its flowing hour (signifying the culmination of our hopes and dreams) and throws its line into it. Agreeing with Ahmad Taha (1983: 42), Amir maintains that this imagery has its roots in religion and mythology. The fisherman's determination of the names of those persons who are to be caught by his threads (symbolically, those who will die next) is reminiscent of the Quran's 'death angels' who are always busy with deciding the names of those mortals among us whose hour of leaving to the eternal world has become imminent. The imagery also harks back to the myth of Cupid, the ancient Roman god of love and son of Venus, who is told to have had a bow and arrows with which he used to shoot at people, and which the latter warmly received as arrows of love when they really were of death. Most ironic was that Cupid's loves and lovers had fallen one after the other. [7] The fisherman is also mentioned in the poem to resent all orchards, but he sneaks through their broken fences to make himself a crown of 'rotten leaves,' with pearls of 'rotten fruit,' which he puts on the head 'over a ring from the withered flowers of Fall.' This image is indicative of the true identity of death. The twice repeated word 'rotten' not only reveals the displeasing figure of death but also its nastiness. It comes upon life, represented here as the colorful and fruitful orchard, and withers it. This image of death in life may very much resemble Larkin's in "The Trees." Larkin's consciousness of the omnipresence of death in life encourages him to spectacularly personify the trees as sad-looking men in the prime of their life. Much more dreadful is the turning of the figure of death into a 'snake with fangs' in the concluding lines of Donqol's poem. It suddenly comes to end the pleasure of a loving couple by stinging the boy to death and leaving the girl stunned. The wide variation of death images in this poem is indeed significant for underlining the wide-ranging deception of death, a truth that can never be doubted.

Donqol's close observation of the bloody wars and massacres that took place in the Arab world (Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan) must have caused him unfathomable pain and provided him with true images of extremely aggressive, massive death, as expressed in a great number of his poems. "The Suez," an Egyptian town in the North, delineates the gloomy silence or death of the place after the Israeli raids in 1967. That town, known to him before war as most charming, is now completely ruined: many of its residents, including even innocent children, are floating in a pool of blood. Most painful and intimidating to the reader is the scene showing that death deprives the town's children of having fun, like other children in different parts of the world: "Children fall on its districts,/ With hands holding threads of kites,/ Lose vigor and die in blood pools" (Donqol: 117). Seeming to insist on leaving no trace of life in the place, death burns the whole town: "Fires devour its white houses and gardens" (117). The imagery of colour (mainly expressed by the 'blackness' of the smoke over the burning town, which sharply contrasts with the 'white' houses and 'green' gardens and the 'red' colour of the murdered children's blood) is most complex for it demands a highly subtle intuition to perceive. It may appear to draw just the literal contradiction of 'black and 'white' and 'red' and 'green' colours, but it turns out to conceal more than one implication. First and foremost, the contradiction of colours is very significant for revealing the permanent clash of life and death: the red and black colours are figuratively known to stand for death and the white and green for life. Since black and red dominate the white and the green, this may be interpreted as an emphatic signal of the triumph of death over life, which is a major theme in the poetry of not only Amal Donqol but also Philip Larkin. This view is enhanced by the general technique of the poem. Consider this metaphorical portrait of the town of Suez: "She's now wearing a cloak of death and sacrifice" (117). The metaphor not only conveys the overwhelming prevalence of death, as implied by its being a cloak covering the body of the town, but also stresses the intensity of the survivors' sadness over the decay of life in the entire town. The latter is compared to a mother, perhaps to the homeland, who is wearing mourning over the death of all her family members. Generally, the poem is based on the principal contrast between the town's brilliant past and dark present, beneath which is concealed a severe confrontation between two unequal forces: the fragile surviving townspeople and death. Finally, the heroism of the citizens in resisting the enemy and trying to spare their life and town ends with their defeat by death. Much more significant is the poet's dramatic irony implied behind the scene. The irony does not exist in the discrepancy or incongruity between what the poets say and what they really mean, as happens in other ironic Arabic or English writings, but between the townspeople's expectation of victory and a much better future and the surprise of their death. Thus, it is this ironic feeling about life which drives Donqol, and Larkin as well, to disdain our dreaming of a happy future. The following lines from Donqol's "The Last Dinner" (167) are a good illustration:

> Give me might to smile,
> When the dagger into joy's chest plunged,
> And like hedgehog, death creeps in the wall's shade,
> Carrying the horror censer to the iris of the child.

In the poem "Crying Before Zarkaa' Al-Yamama," [8] Donqol comes back to paint another picture of malignant death, which is tantamount in effect to that in the previous poem. Despite the variation of death images in the poem, they are threaded together congenially. The succession of these various images does not distract the reader from the intended meaning and message of the poem, but rather it enlarges his/her imagination of the further dimensions these images give to the meaning or the theme of death. Going through the poem, the reader is haunted by the corpses of the martyrs scattered horribly on the flaming sand of the desert, the scene of "the dead helmet children in the desert," and the picture of the Egyptian widows in different villages, who are wearing mourning over the loss of their husbands and sons (Donqol: 105). All these scenes are capable of leaving the poet, and us, with "injured hearts, injured spirits, and mouths." The poet voices: "We've got nothing but death, broken fragments, and ruin" (109). Besides the heroism of death met with the anti-heroism (or defeat) of the murdered Egyptians, there is another form of this same contradiction implied in the defeat of the poet by imagining himself as a helpless man crying before Zarkaa' Al-Yamama. Both he and she could not convince their political leaders, who regarded them as foolish and superstitious, to ward off bloody wars with different enemies; consequently, their countrymen became remorseful for disregarding the prophecy. The poet's irony is directed at the foolishness of the Egyptian authority of the time for failing to appreciate the shrewd vision of the blind fortune-teller.

All Donqol's poems on death, which either mourn the death of certain famous Arab individuals (e.g. Mazzin Abu Ghazala in "A Crying at Night," Sallah Hussein in "Things Happen at Night," Gamal Abd El-Nassir in "Ailul (or September)," Sarhan Beshara in "Sarhan Got Not the Quds Keys," Um Kalthoum in "Death of a Famous Woman Singer" etc.) or mass deaths prove that death is a natural force that can never be challenged, and the persons who dare to defy it will inevitably be doomed. Despite the fact that this concept of death is no more than a literal expression of reality, with which Larkin has also bounded his poems on the subject, both poets show, more than any other authors, to be influenced by the religious fact that we are all equal before death, even though they sometimes treat death cynically by reason of its being so cruel. If Larkin always awaited death in a full apprehension, Donqol himself has experienced death more than one time. Donqol has spent his last few years in hospital for treatment from cancer; he unavailingly struggled against death, as his wife Abla Al-Reweiny mentions in *The Southerner*.

Donqol's suffering from the agonies of spiritual death has also induced him to have an anti-heroic attitude to life. The poems exposing his complaints about the hollowness of modern Arabs are far more than can be handled in this study; therefore one limits himself to just a few representative examples. His "A. D.'s Book" (or Amal Donqol's Book) compares the dead silence of Cairo City, with all its 'high buildings and shadows,' to the ship that is drowned and plundered by death for a long time ago, its captains resting their heads on its edge and many broken bottles of wine are scattered at their feet (see Donqol: 310) This figurative sketch of death may have some affinity with Larkin's in "Next, Please." If Larkin's ship of expectations is made to shift into that of death, here Donqol's ship of life is plundered and wrecked by the pirates of death. Despite the minor difference between the two poets, in that Donqol's view of death is more severe; both jibe at our disillusionment in this life, which never makes us expect death. Feeling that death fills up the air, Donqol is prompted to depict his country as drowsing in silence, cloud, and darkness. Therefore, it is hardly surprising to find that these poems: "The Land and the Deep Wound," "Nothing to Say" and "Things Happen at Night" hark back to T. S. Eliot's multidimensional metaphor of the predicament of modern life, civilization and mankind. The reader's attention is drawn in these poems to the poet's deep sensibility and reason in fathoming the endless destruction of life, which may seem harsher to the poet than to the reader. Symbolizing human beings, the Arab land is portrayed in these poems as void of any trace of life. In Egypt, as seen in "The Land and the Deep Wound," the Nile River was and still is poisoned from the time of the Moguls, early colonists in Egypt, and the land is so thirsty that it searches for water from under the roots of thorns: "It awaits the gruesome fate./ It is withering" (99). Nothing breaks the silence but the stormy winds and howling wolves, symbols of horrendous death, which bear away anyone's hope of life, as expressed in "Things Happen at Night." Being menaced by an abominable death, the Egyptian farmers, who were before the murder of their backer Salah Hussein as "lofty as the plough tilling the land," become "atrophied, like a wheat seed" (164). It seems from the title of the poem "Nothing to Say," an echo of Larkin's poem "Nothing to be Said," that the poet has nothing to say other than claim the inevitable death of his people. In a rhetorical question with a gruesome irony, he wonders: "Oh, land! Are the men going to be born?" (103). A similar tone is expressed frequently in some other poems. "The Diary of a Young, Old Man" presents a personal meditation on the redolence of death in life, where the poet confesses: "I know the world died in my heart" (119). But this reflection grows invariably more serious and more impersonal in some other poems, as is plainly explained in the replacement of the pronoun 'I' with 'We.' In "A Break on the Sea Shore" the poet wonders:

"Are we dead?" (130), and in "Weeping at Noon and Night" he unwaveringly says: "Still we are shadows of wishes/ In Death Settings!" (158). Larkin's sensitivity to our spiritual destitution prompts him to "hallucinate with death" the rest of his life, as implied in his subtly symbolical poems "Thirsty! Thirsty!" and "Paragraphs from the Death Book." The first quatrain of the latter tells that the speaker wakes up so tired every morning to wash his face and hands, but is shocked to turn on the tap, because it runs with blood instead of water (see p. 199). Since 'water' is a symbol of life and it is intentionally turned into 'blood,' a symbol of death, this may hint at the poet's irony towards life.

Amal Donqol's other, but contradictory, view of death as a 'comfortable blankness,' in that it puts an end to all sufferings in this world, may also place him in Philip Larkin's conceptual line and, much more important, provide us with another form of the juxtaposition of 'heroism' and 'romanticism' with 'anti-heroism' and 'realism,' which is the paper's main focus. In more than one poem, he calls for the death of the suffering, for one reason or another, because there seems to be no hope of their healing. Consider the following lines from his "Drawings in an Arab Hall":

Ah! Who can stop the mills in my head?
And pull the knives stabbed in my heart?
Who can kill my poor children in order not to
Become servants, catamites, and pimps
In furnished, scarlet flats?

Who can kill my poor children in order not to
Become beggars tomorrow? (339-40)

These lines may be comparable with Larkin's poem "Myxomatosis." Although the two poems have different objects, Larkin deals with a seriously ill rabbit whereas Donqol with desperate human beings, they get to the same conclusion that death is needed for relieving all living creatures from any permanent agonies. It also sounds illogical, and impossible, if Donqol orders the killing of all tormented people as though they were rabbits. One can easily get rid of an animal, but not a human being, afflicted with a disease. However, there may be no room for this little difference between the two poets, if Larkin's rabbit is intended to be an objective correlative for man. On top of that, both poets have proved to be so pessimistic that they have never expected any change in their perverse countries. It is this pessimism which must have compelled Donqol to relinquish the heroic role he adopted throughout his life. A careful examination of his eight volumes of verse shows that the poet has seriously contended, with an unrelenting pen and voice, against perversity in the Arab community, and that he has never surrendered his will to anybody or authority but death. In "Spartacus' Last Words" he confesses: "Hanged I am by the morning's scaffolds; / Death bowed my forehead,/ That I never did as long as lived" (Donqol: 91) This certain defeat of the poet is also verified in putting himself in the place of Spartacus, a slave hero who challenged the Roman empire but was defeated by death. Both situations have an irony of fate, in that the man who tries to improve his social situation must sacrifice his own life.

From the above discussion of the theme of death one can infer that both Larkin and Donqol are anti-romantic and anti-heroic as well. They have not tried to challenge death, or even to avoid it, as many romantics do. This attitude is chiefly based on reality; even their imaginative depiction of death through the use of metaphor does not dim the picture of reality, but rather illuminates it: apart from taking the reader into remote and interesting worlds, these metaphors help him/her have a full mental image of what the poet tries to say. The adherence of the poets to reality must have caused them to avoid using many subtle symbols and vocabulary with multiple denotations and various overtones, because these technical aspects, which characterize modern poetry, are expected to hamper their imparting a precise meaning to the reader. Finally, one can fairly state that the language of both Larkin and Donqol can be taken as a proof of their dissent from romantic and modernist writings, favorably disposed to superabundant imagination and mystery.

The hackneyed view of love as the fountain of life and happiness, which culminates in the communion of the lovers through marriage, is opposed by both Larkin and Donqol. None of their emotional poems concludes with a complete success of love and marriage, but rather it willfully associates love and marriage with difficulties and frustrations. This attitude not only departs from the long-established romantic tradition but also ridicules it. The following comment on some poems by Larkin and Donqol throws more light on the poets' anti-romantic attitude to the passionate relationship of man and woman.

Larkin's "Wedding Wind" can in many ways be distinguished from any other poem on marriage. The words of the title are banal, though one wants to argue that they have complex dimensions. The blowing wind in the wedding day makes the bride think that nature shares in the celebration of her own joyful union with her lover, but this impression soon changes when the wind gets severer at night; she comes to seriously meditate on the possibility of enduring such a wind, which turns out to be a portent of destruction. It may not sound unusual to read that a woman feels so happy for getting married to the man whom she loves, what really sounds abnormal is the woman's narrow-mindedness. However, her look is perhaps meant by Larkin to refer the reader's attention to the naivety and foolishness of not one individual but the majority who are most always unconscious of the problems of marriage concealed behind its surface pleasure. There is a grim irony in the discrepancy between expectation and reality; marriage is always thought to take the married couple to the climax of happiness, but it really surprises them with some sadness, as is the case with the woman in this poem. On her wedding night she pities the outside world for lacking the happiness she is now enjoying: "... and I was sad/ That any man or beast that night should lack/ The happiness I had" (Larkin: 45). But she must be unaware of her own foolishness, because when her husband leaves to shut the house door which kept banging in the wind, she starts to look at her face reflected by the candlelight on the 'twisted candlestick' but she cannot see anything: "Stupid in candlelight, hearing rain, / Seeing my face in the twisted candlestick, / Yet seeing nothing" (45). On the other hand, the poet's faithfulness to the truth may have compelled him to make this woman aware of her own self-deception. In the second part of the poem, she is shown in the morning following the wedding night to carry a pail of water to her chicken in a 'run,' and the severe wind traveling to the clouds and into the surrounding forests comes to thrash her 'apron and the hanging cloths on the line.' The destruction of her own place has incited her to suspect her endurance of the wind, a symbol of life. In this way, the poet wants to prove that life is not always rosy, as romantic people claim, but rather can be as stormy and horrid as the wind described in the poem. The dramatic monologue in the concluding lines unearths the woman's skepticism about the continuity of her joy, which is metaphorically described as 'a thread Carrying beads' and as 'the delighted lakes, with 'all-generous waters,' in which she is swimming; she cannot tell if she is going to sleep in the morning following that rainy and stormy wedding night, a morning which wants to 'share her bed,' and if death is going to finish (or 'dry up,' as Larkin says) her lakes of joy.

The form of the poem is not as firmly fixed as that of other poems by Larkin, yet it is deliberated in a willful way to serve the sense and emotional weight the poet tries to impart to the reader. In fact, this poem not only dissents from the structural pattern Larkin follows in many of his poems, but also is at variance with the English poetic tradition in general. Contrary to a Shakespearean sonnet, it does not start with a question and then come at the end to solve it, but complicates it more by raising some other relevant questions. These questions imply that the newly married woman gets lost for being unable to decide where or not she is going to endure her new life. On the other hand, most of his poems are witnessed to follow a symmetrical grouping of lines, but this one departs from the stable stanza form. It falls into two parts; the first consists of ten lines, whereas the second has fourteen. There are no pauses within the lines, and the only pause is the space between the first and second parts. Further, some of the lines violate the rules of grammar (e. g. in the second part the woman mentions: "Can it be borne, this bodying-forth by wind of joy my actions turn on ...," instead of saying: "Can this bodying-forth be borne by wind of joy my actions turn on?). The tense is also altered from the past to the present simple, and then to the past perfect and the future. After all, the tone of speech is transferred from certainty in the first part to uncertainty in the second. All these seemingly illogical alterations may affect the systematic readership. It may bewilder the mind of a reader to find that this grammatical reversion of the lines' structure is not mandatory for the preservation of rhythm and/or rhyme, because they are obviously irregular. However, one can argue, all these alterations may be deliberate for the function of drawing the intelligent reader's attention to the change of emphasis in the meaning, mood and message. It turns out that the radical change in the form und structure of the lines is closely bound up with the change of the woman's impression about marriage, which is the poem's main idea. The uncertain tone indicates that the speaking woman cannot determine her future life after marriage. On top of all, this type of structure serves the implied ironical paradox between the happiness people expect in marriage and the misery that really occurs.

Nevertheless, if there is any mystery arising from the skepticism of the speaking woman at the end of the poem, it may be resolved by examining other ingredients of Larkin's technique. In the first place, the kind of diction he employs tends to stress the failure of this marriage. The words 'wind,' 'banging,' 'stupid,' 'twisted,' 'nothing,' 'restless,' 'sad,' 'blowing,' 'hunting,' 'thrashing,' 'hanging,' and 'death,' all suggest anything but joy or success. Much more importantly, many of the selected words are employed metaphorically so as to draw our attention to their multiple dimensions, which give more depth to the senses and the images the poet seeks to convey. To refer to just one example, the metaphor of the banging door indicates how destructive the wind is, which is elevated by the resonant repetition of 'banging' "again and again" in the third line of the first part. The effectiveness of the metaphor is far more than that can be obtained from the ordinary language describing the wind as 'high' in the second opening line. The metaphor also prepares us to expect that such a wind will be more furious. In the second part of the poem, it is metaphorically represented as the monster that 'haunts' clouds and forests, disturbs beasts ("the horses were restless," the woman's husband gravely says), and strips people of their clothes. The poem also makes use of many hard consonants and displeasing vowels to underline the harshness of life the newly married couple unexpectedly experience. Doesn't it sound ridiculous, after all this, to look, as romantics do, upon love and marriage as a source of life and happiness?

In "An Arundel Tom" Larkin reconfirms, but from a completely different angle and through a distinct artistry, his anti-heroic stance towards love. The poem produces various fresh examples in this respect, which are interwoven in the world of the poem. First and foremost, we are presented with the heroic action of the sculptor through using the pre-baroque sculpturing of the statues of the Earl and the Countess in stone. The sculptor may try to convince the spectator that he is realistic, known to lean to extravagant ornamentation. The Earl and the Countess are shown in their old clothes to hold hands, while their little dogs lie on the base under their feet. However, none of the sides of the sculpture, except for that showing the Earl holding his wife's hand, appeals to the frequent visitors of the cemetery. With this plain sculpture in stone, the artist might have believed that he would maintain the historical identity of these two figures forever, a kind of work that he might have thought to be heroic. The statues' long standing at the cemetery among the graves and the bones of the dead excites even the visitors: "They would not think to lie so long" (116). On the other hand, the poet seems to give no credit to this kind of heroism because of specific motives. The statues cannot exist conspicuously, as the sculptor thought, in the face of time that leaves its effect on the sculpture; the visitors cannot easily read the Latin inscriptions on their base, or even see clearly some of the old features of the Earl and the Countess. The statues are obviously disfigured, though soundlessly, by the wind and snow as well as the sun. Even the second aspect of heroism on the part of the sculptor, which exists in his claim that the sculptured Earl and Countess would give a model of everlasting love, is discredited by the poet through implying in many ways that the figures are not real. They are motionless and lifeless, a view that sounds logical on the basis that their love is no more than a drawing in stone. Thus the love scene is just a "stone fidelity," (117) which has nothing to do with reality; therefore, it is not a surprise to read that it is only a "sculptor's commissioned grace" for the purpose of preserving the Earl and his Countess in the memory of their people for a very long time. Above all, the Earl and the Countess are now dead, and nothing but their dissolved bones are left; they are like "a trough/ Of smoke in slow suspended skeins" (117). Time, as an absolute force, "has transfigured them into/ Untruth" (117). Regardless of the cleverness of the sculptor in showing the pictures of the Earl and the Countess as they really were, how can a dead person be regarded as living? This leads us to a third form of heroism and anti-heroism in the poem. The life of both the Earl and the Countess, widely respected and celebrated by their subjects, comes to its end by death. Now, they are no different from ordinary dead men. Whoever visits their tomb does not pay them the awe and respect s/he used to do them when they were alive. This means that their heroism is transfigured into defeat. No one, even Kings and Queens or Earls And Countesses, can presume any heroism against death. With this conclusion, Larkin and Donqol admit the fact that we are all equal in the face of death. Here, we are not far away from Shakespeare's Hamlet's meditation on the skulls of many renowned men (e. g. Yorick, Alexander the Great and Caesar), who during their life thought themselves to be great heroes, which have "become the property of Lady Worm and [are] knocked about by a grave-digger's spade" (R. Lall 1999: 576). No better evidence of the ugly reality of the dead than Hamlet's disgust at the skulls.

However, the poem's idea of love is subtle and novel. Larkin does not feel ironic about 'the failure of love,' as Calvin Bedient (1974: 73) suggests, or 'love's unsuccess,' to borrow M. Schmidt's phrase (1979: 335), but the lack of love and life in general. M. Enani's comparative study of Larkin and some renowned modern English poets has invited him to heap praise on Larkin, and on this poem in particular: "For the first time in the history of English literature love is at once aspired to as an inevitability but ridiculed as inadequate, or, at least, never fully attainable" (1994: 65). Enani's statement implies the possibility of love's existence in this world, as the adjectives 'inadequate' and 'attainable' denote, which may not apply to Larkin's point of view of love. In other words, Larkin sees that there is no love in the human world, a vision which seems to contrast with our deep-seated concept of it as a permanent possibility. Such an unfamiliar idea of love is in many ways borne out by the structure of the poem. Delving deeply into the technique may help us to notice that all affirmations of love and life in the poem are deliberately twisted by the poet into negations for an ironic objective. If there is love, as signaled by the sculptor in the embrace of the Earl and Countess in the stone, it is absented, indirectly, by being a stone fidelity; if there is a permanent life granted by the sculptor for these two historical characters, in that as long as their tomb is visited by people they are remembered all the time, it has come to an end at the moment of their death; and if there is any reality for the whole work of the sculptor, in its being a concrete object that can be touched and watched by all visitors, it is transformed into *hollowness* and *untruthfulness*, as are the life and love of the Earl and the Countess into 'a trough of smoke.' And since the fluid syntax of the poem makes the adjectives 'hollow' 'helpless' and 'unarmorial,' in the stanza before the last, qualify the attitude to love and life, this means even the attitude itself is rootless or *unreal.* To reword it, if there is any affirmation or reality in this life, it should be only related to time, which is recognized as a real force of doom or death; and the only positivity among the 'negative order(s) or ideas of life is our awareness of these negative orders and ideas, as Enani (65), agreeing with Bedient (74), suggests. Thus, it seems a deliberate technique of Larkin to embody love through death, or the *negative* through the *affirmative.* This may lead us to reconsider all affirmations made by the language so as to reach an appropriate understanding of the poem. To take one example, the last line: "What will survive of us is love" does not mean that we die and our love remains, but means that nothing of us survives. Behind the line is also concealed the poet's irony about the inevitability of death.

Many other successful poems by Larkin argue against the traditional or romantic idea of love. "Love Songs in Age" introduces us to an old widow who comes to discover the love songs she admired as a child to be meaningless or 'empty,' as David Timms mentions in his comment on this woman's emotion (1973: 106). There is also a clear mockery of the potential of love in Larkin's ironic poem "Who Called Love Conquering." The poem commences with representing love as a beautiful flower that "So easily dries among the sour/ Lanes of living" and concludes with the symbolic death of love (Larkin: 172). In "Vers de Societe" the persona is ironically made to find it difficult to befriend people in a really abominable world, indicated metaphorically by the blowing of the wind and the miserable look of the people locked in their own rooms or houses: "And sitting by a lamp more often brings/ Not peace, but other things" (Larkin: 148). Here, Larkin does not look upon isolation, whether one lives alone or in company, from a romantic perspective as an ideal, but rather as a bitter reality that we have to accept. Enani sees that the poem gives a twist "to the famous Arnoldian idea that genius is always lonely (1994: 64; see also Frank Kermode 1957 and A. Alvarez 1968). Enani maintains that any conscious body, not necessarily a genius, can appreciate his/her solitude in such a world described by Larkin.

Larkin's close observation of the social change in 1960s England and its remarkable influence on the relationship between man and woman must have stimulated him to hold an anti-heroic and anti-romantic attitude to love in "Deceptions." He seems to have sympathy towards both a raped girl and the rapist on the pretext of their being victims of deception for wrongly thinking that their act would gratify their tired bodies. This seeming neutrality of the poet shifts into a firm assault on this sexual act in "High Windows" and "Annus Mirabilis." To him, this act is not just illegal but degenerate, albeit ventured into by the young as a kind of heroic development in the human relationship. "High Windows" opens with mocking a boy and a girl's illicit sexual intoxication, an intoxication which may make them feel to be living in 'paradise': "I know this is paradise" the poet says (129). Many old men may look upon such young ones as heroes for they could do what they themselves could not forty years ago. The heroism of these young men may also be vindicated in their defiance to God, religion, society, and the law. To avoid criminalizing their act in, at least, the eyes of society, these heroes make use of the most recent scientific inventions; the boy wears condoms, and the girl takes 'pills' and wears 'diaphragms' to avoid the scandal of bearing illegal children. Although the poet lived a bachelor life, he was quite conscious of the allure of free sex: "Everyone old has dreamed of all their lives" (129). Nonetheless, he condemns this modern kind of relationship for it destroys people's faith in God, religion and the hereafter, indicated by the direct reference to *hell* and *priest*; much more important it turns licentious men and women into non-humans: *"...He/ And his lot will all go down the long slide/ Like free bloody birds"* (129). The peril of this kind of relationship is also concealed in leading people to an endless life of confusion, mystery and senselessness, as metonymically referred to in the last stanza, where the poet looks through his high glass-windows at the extending horizon and sees just "the deep blue air, that shows/ Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless" (129). The prophecy of the poet is achieved, as the problem becomes complicated in England within the 1960s through the emergence of several bands of free sex advocates, like the Beatles, a group of singers known for their long playing record, to which the opening stanza in the poem "Annus Mirabilis" refers with the letters 'LP.' (146). The allusion in the poem about D. H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is very significant for marking the gradual development of sexual permissiveness in England in the period between Lawrence and the Beatles, who emerged in 1963. The ironic, anti-heroic attitude of the poet is stressed, though indirectly, in the two poems by the sharp paradox between the respectful past and complexly permissive present.

Despite variation in the realms of their experiences and the ways of expressing them, Amal Donqol's poetry on love proves in many ways to be akin to Larkin's. If the English poet Larkin finds it impossible to attain a truly profound and permanent love in a world ruled by wars, materialism, disintegration and isolation, as shown so far, it is no wonder that the Egyptian Donqol encounters the same problem in the Arab world undergoing the same circumstances. This simply means that decline in the passion of love is universal. Thus, why should these poets not lampoon the romantic literature viewing love as a lofty emotion that can achieve an ideal communion and fertility of different human beings? Being honestly realistic, Larkin and Donqol always mix love with frustration and pain, mainly brought about by the separation of two lovers for one reason or another or the death of one. One may not exaggerate to suggest that they make love shaded in death, or vice versa. The only minor difference between the two is that Donqol, like any other Oriental poet, is more erotic. The following discussion of certain poems by Donqol is quintessential to revealing his anti-romantic and anti-heroic stance to love, which is expressed concretely and compactly through the use of an acutely conscious symbolism.

In a poem entitled "She Said" Donqol introduces us to a realistic love scene wherein the lovers are suffering for being unable to cross the long-established social borders between them. Since the girl is shown to stand upstairs and the boy downstairs: "Come to me. Move up the little stairs' she said" (43), this signifies that they are not equal or, more accurately, she is higher than him. The problem is concretely represented by the little stairs the boy cannot walk up to his love. This is far from hypothesizing that he is too weak to move up the stairs; in fact, he is quite conscious of the wide social gap between them. He does not even try, because he is quite convinced that the stairs will not lead him to her. Describing the stairs as 'little' bears a severe irony about social trifles; that is, the difference among people may be trivial, yet it is made like a high fence by communities that people cannot, even with love, go beyond. The irony is intensified in the implication that the lower people should remain low. This situation, of course, implies an anti-heroic bent of the speaking lover, who probably stands for the poet. If he responded to his love or moved upstairs, metonymically crossed the social barriers, without any regard for what might happen to him, he would be called a romantic hero. Much more important, the lovers do not even think of eloping far away from their strictly rigid society, as

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet did. The latter's rebellion against their long-seated traditions is known to have caused them their life. Donqol's mocking of Shakespeare may rest on making his lovers foolishly sacrifice their life for nothing, because the elopement of Romeo and Juliet did not make them share the cheerful life they dreamed of. In other words, this kind of love is not life-giving, as others claim. Thus, Donqol's anti-heroic stance lies in his passive acceptance of bitter reality which the romantics evade. His poem closes with another justification of his stance. Some of the readers may blame Donqol for not giving his poor lover the chance of struggling to attain his love, but even this thought is rejected by the poet on the pretext that the lover may die, as do many of us, before fulfilling his dream, as the speaker mentions at the end of the poem: "Further than lifetime my ambition is, / And distress has killed hope" (43). There seems to be an irony of fate in that love is almost always doomed to death, as is the case with Larkin's loving Earl and Countess in "An Arundel Tom," whose 'stone fidelity' could be interpreted as a sign of experiencing love in death, of which they were deprived during their life.

In poem after poem, Donqol, like Larkin, does not take his reader, as do romantics and many modernists, to an unfamiliar area where s/he walks among shadows and mirages, but puts him/her face to face with reality. His poem "Innocence" lays the blame of the failure of love on deception. Unlike many men who are outwitted by the charming appearance of women, his male persona in the poem adopts a neutral stance; love is not purely sweet nor completely sour, but a blend of both. Once again, the speaker here undergoes a psychological stress tantamount in effect to that of the persona in the previous poem. Both personas find it agonizing to be with or away from the girls they love. If the lover in the previous poem has suffered his separation from a girl by reason of class difference, the male persona in this poem is also burnt by the fire of falling in love with a green-eyed girl, whom he should desert, feeling that the charm of her physical beauty is alluring.

This is explained by the paradox in the first two lines: "Before your eyes I feel/ Something deep inside me cries" (9). Since this paradox is apparently mysterious, one may wonder: what does it make this lover feel sad to see a most beautiful love? But this question is resolved when one later comes to learn through the allusion to the story of Eve, who was behind Adam's fall from paradise, that he is afraid to be cheated by her: "I feel the ancient sin disrobed between your palms" (9). However, the underlying tone indicates that the loving speaker suffers the agony of abandoning his love. A similar tone of torture is stressed in Donqol's other poems, such as "The Green Eyes," "What a Face!" and "It Looks Like her." In the first poem, the green eyes of love are metaphorically referred to as the fans that cool down the lover's flaming passion: "I feel it so hot within me/ And two fans, the green eyes, look to me" (73).

Unreservedly, Donqol's assault on deception is not confined to women, as it extends to men as well. His "My Heart and the Green Eyes" shows that the modern world masquerades enemies as friends. It feels painful for the poem's male persona to discover that the friend, whom he has taught how to shoot arrows from a bow so as to become as strong as other fellows, comes to shoot at him: he attracts his love to him after three years of mutual affection. The girl's deception is metaphorically reflected in her paradoxical character: "From behind the veil, the green eyes look at me/ Like the back veins of a lean spinster's knee" (25). This is also sustained with the paradoxical portrait of her eyes as those of a saint. Being unable to stand the horrible pain of deception, which the poet represents as a flaming iron skewer within his heart, he comes in other poems to order his love to take off all the masks she wears. In "Have a Break" he asks his girl, who pretends to love him madly by beautifying her face with makeup and smiling in his face when she is really obsessed with her first lover, to take off her masks and stop acting out an emotional farce: "Have a break! Nothing is left of the role to play" (52; 54).

The mature Donqol is still craving for true love in an increasingly perverted modern world. His poem "Rabab," a common Egyptian female name, reechoes Larkin's poems "Deceptions," High Windows" and "Annus Mirabilis" in lamenting the loss of sanctioned love due to the widespread permissive sexuality. The apostrophized lady in the poem appears as a bad example of her gender because she is preoccupied with tempting both men and women to her gorgeous body. On the other hand, the male persona in the poem is implied to be no less perverse than her, since he intentionally ignores all her dirty past and makes love to her. His "Death in Tableaux" assaults a woman who makes highly valued love ignoble by satisfying her lust unregretfully. Her indulgence in this act has led her to sleep even with her father. "The Diary of Young, Old Man" also resembles Larkin's "High Windows" in presenting a woman trying to conceal her crime from the eyes of society by taking contraceptive drugs: "I've wasted all my salary on birth-control pills" (Donqol: 125). When she discontinues the drugs, unable to afford their cost, she gets pregnant and goes to a physician to undergo an abortion, but the doctor refuses. Thus, Donqol seems to bitterly criticize the Arab people's mimicry of the Western sexual permissiveness. Although this act may be intoxicating for both men and women, it despoils the profound love we have been brought up to cherish, degenerates humanity and violates religious beliefs. Such remark may disprove both poets' accusation of being agnostic.

It should be quite clear by now that Donqol's attitude to love is anti-heroic and realistic. It is anti-heroic on the basis that all his male personas presented in the love poems fail to accomplish any successful emotional relations with women, and that they are regretfully resigned to all hindrances they encountered. This stance may be acceptable, especially when these hindrances are far more than can be removed, and their challenge by the lovers inevitably comes to grief. As for the realism of such attitudes, it is vindicated in the poet's deviation from the romantic depiction of love. Even when he sometimes seems to be walking a tightrope between two very thin threads of reality and imagination, he most often falls off on the side of reality. The only remark that needs a brief pause is his general view of women as naturally deceptive, which is noted in more than one poem, on the pretext that they have inherited this offense from their foremother Eve. It is irrational to regard all women, or even men, as alike despite all the corruption that overshadows our modern life. However, Donqol's look upon some women as bad is not intended to malign the whole feminine gender, but rather indicates that he is seriously questing for an ideal love. In fact, Donqol is anything but misanthropic and racist. In as much as he criticizes some women, he ridicules countless historical men. Both he and Larkin are basically interested in the truth without any ornaments. The humanity of these poets is stressed in their honest search for an ideal world wherein people can love each other and live together in permanent peace.

Besides the aforementioned examples of heroism and anti-heroism, there is another example represented in the attitude of both Larkin and Donqol to the adventure of traveling. The majority of us have been brought up to accept that adventurous people are almost always successful. Apart from acquiring uncommon experiences, they enjoy a life much more comfortable than that at home. On the other hand, these two poets potentially reject this vision on account of being mostly romantic, in that it regards traveling as a sort of idealism without any regard for its hazards. Their poems on the subject use the traditional device of paradox to depict conflict of reality and romanticism, with an obvious lean to the fact that adventurous travelers are most often doomed to failure.

A considerable part of Larkin's poetry debates on the intricacy of choosing life at home. "Toads" and "Toads

Revisited" are constructed on an unfamiliar but significant contradiction between the speaker's toad-like work and the 'toad-like squats' inside him. He cannot deny that the idle or easy life led by intelligent persons as well as the gypsies appeals to someone like him who gets bored of and is exhausted by working hard everyday, but meanwhile he is obliged to put up with the 'toad work' to live in an individualistic world. The speaker's psychological stress may be appreciated in the first stanza of "Toads" through this argumentative question: "Can't I use my wit as a pitchfork/ And drive the brute off? Such bewilderment of choice may remind us of the situation of the traveler in Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," who is attracted to two beautiful roads into a wood, standing for choices in life, but finally decides to take one that nobody has ever trodden. It may seem that Frost's man has released himself from the struggle of choice by taking a new road, as some critics think, yet he still undergoes the strain of being deprived of enjoying the beauty of the wood at which he stops for a long while before leaving. Both poems are not philosophical, albeit they perhaps "comment on the issue of the free will and determinism" and attract the attention to our difficult positions in this life (see Perrine: 79-81). If the obligations of life drive Frost's traveler to sacrifice the enjoyment of nature, they also lead Larkin to endure his toad work. However, Larkin's attitude is more bleak and ironic. To him, both idle and tedious ways of living are distressing on the ground that they are perceived as the 'toad,' which is a symbol of disgust and aversion. Like Frost's man, Larkin experiences a severe psychological tension caused by feeling attracted to the two ways of living: "But I do say it's hard to lose either, / When you have both" (63). The same tension is also expressed in "Toads Revisited." Very much resembling Frost's traveler, who takes the responsibility of choosing one road, Larkin resigns himself to his old, mostly tedious, life till death, believing it to be predetermined: "Give me your arm, old toad; / Help me down Cemetery Road" (90). Such a consciousness of reality deprives Larkin, and anybody else in his position, of the right of choice;

and those men who choose a parasitic life must be, he believes, no heroes. To wonder about town aimlessly, or spend time watching others walking noisily down the streets, or even staying at home watching the clock ticking the minutes and hours of the day away and waiting for someone to deliver the bread and papers at the doorstep, all make no hero but rather a useless individual in any society. If there is any heroism in this life it should be conferred upon the hard and industrious workers.

Larkin's "Poetry of Departure" comments on the choice of life indoors and outdoors. There seems to be a sharp contradiction between these two forms of life. The heroism of others, as explained in the first stanza by the man who is reported to have spurned everything at home by traveling abroad, is confronted with the poet's anti-heroic stance through concluding that this adventure is 'artificial.' The speaker in the poem, who may speak for the poet, is captivated by this adventurous man and wishes to follow his example: "Leaves me flushed and stirred," but he prefers to stay at home to continue doing his work of reading good books and resting on a comfortable bed (64). This implies that he, unlike most of the traveling heroes, is not willing to face any of the risks of traveling.

It should not be ignored that Larkin's poems on traveling are distinguished by a close texture and careful structure. Language is employed effectively to legitimize the objective Larkin seeks to convey to his readers. It is a mixture of formal and informal English, a medium of expression intended to refer our attention to the various types of personas used in the poem. Such suggestion is supplemented by the use of various personal pronouns (I, he, you, we). In one sense, the idea of traveling is not presented to us from a narrow subjective, but rather an objective perspective. In fact, we believe Larkin when he tells us in a sort of report, which he might have read in a paper, about some man who sacrificed his family and home for the sake of fame and money, and we also believe him when he shares us with him in the excitement of such adventure of traveling. Much more useful in this respect is the poems' rhythm, which is produced not only by the repetition of certain sounds or words but also by the recurrence of certain images, like the toad, which highlights the significance the poet wants to convey to us.

There are many ways in which we can mark the similarity between Larkin and Donqol in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of traveling. Donqol falls in line with Larkin concerning the boredom of the routine life at home; therefore, it is not strange to find him drawn to the more civilized life beyond the borders of his primitive village in Upper Egypt. As a young man he left for Cairo, Alexandria and Ismailia, Northern cities of Egypt. There is no doubt that he has scored some fame as a modernist Egyptian whose works have found a notable niche in modern Arabic poetry. However, most of his experiences away from home are shown in his autobiographical books and many volumes of verse to be painful and unsuccessful. Apart from feeling a stranger in his homeland, he was arrested and tortured in jails for disturbing national security through many of his revolutionary poems.[1] Unlike Larkin, he has taken the venture of traveling to different places in search of success. But even this minor difference cannot distinguish him from Larkin, because he meets all the intimidating perils which Larkin anticipated for adventurous travelers. In this way one can presume that inasmuch as the adventure of traveling is appealing and desirable, it is perilous. It is a kind of romanticism then, both poets believe, to show the travelers encountering no risks, or simply and naively regard their life outside home as paradise. Such barely realistic or anti-heroic attitude is evidenced in many poems by Donqol.

"From the Aide-Memoires of Al-Mutanabi" is an autobiographical poem which tells about Donqol's desperate life in Cairo. He portrays himself as a stranger lost in a city refusing to give him a peaceful and convenient accommodation. He deviates from being a conservative son of a religiously pious father to a man who pays no regard for any rules or principles. Consider his addiction to alcohol in these lines: "I hate the wine's color in the bottle, / But am addicted to it for healing" (185). The psychological stress he undergoes causes him to recurrently touch upon the difficulty of living away from home. In "A Message from the North" he complains about his depressing and sickening solitude in Alexandria, which prompts him to wish to go back home. Again and again, he uses paradox to reveal the demerits of migrating away from home. The image of the North is made to stand in opposition to that of the South. He came to the North to enjoy life and procure a successful living, but he discovered it to be an illusion, or rather "Mines of dreams with no metal," as he puts it (63). The North not only destroys his hopes but also inflicts him with killing diseases. Here is a very interesting image of heroism and defeat or failure, implied in apostrophizing his home: "I'll come to you, like a broken sword / In the debilitated palm of a knight" (63). A similar kind of paradox is reechoed in "The Silver City Story." This symbolical title seems to positively describe Cairo, capital of Egypt, as beautiful and brilliant as silver, yet according to Donqol's habit of negating the positive for certain ironical proposes, it turns out to be a waste land. Like all strangers, the speaker in the poem complains about his being ostracized and starving to death. Several traveling persons are shown in other poems (e. g. "Death in Plateaus," "Pipes," "A. D.'s Book "and "The Genesis") to stand in his similar situation. These migrating laborers are shown in "The Genesis" to work hard all the time for making the rich elite richer when they themselves are unfairly made to become poorer. Even those Southern men who leave home and family to defend their country against the enemy at the North are left to famine and horrible death. There is no more striking example of the poet's irony about the misfortunes of traveling than the embodiment of Alexandria as the abode of death and its sea as a spider's web in the poem "Pipes." In fact, it is not just Alexandria, but all Northern cities, which are emphasized in these poems to be webs in which all migrants are entangled to death. In "A. D.'s Book" the trains take countless travelers from home at the South to the North, but return with none of them. Either they die or get lost. But this is not shocking, especially when we learn that the poet himself stays in the North till he dies.

The similarity of Larkin and Donqol, as shown so far, may be supplemented by their sharing certain technical features. Paradox, which is a traditional technical device, is essential to the structure of most, if not all, their poems. However, this paradox is employed genuinely in that it is made to serve conveying certain ironies and satires or cynicisms, which is a common feature of modernist poets. What also sounds unfamiliar about this aspect of technique is its negation of the positive in an oblique and deceptive way. To refer to just one example, Larkin's ship of life or expectations in "Next, Please" turns into a horrible ship of death. Similarly, Donqol's silvery, or brilliant, city of Cairo in "The Silver City Story" becomes a truly dark place, or a symbol of death. What matters most is that the paradoxical use of ordinary subjects or themes is handled by the poets in a new but perfect manner. No better example to recite here than that of their utilization of the horses, normally an emblem of power and glory, as a symbol of frailty and disgrace or humiliation. Much more interesting is that theses horses are used to signify the present British and Egyptian people. Thus their unprecedented abundant use of paradox, which may be a weakness in the poetry of some other poets, can be said to be a careful and successful pattern for producing neatly textured poetries.

Economy and brevity are common features of the poetry of both writers. Besides their use of very brief poems or epigraphs, which function effectively in carrying multiple images and meanings as well as emotional weight and tonal attitudes, they compose long poems with a few key words for expressing large ideas; sometimes some of the grammar of definite poems is sacrificed for commitment to economy. To give an example, Donqol's use of the word 'pill' in "The Diary of a Young, Old Man" and Larkin's use of the same word as well as 'diaphragm' in "High Windows" draw our minds far beyond their being mere contraceptive devices; they place our focus on the dissipation of permissive sexuality and how this problem causes the sickness and disintegration of societies. Thus such simple words save the poet long details. Furthermore, the language of each poet is carefully put in certain syntactical contexts to serve certain literary objectives. In the first place, it is influential in producing symmetrical rhythms and, much more important, in provoking the reader's sensation. Their primary concern with conveying the bitter reality to the reader seems to have confined them to using a sort of linguistic structure capable of making the reader feel what they themselves do about the miserable world we live in. Apart from procuring an air of reality or objectivity, Larkin's use of informal English and Donqol's recurrent reference to certain historical characters and stories, all draw our attention to the poets' linguistic and ideological deviation from the English and Arabic literary tradition.

Both poets are also inclined to use an easy rhythm, which is formed by the repetition of certain images, with slight variations, to convey multiple meanings. The image of death is envisaged in many poems by Larkin and Donqol, yet it is widely ranged to convey the various forms of this absolute power in our life. The repetition is highly rhythmical in letting us sense the violence of clinical and spiritual death and in drawing our eyes to our ironic reality, that we are created to die. The image of death is furthered by applying it to other objects of nature, such as animals and birds as well as plants. One cannot forget Larkin's image of dying trees in the prime of their life in "The Trees," and Donqol's dying flowers, which are presented to a sick person in hospital, in "Flowers" (see pp. 397-8). This kind of rhythm is enhanced by the interrelationship of the various images of death within each poem, which participates in illustrating the general meaning the poet tries to impart to the reader.

In conclusion, if we pull together the threads of all the points discussed so far, we can briefly state that both Larkin and Donqol take an anti-romantic and anti-heroic stance towards the issues, themes or ideas they touch upon in their poetries. They mock all the romantic attitudes, whether held by ordinary people or writers, towards life and death as well as love and travel, which are major subjects in their writings. All kinds of heroism are thus negated by the poets for not resting on any solid ground or for being far from reality; therefore all of them are made to come to grief. Such negation of the affirmative can be translated as an anti-heroic stance. Another mark of the poets' anti-romanticism is justified in their honest portrayal of reality in a careful and genuine technique, which may distinguish them from many of the modernist writers in the East and the West. Even their little escape from reality, through the employment of imagination in expressing certain points, is always subdued by their consciousness of the borders of reality. It is on this basis that a few critics have looked upon them as classical poets. Terry Whalen, for example, sees that Larkin's mental and imaginative restraint puts him in the classical tradition of poetry, which is interestingly defined by T. E. Hulme as follows: "The classical poet never forgets this finiteness, this limit as man. *He remembers always that he is mixed up with earth. He may jump, but he always returns back, he never flies away into the circumambient gas*" (Whalen: 52; Hulme 1962: 94, italics Hulme's). According to the latter, Larkin's subdued inclination to romanticism, which means that he never becomes unconscious of the truth in which he is always engaged, results in conferring a marked creativity upon his work. To mention but one example, he is different from the leading romantic poet Shelly in terms of wondering about the universe. To contradict the critics who have claimed that Larkin's "High Windows" is indebted much to Shelley's

"Adonais," which depicts the universe as a firmly fixed beauty in that its "Heaven's forever shines" and that "life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,/ Stains the white radiance of Eternity," one may say that Larkin's image of the universe is so mysterious that neither the sun nor the 'deep blue air' behind the glassy windows shows anything but 'endless' mystery (Percy Bysshe Shelley 1821: 306; Larkin: 129). It is this feature which distinguishes him from any poet in the founding group of the so-called Movement. Similarly, Donqol's view of our world is so bleak that he advises us not to dream of a happy life, as shown in his poem "The Last Words of Spartacus," which indeed dissents from that of many contemporary Arab writers who have taken flight from reality into romantic atmospheres.

Notes

1-Larkin was at odds with modernist poets, almost shaped by the 1890s French symbolism and imagism, whose works broke the conventions of English verse by using a new technical and an intense sort of obscurity. In his preface to *All What Jazz*, a 'collection of jazz criticism,' he attacked all forms of modernist art (painting, music and poetry) espoused by Pound, Parker and Picasso, because of their being "irresponsible exploitations of technique in contradiction of human life as we know it" (Larkin 1983: 297). Explaining the unfamiliarity of the world in modernist poetry, Terry Whalen states: "it is a landscape of the mind in which concrete metaphors, images and symbols act as the signifiers of a complex state of spiritual internality" (1986/ 1990: 95). Because he strongly believed that art or literature and life are inseparable, Larkin once admitted in "Big Victims," *New Statesman* (13 March 197o: 368, in Andrew Motion, *Philip Larkin*, London & New York: Routledge, 1982, 12) that "poetry is an affair of sanity, of seeing things as they are ..." It is the blemish of modernist literature with unnecessary forms for the purpose of looking complex which has driven Larkin to pronounce in an interview with Philip Oakes that the true writer does not need "a palate for pepper" ('The Unsung Medalist,' the interviewer Philip Oakes, in *Sunday Times Magazine*, 27 March 1966, 65; quoted in Andrew Motion 1982: 23). Such declarations of his abhorrence of modernism must have invited some of the 1970s English critics to deny Larkin's relation to modernist writers. However, this view was not without criticism. Guido Latre (1985: 438), Seamus Heaney (1982: 132), Donald Davie (1973: 63-82), Alan Brownjohn (1975: 3), Clive James (1979: 55), and others have argued that Larkin's poetry often aspires to symbolism besides its primary concern with conveying critical reality. For example, Latre sees Larkin's poetic works as "very often in search of the symbolic moment in which mimesis of reality (metonymy) and creative transformation (metaphor) intersect" (438). It is on this basis that these critics conclude with validating the connection of Larkin with W. B. Yeats and other advocates of the French symbolist attitude. According to Yeats, symbolism is very useful for creating a wide variety of images, tones and forms of our emotions; in fact, he adds, no existence of an emotion is expected without putting it in a specific 'color, sound and form,' and since every artist has got his own perception of things and methods of expressing it, our emotions as well as experiences are anticipated to be reshaped continually (Larkin 1970: 368)). Furthermore, symbolism helps the writer to dislocate any affiliation between his concept of a thing and what surrounds him; it is a respite from the imprisonment of an emotion. For more details in this respect, see W. B. Yeats, "The Symbolism of Poetry," in *Essays and Introductions*, London: Macmillan, 1969, p. 157. No doubt that Larkin benefited from such features of symbolism, however, unlike Yeats and the French symbolists (e. g. Theophile Gautier and Baudelaire), he shows no inclination to what is absurd, bizarre or rogue. This is witnessed by many scholars; see, for example, Barbara Everett, "Philip Larkin: after Symbolism," *Essays in Criticism*, 30, 3 (July 1980), and her "Larkin's Edens," *English* (Spring 1982).

2- Amal Donqol's wide reading of ancient Oriental and Western histories has obviously shaped a great deal of his attitudes and much of the content of his work. Therefore, it is hardly surprising to find his poetry now and then referring to certain famous individuals, myths, stories or even common attitudes from the two worlds. This can be clearly witnessed in the titles and contents of specific poems. For example, he dedicates his poem "Things Happen at Night" to the late leading Egyptian peasant Salah Hussein, who was "one of the epitomes of the Egyptian peasant movement and a member of the Socialist Union at Kashmesh village in

Munufia governorate. He was murdered by Salah Al-Faqy, a member of a capitalist family, in 1966" (Ahmad Hamroush, *The Story of July23 Revolution*, Cairo: Madbouly Bookshop, n. d., 261-62. He used this figure as a referential example of sacrifice for the sake of freedom and justice in modern Egyptian society. He also refers directly to Saladin, a famous historical Arab and Moslem leader, and some Pre-Islamic Arab poets, like Al-Mutanabi. For more details in this respect, see Ali Ashry Zaayed, *Recalling Heritage Figures*, Tripoli, Libya: General Co. for Publication, 1978; Ahmad Mejahid, *Forms of Poetic Intertextuality: A Study of Investing Heritage Characters*, Cairo: State Publishing House GEBO, 1998, 142-3. Spartacus and Julius Caesar are among the historical Western characters Donqol employed in some of his poems. Many critics also discover that Amal Donqol was influenced by ancient Egyptian and Greek myths as well as the Quranic and Biblical stories, as this is revealed in his poem entitled *Exodus*; see, for example, Abd Al-Atty Kewan, *The Quranic Intertextuality in Amal Donqol's Book*, Cairo: Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, 1999, 123; Salah Fadl, *The Literary Connotation Product: A Reading in Poetry, Fiction, and Drama*, Cairo: General Egyptian Houses for Culture, 1993, 42-3; Abd Al-Salaam Al-Mesawi, *Indicative Structures in the Poetry of Amal Donqol*, Damascus: The Arab Foundation for Studies and Publication, 1994; Ahmad Kamal Zaky, *Methodologies*, The Arab Writer House, 1967, 170.

3-When it first emerged in a few 'literary journals' within the 1950s, it had aroused lots of controversies. Some of the critics of the time denied its existence as a 'coherent literary group,' while some others recognized it as a group of poets "with a clear shared set of values and assumptions closely related to the moods and conditions of post-war England" (Stephen Regan, *Philip Larkin*, Macmillan, 1992, 14). According to Anthony Thwaite, "the bareness of the title has sometimes been interpreted as arrogance, sometimes as mere blankness ..." (*Poetry Today: A Critical Guide to British*

Poetry 1960 – 1984, London & New York: Longman, 1985, 38). *Discovering* certain features of the Movement poetry, many critics were invited to give it a variety of definitions. Stephen Regan viewed it as "a reaction against the inflated romanticism of the 1940s, a victory of common sense and clarity over obscurity and mystification, of verbal restraint over stylistic excess: in short, the virtues of Philip Larkin over those of Dylan Thomas" (Ibid, 13). Despite his rejection of the Movement as a group with a distinguished 'program,' Anthony Hartley specified certain characteristics of it. According to him, it was "dissenting' and non-conformist, cool, scientific and analytical ... the poetic equivalent of liberal, dissenting England" ("Poets of the Fifties," *Spectator*, August 27, 1954, pp. 260-1). His reference to the Movement with the adjective 'liberal' was interpreted as follows: "A liberalism distrusted of too much fanaticism, austere and skeptical. A liberalism egalitarian and anti-aristocratic" (Loc. Cit.). J. D. Scott goes further: "The Movement, as well as being anti-phony, is anti-wit; skeptical, robust, ironic, prepared to be as comfortable as possible in a wicked, commercial, threatened world which does not look, anyway, as it's going to be changed much ..." ("In the Movement," *Spectator*, October 1, 1954, pp. 399-400). A similar stance is found in the introductions of these edited books: G. S. Fraser & Ian Fletcher (eds.), *Springtime: An Anthology of Young Poets and Writers*, London, 1953; D. J. Enright (ed.), *Poets of the 1950s: An Anthology of New English Verse*, Tokyo, 1955. These three writers regarded the Movement as a 'new spirit' of writing that cared much about simplifying and clarifying all complex and mysterious situations in the human world. Speaking technically, Robert Conquest found an interesting conformity of content and form in most of the Movement poetry: contrary to the time's writers, who were explored "to produce diffuse and sentimental verbiage," the Movement poets tended to use "a rational structure and comprehensible language (*New Lines*:

An Anthology, London, 1956). As for the tone of Movement poetry, it is noted by John Press to be characterized by "the general retreat from direct comment on or involvement with any political or social doctrine" (*Rule and Energy*: *Trends in British Poetry Since the Second World War*, London, 1963, p. 5). This notion may have influenced Blake Morrison, because he looked upon the Movement poets as respectful and 'submissive' to the social systems of their time (*The Movement*: *English Poetry and Fiction of the 1950s*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 74-5).

On the other hand, a few critics have distinguished Philip Larkin from all Movement poets because of certain reasons. For instance, Samuel Hynes has argued that Larkin's poetry is more 'expansive' and more 'wide-ranging' than others in the group ("Sweeping the Empty Stage," Review of Morrison, 1980, in *Times Literary Supplement*, June 20, 1980, p. 699); Ian Hamilton, "The Making of the Movement," in Michael Schmidt & Grevel Lindop (eds.), *British Poetry Since 1960*: *A Critical Survey*, Oxford, 1972, p. 71.

4-In his essay "Not the Place's Fault" Philip Larkin discredits the romantic ideal of life. His distaste for 'traveling and holidays' mainly comes out from "an impotent dislike of everyday life and a romantic notion that it will all be better at Frinton or Venice" (*Umbrella*, 1, 3, Summer 1959, 111). Even his reliance upon nature in performing certain images, is not intended for manifesting the beauty of a landscape or an object, as romantics always do, but rather "for the opportunities it offers to moralize about the human condition" (Andrew Motion 1982/ 1986: 62). It is noteworthy here that Larkin's resentment of life is not only caused by the failure of his own experiences but also by his deep sensitivity to the 'sadness' of humanity in general, a sadness which, as Terry Whalen sees, is echoed obviously in the romantic Wordsworth's "still, sad music of humanity" (William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above

Tintern Abbey" (1798), *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Earnest De Selincourt, London: Oxford University Press, 1965, 164, qt. in Terry Whalen (1986/ 1990: 26). In *Viewpoints: Poets in Conversation with John Haffenden*, London & Boston, Mass.: Faber and Faber, 1981, 118, Larkin mentions that "depression is to me as daffodils were to Wordsworth." Therefore, all writers who looked upon life as fun were judged by him as illogical and foolish: "I didn't invent age and death and failure and all that, but how can you ignore them? Hardy or someone said that life was a comedy to those who think, but a tragedy to those who feel. Good stuff" (Ibid., 119). For further information about Larkin's anti-romantic attitude, see John Bayley, "Larkin and the Romantic Tradition," in *Critical Quarterly*, 26, 1-2 (Spring - Summer 1984), 61-6; Geoffrey Harvey, "Creative Embarrassment: Philip Larkin's Dramatic Monologues," in *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 14, 1 (January 1983), 63-80; John Reibetanz, "*The Whitsun Weddings*: Larkin's Reinterpretation of Time and Form in Keats," in *Contemporary Literature*, 17 (1976), 529-40; and his "Philip Larkin: The Particular Vision of *The Whitsun Weddings*," in *Modern Language Quarterly*, 43, 2 (June 1982), 156-73.

5-Abu-Nawass is the name of a most famous ancient Arab poet. The reference indicates, as do many others to historical and literary names in several other poems by Donqol, that the poet has widely read in the past heritage of Arabs, which must have served the forming of certain significant parts in his poetry and, much more important, the building of his points of view.

6-Said Bahrawy argues in *The Quest for the Pearl of the Impossible*, Beirut: New Thought House for Publication, 1988 that all the characters Donqol borrowed from different legacies are types of individuals who do not go beyond their historical circle as defeated rebels. The execution of Spartacus is used in the poem as an episode applicable to the poet's defeat by the impending death. See also his article "Arabic Modernism in Amal Donqol's Poetry," in *Critical Studies*, Beirut: Arabic Studies for Research & Publication, 1996, ed. in Abla El-Reweiny, *Amal Donqol's Book*, Cairo: State Publishing House GEBO, 1999, 306-8. The opinion is mainly based on Abla's description of her husband Amal Donqol as an obstinate, insurrectionist dissenter. She also stresses that he was an avid reader of histories, legacies, religions, and philosophies. See her book *The Southerner*, Cairo: Madbouly Library, n. d., 5-9; 90-92. Nassim Megally, *Amal Donqol: The Prince of Opposition Poets*, Cairo: State Publishing House GEBO, 1994, 47, suggests that Amal Donqol's Spartacus is an example of self-sacrifice for the sake of freedom, with which the poet tries to urge the reader to revolt against all forms of tyranny. To Bassam Qattous, Spartacus means a symbol of salvation for all human beings, which the poet employed as a disguised objection to the despotic systems in the Arab world (*Strategies of Reading: Establishment of the Origin and the Critical Procedure*, Erbid: Hamada Establishment, Al-Kendy Publishing House, 1998, 169. See also Assem M. Amin *Paradoxical Language in Amal Donqol's Poetry*, 1st. ed., Oman: Saffa's House for Printing, Publication and Distribution, 2005, 132-4.

7-Usually represented as a winged, naked, infant boy with a bow and arrows. He stood as a symbol of love. For further details see Max S. & Rhoda Hendrix, *Lexicon of Myths*, trans. Hanna Abboud, Al-Kendy House for Translation, Publication & Distribution, 1983.

8-A pre-Islamic mythical Arab woman from the Peninsula. She was well recognized as a very sharp-sighted fortune-teller, who could foretell what would happen in the future and see what others couldn't from a long distance. It happened that she once warned her tribesmen against the imminent raiding of Ehsan Bin Thabet's army, from Yemen, on her tribe, but no one believed her; rather, they regarded her as superstitious and insane. Her prophecy was achieved: the enemy soldiers came stealthily, by concealing themselves under branches of trees which they raised above their heads, to attack her tribe; their leader, Ehsan Bin Thabet, caught Zarkaa' Al-Yamama and gouged her eyes. This is reminiscent of the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, who prophesied Macbeth's crowning as the king of the country and told him that he would not die unless the forest moved. Failing to understand the witches' warning against murder by the enemies, he, like Zarkaa' Al-Yamama's tribesmen, was surprised by the attack of the enemies, who also disguised themselves with branches of trees they raised above their heads. Donqol's reference to this mythical Arab woman serves his irony against the Egyptian political leaders of the time, who caused their country incalculable harm by refusing to listen to his warning against fighting Israel. His political criticism gets more severe in regarding himself as Zarkaa' Al-Yamama, whom he portrays as blind, which means that he suffers from the regime's condemnation; a condemnation as painful as that Zarkaa' Al-Yamama having her eyes gouged out.

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كانت الخيل – فى البدء – كالناس
برية تتراكض عبر السهول
كانت الخيل كالناس فى البدء .. (الأعمال الكاملة ص٤١٨)
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صارت الخيل ناساً تسير إلى هوة الصمت
بينما الناس خيل تسير إلي هوة الموت (ص٤٢٢)
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تجف الخطوط به
مثلما جف – فى رئتيك – الصهيل ! (ص٤١٨)
....

كانت الخيل برية
تتنفس حرية
مثلما يتنفس الناس
فى ذلك الزمن الذهبى النبيل (٤١٩)

ص١١ – قصيدة "الموت فى لوحات":-

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ص١٢ – قصيدة "الورقة الأخيرة : الجنوبى":-

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- قصيدة " خطاب غير تاريخى على قبر صلاح الدين " (ص٤٢٧)
- قصيدة " قالت امرأة فى المدينة (ص٣٤٥)
- قصيدة " كلمات سبارتكوس الأخيرة " (ص ٩١)

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فخلف كل قيصر يموت : قيصر جديد (ص٩٣)

- قصيدة " لعبة النهاية " (ص٤٠٣)

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ليكتب أسماء من علقوا فى أحابيله القاتلة

ص١٤- قصيدة "السويس":-
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فتقبض الأيدى على خيوط " طائراتها"
وترتخى – هامدة – فى بركة الدماء
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....
والآن ، وهى فى ثياب الموت والفداء (ص١١٧)

ص١٥- قصيدة "العشاء الأخير":-

أعطنى القدرة حتى أبتسم
عندما ينغرس الخنجر فى صدر المرح
ويدب الموت ، كالقنفذ ، فى ظل الجدار
حاملا مبخرة الرعب لأحداق الصغار (ص١٦٧)

- قصيدة "البكاء بين يدى زرقاء اليمامة":-

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- قصيدة "بكائية ليلية" ، "اشياء تحدث فى الليل" ، "أيلول"، "سرحان لا يتسلم مفاتيح القدس" ، "موت مغنية مغمورة"

ص١٦- "سفر ألف دال"، "الأرض .. والجرح الذى لا يتفتح"

- وقصيدة "أشياء تحدث فى الليل: إلى صلاح حسين" :

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وقصيدة "الجرح الذى لا ينفتح ":-

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- قصيدة "إجازة فوق شاطىء الأسكندرية ":-

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- قصيدة "بكائية الليل والظهيرة ":-

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ومن يقتل أطفالي المساكين ..
لئلا يكبروا في الشقق المفروشة الحمراء
خدامين ..
مأبونين ..
قوادين ..
ومن يقتل أطفالي المساكين ؟
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ص٢٣ – قصيدة " براءة ":-

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– " قصيدة " العينان الخضراوان " ، " يا وجهها "، " شبيهتها "

– قصيدة " العينان الخضراوان " :-

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– قصيدة " رسالة من الشمال " :–
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