

The Egyptian Spartacus: The poetry of Amal Dunqul

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## Abstract

Mounting sociopolitical changes, along with the incompetence of the post-revolutionary regimes in Egypt have functioned as adequate themes for the writings of Amal Dunqul. He adopted "speaking truth to power" as an ideology to not only document the consequences for such sociopolitical turbulence but also to face the incompetence of the authority. He employed this concept in his writings to empower his people to move to ask for their rights. He believed in the strong role of literature in changing societies. The paper, thus, displays the role of Amal Dunqul as a real intellectual who courageously speaks truth to power fearless of any consequences. It also illustrates how he was influenced by the socio-political turbulence took place especially after 1952 revolution and the defeat of 1967. In addition to analyzing his stance towards the authority of Nasser and Sadat in his poetry and how he stood against their policies.

**Keywords:** speaking truth to power, real intellectual, outsider intellectual, resistance literature, functionary intellectual, Amal Dunqul, post-revolutionary generation.

## ملخص

لم تتناول كتابات أمل التغيرات والصراعات السياسية والاجتماعية التي مرت بها مصر إبان رحيل الاحتلال فقط، بل أيضاً تناولت بالنقد والهجوم أثر الديكتatorية والفساد التي مرت به مصر في هذا الوقت. واعتنق الكاتب مبدأ "قول الحق في وجه السلطة" للكاتب ادوارد سعيد كأيديولوجية ليس فقط لعرض نتائج التغيرات السياسية والاجتماعية ولكن كداه لمواجهة احتكار السلطة؛ وقد وظف الكاتب هذا المبدأ في كتابته لإيعاز المجتمع على التحرك صوب حقوقه تأكيداً على دور المثقف الحقيقي، ومن ثم يصبح للأدب دوراً في الحراك الاجتماعي الذي يسعى لتحريك المياه الراكدة في مجتمع ما بعد الاحتلال خاصةً بعد ثورة ١٩٥٢ وهزيمة ١٩٦٧.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** قول الحق في وجه السلطة، المثقف الحقيقي، أدب المقاومة، مثقف السلطة، أمل دنقل، جيل ما بعد الثورة.

The twentieth century witnessed a growing interest in studying the role of intellectuals, and their ability to incur a significant change in their societies. In *Representations of the Intellectual*, Edward Said defines the intellectual as an individual gifted with a special "faculty" to convey a certain message or vision to the public (11). He also pinpoints that "in the Arab Islamic world, the two words used for intellectual are *muthaqaf* or *mufakir*, the first derived from *thaqafa* or culture (hence, man of culture), the second from *fikr* or thought (hence, man of thought)" (*The Public Intellectual* 21). Similarly, Raymond Williams in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* describes intellectuals as those who perform a "mental effort" that causes any ideological or cultural impact in their societies (169). Hence intellectuals, as men of culture and thought, mainly employ their intellect to produce a cultural or an ideological output, hoping to cause a change.

In this regard, literature can be an intellectual pursuit that has a cultural and ideological role (Barber 6), due to involving an intricate "mental effort". Said believes that the writer/ intellectual is "someone who ought to be listened to as a guide to the confusing present" (20). Since intellectuals are expected to conceptualize their society through their cultural production; encountering injustice and oppression triggered by the authority has given the intellectuals a valid subject matter for their writings. Literature, then, as intellectual pursuit turns out to be a medium for presenting an "alternative narrative" other than the one presented by the officials (37).

Influenced by consecutive postcolonial hegemonic regimes, as his 'different' poetic trajectory suggests, Amal Dunqul (1940-1983) has enacted the role of the public intellectual. This role, according to Edward Said, is "carefully weigh[ing] alternatives, picking the right one ... [in order to] cause the right change" (102). In fact, he believed that intellectual has to avoid being a 'functionary intellectual',<sup>1</sup> or an employee of the regime who writes propaganda literature that helps direct the people into acquiescence. Dunqul, therefore, refused to belong to any political party or governmental organization to avoid being co-opted by

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<sup>1</sup> According to Paul Hollander, the 'functionary intellectual' is a "full time party employee specializing in agitprop activities...They include officials, journalists, educators, establishment writers and social scientists dealing with ideas and social, cultural and political issues from the official point of view (*Debates of the Future of Communism* 154).

the authority (Al-Riwini 83). He even developed as a strong opponent of the authority using his poetry as a tool to defy what he saw as atrocities of dictators. His main goal, as he himself stated it, was to advocate justice and freedom through his writings (*The Talks of Amal Dunqul* 114). His poetry, as this paper attempts to reveal, exposes the increasing political corruption; and faces the hegemony practiced by the postcolonial regimes of Nāṣir and Sadat.

Revolutionary art, as Dunqul's poetry is considered, was repeatedly criticized for being propagandistic art. Francis Both in *Comrades in Art: Revolutionary Art in America 1928-1938* quotes from Leon Trotsky that "art is always a social servant and historically utilitarian...independently of whether it appears in a given case under the flag of 'pure' tendentious art" (qtd. in Both 150). Revolutionary writer, as Both alleges, is not merely concerned with praising the revolution, but mainly affecting the course of the revolution and inciting the masses to move and ask for their rights. As a result, the charge directed to 'tendentious literature' as being a propagandistic literature with a less aesthetic value was totally rejected by Andrei Zhdanov. He believes that the main aim behind that type of literature, especially the Soviet literature at this time, was "to liberate the toilers, to free all mankind from the yoke of capitalist slavery" (qtd in. Both 152). The same perspective was adopted by Dunqul, he was not afraid of being propagandistic; he reflected the agonies of his people that resulted from the incompetence of the authority, fearless of presenting a less aesthetic art. Thus, reflecting the class struggle or the political changes taking place during a certain era has become evidently manifested in Dunqul's poetry.

The paper explores the overlapped role of the intellectual and the political activist who uses literary production to fight back authoritarianism. Studying Dunqul's poetry reflects the function of the poet/intellectual in confronting autocratic regimes. It also attempts to reveal how his poetry was a manifestation of Edward Said's "speaking truth to power" which stresses the role of the real intellectual as the voice of the voiceless, who courageously faces the authority and reveals its violations. Dunqul's poetry, as will be revealed in the analysis does not only document historical events, but also presents a medium for social mobilization that urges people to resist oppression and dictatorship. The paper, as such, discusses Dunqul in terms of being a guerrilla fighter who employed his poetry to serve the notions of freedom and justice instead of merely commenting on the historical events during his time. Therefore, in

the light of Edward Said's "speaking truth to power", and Harlow's definition of resistance literature, selections of Dunqul's poetry will be examined in order to understand his writing legacy as a revolutionary writer.

### "Speaking Truth to Power": A Form of Political Activism

"Speaking truth to power"<sup>2</sup> functions as a tool of political activism, opposition, and resistance against the norms imposed by the authority. Intellectuals, like Dunqul, are believed to play a vital role in reflecting the sociopolitical changes in their own societies via pointing out the corrupt administration of the authority. They have not merely documented the atrocities of the authority; they have also instigated the masses to ask for their rights regardless of their own political affiliation.

In *Representations of the Intellectuals*, Said states that the intellectual has always been associated with being isolated in an "ivory tower and a sneer"(9). Conventionally, the intellectual was regarded as one who is constantly trying to recollect extra sophisticated individual pursuits to conceptualize everything into terminology. As a result, the word "intellectual" gained a bad reputation due to being connected to "arrogance and egotism", according to Helen Small (1).

Said, on the other hand, views intellectuals as public figures who have a special faculty for passing knowledge to the society. Their performance has to transcend any "slogans, orthodox party line, or fixed dogma" (9-11). Their own task must be going beyond stereotypes that thwart "human thought or communication" (xi). He also asserts that "[r]eal intellectuals are never..., moved by metaphysical passion and disinterested principles of justice and truth, they denounce corruption, defend the weak, defy imperfect or oppressive authority"(6). As such, intellectuals should discard any political, religious, or ideological affiliation. They shall also exert their ultimate effort, trying to point out oppression and violence caused by the authority.

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Said the Palestinian-American critic gave six lectures in the B.B.C that were later compiled into a book called *Representations of the Intellectuals*. One of these lectures, "speaking truth to power", deals generally with the role of the real intellectuals according to his own opinion, juxtaposed to the views of many critics. He rather presented a comprehensive definition of the real intellectual that changes his society.

Being "the disturber[s] of the status quo" (Said x), intellectuals shall be truthful and sincere enough to be able to antagonize the authority, disinterested in any material or class interests. In other words, they shall adopt skepticism instead of conformity as an ideological stance. They shall be non-conformists who cannot be easily co-opted by governments, or a functionary or employees who abide by the rules or governments or any similar institutions (xv-xvi). In this way, real intellectuals, as seen by Said, are those who are in a constant conflict with the authority in order to reflect the suffering of the people.

Furthermore, Said divides intellectuals into "insiders and outsiders", or simply "yea-sayers" and "nay-sayers" (52). The insider is the one who is in a total accordance with the norms forced by the authority without the least dissonance, or merely a functionary intellectual who propagates the narrative of the authority. Unlike the insider, the outsider is in a perpetual dissidence with the restrictions of authority. The outsider has "to deliberately not belong to these [oppressive] authorities"; in other words, such intellectual has to reflect the agonies of the oppressed rather than watching them silently (xvi). Additionally, the intellectual has to keep his own independence via keeping the spirit of the amateur rather than the professional, as keeping a spirit of an amateur along with an alert consciousness will eventually facilitate the task of questioning the authority.

Intellectuals, for Said, shall be against "the constituted and authorized powers" that "are exercised in a manifestly disproportionate and immoral war or in a deliberate program of discrimination, repression and collective cruelty"(98). Hence, "speaking truth to power" turns to be a matter of choosing the right side and representing it hoping to cause a serious change. Moreover, in an interview with Abdullah Al-Sinnarri, in *Peace and its Discontents*, Said sums up the role of the intellectuals saying that "[t]he role of the intellectual is to say the truth to power, to address the central authority in every society without hypocrisy, and to choose the method, the style, the critique best situated for these purposes [aiming at passing] real ideas and values" (184). In this case, genuinely questioning the authority embarrassing questions and standing with the oppressed must be the ultimate goal of the intellectuals (11). They, Said adds, ought to truthfully face the power with its atrocities otherwise, it

will threaten their moral and personal integrity in the society (*Representations* 121).

### "Speaking Truth to Power": A Form of Resistance

Literature of resistance is considered by many Intellectuals a medium of struggle against any form of oppression not merely a tool for documentation of any historical moment. Resistance is defined by Selwyn R. Cudjoe in his book *Resistance and Caribbean Literature* as "any act or complex of acts designed to rid a people of its oppressors" (19). Literature becomes an essential tool used by writers to fight back their oppressors. In this way, "speaking truth to power" can be a manifestation of resistance according to Cudjoe's definition.

Harlow asserts that the role of literature and writers during the struggle correlates with any forms of armed or political resistance; "resistance literature continues to wage a struggle for liberation on many levels and settings. This ongoing struggle is part of its political and cultural agenda" (xviii). Literature, as such, is used by many intellectuals and writers to voice the agony and oppression of their people. Therefore, Dunql's poetry proves to be a true example of resistance literature as the analysis will reflect.

### Poetry as a Struggle Arena

The role of literature has become fundamental in struggle movements, so poets have been regarded as the "guerilla fighters" of resistance movements, Harlow asserts (33). She maintains that "the role of poetry in the liberation struggle itself has...been a crucial one, both as a force for mobilizing a collective response to occupation and domination and as a repository for popular memory and consciousness" (34). Ghassan Kanafani likewise believes that poetry, especially the one written under censorship and restrictions, can be deeply effective in urging resistance. Being easily circulated and memorized, even without publishing, made it an equal weapon to military resistance in standing against any form of oppression (*Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine* 21); poetry can be a tool for instigation and documentation at the same time in any resistance movement. This means that poetry is not a way to fight colonial powers; but also, a tool for social mobilization. Poets use it to stand against hegemonic regimes that replicate the colonial oppressive

performance like the case in Egypt, as well as being a platform for documenting people's struggle.

Poetry in Africa particularly, Harlow claims, is a "major channel of communication between powerless and powerful" (33). Thus, the need of a "different poem", or what Aime Cesaire called "the invention of new souls" (qtd in. Said 44), is essential to cope with the dynamics of any resistance movement that originally fight against the norms of past and present in order to present an alternative vision of future (Harlow 37). Accordingly, in the light of Harlow's definition of resistance poetry, Dunqul's poetry can be a glaring manifestation of such concept as the analysis will show.

### **Amal Dunqul and the Post-Revolutionary Disappointment**

In January 1952, rage in Egypt escalated against the monarchy; a savage British attack on an Egyptian police post took place in the Suez Canal causing numerous deaths. King Farouk, however, reacted indifferently towards the massacre; the whole country exploded in protest. Six months later, on July 23, 1952, a group of military officers led by Muhammad Najib and Gamāl‘Abd al-Nāṣir, toppled the monarchy in a revolution which was seen by many as a coup (Gordon 4). The military movement "overthrew the parliamentary monarchy and forced the king's abdication and departure from Egypt" (Jankowski 13-14). The movement claimed it was putting an end to the increasing corruption of the monarchy, atrocious feudal system, abuse of power, and the deterioration of the army, especially after the defeat in the war for Palestine in 1948. In addition, the "Free Officers", as they named themselves, aimed to end the British presence in Egypt after decades of subordination of Egyptian politicians and monarchy to the British officials, Jankowski highlights (4).

The leaders of the movement issued several laws in favor of the Egyptian people; the movement, therefore, was called the "blessed movement", and later a "revolution", as Tawfiq Al-Hakim in *The Return of Consciousness* denotes (20). Later, after the deposition, or the forced resignation of Muhammad Najib, the head of the Free Officers, with claims of corruption and abuse of authority, and questions concerning the legitimacy of the decisions he has taken (Binder 58), Nāṣir came to power

as head of the Free Officers and later the president of the country with promises of future prosperity (Jankowski 21).

Although Egypt gained its independence in 1954, it continued to witness grave socio-economic problems that synchronized with gigantic political changes. Many intellectuals expressed their opposition to the inadequate political rights, prevailing injustice, corruption, and quasi-military autocracy. Nevertheless, Nāṣir's administration executed huge industrial projects which aimed at economic growth, it silenced many oppositional voices (Hatina 103). Later, a tension ensued between the president and the intellectuals who opposed his own decisions in spite of limited freedom. The aforementioned political tension between the president and the intellectuals synchronized with a mystified socio-political vision. Al-Hakim claims that Nāṣir's wish to intensify his authority and end the Israeli existence in the Arab world led him to close the Gulf of Aqaba to confront the Israeli Occupation and threaten its own survival in the Arab region. Such Herculean maneuver, along with the attacks of the Palestinians fighters, and the Egyptian guerilla fighters, infuriated the Israeli authorities and led to the June 1967 setback. The inequality of powers between the Egyptian and the Israeli forces caused an extremely tragic defeat which marked the beginning of the end of Nāṣir's era (Al-Hakim 59-60). Sinai Peninsula then fell out of the Egyptian control till the eighties.

Dunqul, as a response to such catastrophe, wrote his collection *Crying Before Zarqaa' al-Yamaama* in which he laments the loss of the land and attacks the Nāṣirist regime for causing such defeat. Moreover, he condemns the "functionary intellectuals" who were just tools in the hands of the regime (Migally 121-123). Dunqul, as the analysis in this paper will reflect, provides a living definition of the real intellectual who stands for truth and justice; so, he refused to be an active member of the Socialist Union to avoid being part of the authority (*The Talks* 12-13). This was reflected in his writings as an insurgent writer who rejects the performance of Nāṣir's administration.

### **Dunqul and the Autumn of Triumph: Sadat's Era**

After the death of Nāṣir in 1970, Sadat Came into power with similar hopes of liberating the country from the Israeli Occupation. He

had been postponing the war of liberation claiming that time was not suitable especially after the tension with the Soviet Union (Shokry 72). He also promised to offer more political freedom and social rights, yet such promises dissolved with the increasing demands for war against Israel especially from university students and intellectuals which reached its peak in 1972. Salah Eissa indicates in *Intellectuals and Generals*, that the reaction towards the massive students' movement was detention of the leaders of such movements along with several intellectuals. The detentions were made under the pretext of keeping the tenacity of the internal front for the sake of confronting the Israeli Occupation without fearing any interior unrest (295). The Students' movement from 1968 to 1972, according to Ghali Shokry, as a result of the defeat of 1967, formed a serious oppositional front towards the Egyptian regime at that time. Having their own pamphlets, manifestoes, newspapers, and magazine amplified the opposition of Sadat's regime (*The Counter-Revolution in Egypt* 111).

The critic Ghali Shokry, in his book *The Counter-Revolution in Egypt*, also explains how Sadat was adjourning the decision of war to the extent that people called the year of (1971-1972) 'the year of fog' instead of 'the year of determination', as he called it in his speeches (94). Later in 1973, when Sadat decided to start 'the war of liberation', he achieved victory over the Israeli military. Regardless of this outstanding victory, Sadat, surprised intellectuals, in 1979 with signing the one-sided Camp David peace treaty with Israel, which appeared to many as a surrender to the American-Israeli desires with serious future repercussions. The treaty was celebrated by the Israeli side and welcomed by the American administration. According to many Egyptian intellectuals, the treaty devaluated the October 1973 victory; such intellectuals could not accept the normalization of relations with Israel and demilitarization of the borders of Sinai (*In Search of Sadat*, Idris 65-70).

Fearing the mounting oppositional voices, especially after strengthening his relations with the American administration, Sadat detained many intellectuals, journalists, and activists on September 3, 1981, in one of the severest attacks on democracy and the freedom of

speech (Heikal 392-396).<sup>3</sup> The harsh capitalist policies, especially the economic openness, in which Sadat turned his back to Nāṣir's quasi-socialist system, led to an increase of different unorthodox voices in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> They also led to several protests, such as the January "riots of the bread", that were instigated by unfair economic policies.<sup>5</sup> Witnessing what he perceived as an economic crisis, oppression, and prevailing corruption, instigated Dunqul to write back against Sadat's policies. Such form of dystopian state provided Dunqul with a subject matter of his poetry and turned his writing into a manifesto of rejection.

### Dunqul: The Strong Poet

As the role of intellectuals has become pivotal in defying coercive apparatuses of the state, the role of "strong poets" becomes also crucial. "Strong poets" are defined by Harold Bloom as "major figures with the persistence to wrestle with their prosecutors, even to death" (465). For Edward Said, these poets are "involved in a lifelong dispute with all the guardians of sacred text or vision" (*Representations* 89). Accordingly, such a politically agitated scene gave Dunqul the urge to not only document the incompetence of the authority but also to instigate the masses to oppose such oppression through his highly provocative aesthetic production which was a strong reflection of Said's "speaking truth to power".

Amal Dunqul's generation came immediately after the generation that Ghali Shokry called "the romantic socialists" (26). Those socialists emerged with the revolution of 1952, propagating its slogans, aiming at achieving a similar revolution in literature. Shokry believes that this generation was far from being realistic, as it basically propagated the sentimental mottos of the revolution which Nāṣir's regime claimed to adopt (*Our Modern Poetry to Where?* 26-27). Dunqul's generation was characterized by being rebellious, or the avant-guards of the modern

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<sup>3</sup> Lots of intellectuals and political figures were detained due to opposing Camp Daid's treaty. Among them was Muhammed Hassanien Heikal, Latifa Al-zayat, Nawal Al-sadawi, Fouad Serag Eldin, Salah Eissa, Hamdin Sabahi, Kamal Attia. This raid was later known by "the detentions of September 1981" (Heikal 395-396).

<sup>2</sup> Economic Openness implied abuse of authority, lack of strategic economic plans, and accumulation of wealth especially with officials (Shokry 211).

<sup>3</sup> 'Riots of bread' were huge uprisings by thousands of Egyptian people as a response to Sadat's economic decisions that aimed at cutting off the basic subsides which will severely affect lower classes. Because of the increasing riots, police forces, and later the army, were deployed to coercively end such riots. Heikal asserts that using severe violence led to the killing of more than 160 people, lots of casualties and detainees. (*The Autumn of Anger* 185-190)

poetic trends, which rejected all the former traditional characteristics adopted by previous generations (29-30). They wanted to move the center, to change the literary stagnation caused by the previous generations. Consequently, Dunqul issued his first collection *Crying Before Zarqaa al-yamaama* in which he strongly condemns Nāṣir's regime (Yousif 79).

Dunqul represents what Edward Said called "an outsider intellectual" who does not belong to any political affiliation to be able to voice the agonies of the powerless people; regardless of the hazards. Said asserts that "[t]he intellectual's representations- what he or she represents and how those ideas are represented to an audience- are always tried to ought to remain an organic part of an organic experience in society: of the poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless" (Said 113). Thus, the disturbed political atmosphere in Egypt served as an outlet for new voices like Dunqul to thrive. It provided a rich atmosphere for such a "strong poet" to "speak truth to power", question authority, disclose its violence and stand against its atrocities. His poetry, thus, becomes the true voice of the voiceless; it is a tool for fighting totalitarian regimes.

As an intellectual/ poet, Dunqul regarded poetry as a way of reconstructing reality, a rejection of the status quo, a "perpetual revolution" with the aim of instigating people to ask for their rights (*The Talks* 119). Dunqul was not merely a standard poetry writer; he was a quasi-prophet who predicted the fall of the revolutionary aspirations of the Nāṣirist state, especially after the defeat of 1967. He commented on his ability to predict the fall of the revolutionary dream after 1967 defeat that it was not merely a prediction, but a state of total awareness of the reality of his society (132). Many of his writings were concerned with exposing the effect of radical socio-political changes that took place by the end of Nāṣir and Sadat's eras.

Since Dunqul believed that poetry must be deeply engaged in people's lives, he made use of their legacy and history (*The Talks* 77). While asserting his identity as an Arab poet, he utilized Arabic heritage as a way of intensifying his connection with his people. It was a way of giving his poetry a familiar framework not only to assert his identity but also to reconstruct and revive the Arab heritage in our modern days. He

also employed myth, historical and religious allusions to reinforce his own writings, so he can gain the credibility from people. Besides, linking revolutionary expression with sanctified texts like the Old and the New Testament and the Holy Quran, or Arabic tradition adds elements of prophecy and grandeur to his poetry.

### Dunqul: The Real- Intellectual

*Crying Before Zarqaa' al-yamaama (Al-bukaa' bayna yaday Zarqaa' al-Yamaama)*<sup>6</sup> was published in (1969) as a reaction to the June 1967 defeat. Such a defeat led to the loss of a great number of soldiers and munitions, in contrast to what the media was repeating about an outstanding victory. Nassim Migally in his book *The Prince of Refuseniks Poets*,<sup>7</sup> refers to Zarqaa' al-yamaama as an old Arab myth about a woman who had a very strong eyesight. She could predict incidents three days earlier; she saw the soldiers of the enemies disguised as trees and moving towards her country. She told her people nobody believed her till the enemies' soldiers raided their country. This allegory used to symbolize intellectual's ability to foretell the defeat (107).

Dunqul stated in an interview that he was inspired to write this poem after listening to several military statements that claimed that the army achieved an outstanding victory; after a while, it was revealed later that the Egyptian aviation forces were completely destroyed, as Dunqul stated (*The Talks* 10). Thus, in order to present what Edward Said called "an alternative narrative", Dunqul wrote this poem as a testimony on what the soldiers were truly experiencing. He wanted through the collection to condemn the authority and to present "an alternative narrative" for the fabricated one propagated by the officials. Consequently, this exceptional poem *Crying Before Zarqaa' al-yamaama* predicted the defeat and accused the officials of being responsible for it, as Dunqul believed.

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<sup>6</sup> *Crying Before Zarqaa' al-Yamaama* was also censored shortly after he wrote it, so he published it in Lebanese magazines (Dunqul 10). The whole collection encompasses different poems were written even before the defeat till the year of 1969 when it was finally published.

<sup>7</sup> Amal Dunqul was called "'amir shu' ra' al-rafd" which I found it translated as 'The Prince of Refuseniks' at (arablit.org).

Dunqul opens the poem with a weary soldier who comes to Zarqaa' al-yamaama, the sacred soothsayer, covered with blood and stabs, crawling among the coats of his fellow murdered colleagues, over piles of corps. Zarqaa' al-yamaama here is a symbol of the prophetic real intellectual, formerly defined by Said; she could foresee the catastrophe before happening. The whole poem could be read as an allusion of the truthful vision of the intellectual who refuses to succumb to the threats of the authority whose lack of vision led to such a tragic defeat. It is also a representation of the real intellectual who refused to be a mere functionary intellectual who propagates the narrative of the authority.

The soldier wretchedly asks Zarqaa' al-yamaama if she could foresee such defeat "I ask you Zarqaa/about your ruby mouth! Your precious prophetic vision"(1-2).<sup>8</sup> The soldier questions al-yamaama if she was aware that this tragedy would befall them. He even compares the preciousness of the prophetic vision of the real intellectual to a ruby, a metaphor that stresses the valuable role of the true intellectual during such a catastrophe. The soldier also describes the appalling scenes that he saw during the war "... [his]ripped arm that still holds my torn flag/ the pictures of children...into helmets...scattered into the desert/ my fellow who was about to sip a drop of water, got his head shot the moment he touches it!" (3-5).<sup>9</sup> He reflects the traumatic experience that he has gone through with his fellow soldiers who were savagely killed or injured in the war of June 1976. By giving voice to this underestimated soldier and making him the speaking persona in the poem, Dunqul was "the voice of the voiceless", to use Said's idea.

The pictures of the soldiers with their children are there witnessing the enormity of the defeat; "pictures of children...into helmets...scattered into the desert" (4). He is now alone, stuck, unprotected, and helplessly waiting for his destiny. There is a paradox between the intimacy of the pictures and the violence of war that mainly aims to incite the reader against the authority that caused such horrific loss. Dunqul, using the soldier as his mouthpiece, goes on through the poem, echoing the trauma of the soldier who is repeatedly begging Zarqaa' al-yamaama to speak up,

<sup>8</sup> عن فملِك الياقوت عن، نبوة العذراء (٢-١) .. أسأل يا زرقاء  
عن جاري الذي / ساعدي المقطوع .. وهو ما يزال ممسكاً بالرابة المنكسة / عن صور الأطفال في الخوذات .. ملقأ على الصحراء <sup>9</sup>  
فيتقب الرصاصُ رأسه .. في لحظة الملامسة .. يَهُمُ بارتشاف الماء

and not to be silent, as "rats are licking his blood as a soup, unable to stop them" (20-23).<sup>10</sup> The shocking visceral scene of the rats licking the blood of the persona is meant to provoke readers causing their pity and terror towards the catastrophic defeat which led enemies to enjoy the bloodshed of Egyptian soldiers. In a way, the poem is not a direct form of "speaking truth to power"; it is rather a form of speaking truth to people to urge them to face power which is responsible for the defeat.

Afterwards, he moves to the most provocative scene that shows his colleague "telling us stories about [his little daughter] ...while we are into the ditch/.../and when he thirstily died into the sun burning desert/ Only [that daughter's name] wetted his dry lips (23-24)".<sup>11</sup> The unfortunate soldier dies reminiscing his beloved daughter, repeating her name, seeking life in her memory; his colleagues helplessly watched him die. Such horrifically vivid scenes are used to move the emotions of the reader, and to make the trauma of the soldiers visible to everyone.

The traumatized soldier cries out loud:

They shouted: Shut up!

I was shut up ..blinded...commanded by the skoptsies

I remained a slave in 'abs, merely guarding sheep

My food is a crumb of bread, water, and dry dates

Yet when the battle erupted,

when all the fighters cowardly retreated

I was called to the battlefield!

I am the one who never tasted the meat!

I am the no one

I who was discarded from taking any decisions

<sup>10</sup> (٢٣-٢٠) !لُقِّ من دمِي حسَاءَهَا .. وَلَا أَرْدُهَا .. فالجرذان  
<sup>11</sup> كان يَقْصُّ عَنْكَ يا صغيرتِي .. وَنَحْنُ فِي الْخَنَادِقِ

.....  
.. وَحِينَ ماتَ غَطَشًا فِي الصَّحرَاءِ الْمَشْمَسَةِ  
(23-24) رَطَّبَ بِاسْمِكَ الشَّفَاهِ الْيَابِسَةِ

I was blindly called to meet death not to take a decision!!  
(39-53)<sup>12</sup>

Dunqul uses 'antara Ibn Shaddad, the poet, and fighter, as an allusion to reflect the disastrous conditions that the soldiers experienced; because of his dark color, Ibn Shaddad was considered by his family as a slave and an illegitimate member of the tribe, although he was the son of Shaddad, a nobleman in the tribe. His bravery made his father and the whole tribe acknowledge him later. Similarly, the soldiers in the poem were enslaved by the authority; they were left unacknowledged, untrained and unprepared for such a horrific war; they were dragged to the battlefield and had to face unbearable threats. The repetition of "I" and "exclamation marks" highlights the paradox of the warrior who has always been an underestimated individual; it shows how the soldier was always marginalized, except in the moment of war, he was dragged to the center of the battlefield without being consulted or trained. Ibn Shaddad's persona was used to stress Dunqul's point of view as an intellectual who criticizes the authority's lack of vision. "Speaking truth to power" is highly employed in this part, as he asserts that the authority, represented in 'antara Ibn Shaddad's tribe, is the reason for this unprecedented defeat. Thus, Dunqul courageously speaks truth to power for the lack of the strategic vision in such a critical moment.

By the end of the poem, the soldier watches life goes on normally, leaving him and his fellow soldiers unacknowledged. He still cannot believe how he and his colleagues jeopardized their lives, while now he was asked to hide his own wounded face, which stands for the unforgettable defeat, in order not to sabotage the so-called serenity of life, hiding their own trauma ignoring their own loss. Throughout the poem, Dunqul uses the mask of the soldier to attack the Nāṣirist regime for

فارسٌ .. وعميت .. وائتممت بالخسيان<sup>١٢</sup> !  
ثالثٌ في عبيد ( عبس ) أحرس الطفuan  
.....  
طعامي : الكسرة .. والماء .. وبعض الثمرات اليابسة .  
وها أنا في ساعة الطفuan  
ساعة أن تخاذل الكمة .. والرماة .. والفرسان  
! دعيت للميدان  
أنا الذي ماذقت لحم الضأن ..  
.. أنا الذي لا حول لي أو شأن  
أنا الذي أقصيت عن مجالس الفتيان ،  
(٥٣-٣٩) !! أدعى إلى الموت .. ولم أدع إلى المجالسة

being responsible for the defeat for not listening to the voices of the intellectuals that were alluded to as Zarqaa' al-yamaama.

### The Rebel Intellectual: Dunql against Prosecution

Throughout the Nāṣirist era, it was very common to detain many literary or political figures from different affiliations. Such tyrannical atmosphere was the trigger behind many of Dunql's poem. *Spartacus' Last Words* (*kalimaat 'isbratakus al-akhira*<sup>13</sup>) reflects the way the authority suppresses any call for freedom and justice. The authority deprives people of their least right which is to say "no" rejecting the violence of power. As already pointed out, Edward Said believes that the real intellectual is a nay-sayer who is in perpetual dissidence with the restrictions of authority; Dunql values the fearless voice and freedom of speech which is represented in his willingness to say 'no' in the face of power. Spartacus represents the revolutionary figure who stands against power only with his own power of rejection. Dunql uses him as his mouthpiece in speaking truth to power, as it will be displayed throughout the poem. He opens his poem with:

Glory to Satan... the god of winds

Who said "no" to the faces of those who said "yes"...

.....

Who said no does not die

and his soul suffers eternally in pain. (1-5)<sup>14</sup>

Dunql, surprisingly, unlike the Quranic context,<sup>15</sup> glorifies Satan. Through such a shocking beginning, he stresses the fact that Satan, as a

<sup>13</sup> According to Mubayi, "the poem is divided into four parts that Dunql titles amzaj (sing. mazj) which are closest to "movements" in the musical sense of the word, giving us the sense of a carefully crafted symphony or operetta of which Spartacus is the narrator. The poet speaks in the voice of the Roman slave Spartacus, who led a failed rebellion against the Roman empire around 70 BC, as he is about to be hanged." (Jadaliya)

<sup>14</sup> المجد للشيطان.. معبود الرياح  
من قال " لا " في وجه من قالوا " نعم "

.....  
من قال " لا " .. فلم يمت،  
أوطئ روحًا أبديّة الألام (٥-١)

<sup>15</sup> "And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers"(The Quran, *Al-Baqara* 2:34). Thus, Dunql in his poem reverses the familiar Quranic context in which Satan (Iblīs) was demonized

reflection of the revolutionary intellectual, is demonized by the authority, as he fearlessly says 'no' in the faces of those who said yes. Henceforth, the rebel who speaks truth to power, who rejects its own norms will eternally suffer due to his courage, and he will always be demonized by the authority. This also shows that authority is given divine characteristics to justify its own unjust performance; yet, the persona, and by analogy, the poet, refused to surrender to the threats of the authority, although his life was in danger. Dunqul, in this poem, chose unorthodoxy not only in his provocative tone, yet also in the unconventional beginning in which he inverts the Quranic text to shock his reader, hoping to make the reader realize the value of saying no to power.

He continues in the second movement saying:

I am hanged on the morning's gallows,  
my forehead is lowered by death,  
as I didn't lower it, it is still alive  
  
...  
don't be ashamed.. raise your eyes towards me  
as you are hanged beside me .. by Caesar's gallows  
raise your eyes to me  
maybe if you behold death into my eyes:  
nothingness will smile inside me.. as you raised your heads  
...once! (6-16)<sup>16</sup>

---

for refusing God's imperatives. The same as the rebel is demonized by the authority for refusing its own constraints.

معلق أنا على مشانق الصباح<sup>16</sup>  
وجبهتي - بالموت - محنّة  
الأنني لم أحناها.. حيّه!  
...  
يا أخوتي الذين يعبرون في الميدان مطرقين  
منحدرين في نهاية المساء  
: في شارع الاسكندر الأكبر  
لا تخجلوا .. ولتزفعوا عيونكم إلى  
لأنّكم معلقون جانبي .. على مشانق الفيصر  
فلترفعوا عيونكم إلى  
لربما.. إذا التقت عيونكم بالموت في عيني  
يبتسم الفناء داخلي.. لأنّكم رفعتم رأسكم.. مرّة! (٦-٦)

Paradoxes are used here to evoke irony; he gives people hope that even if they raised their heads once, even to behold his death, it will encourage them to fight for their rights or else they will end up like him. He believes that silence will kill them even more than loudly saying no, as silence is death anyway. Thus, he asks them to "[k]iss your wives, here, in the middle of the street" (23),<sup>17</sup> as you may not have the luxury to pay farewell to them. He didn't even have the time to say goodbye to his wife, and they will end up like him someday. Dunqul subtly employs Spartacus as a fearless intellectual who instigates people to ask for their rights via reflecting on his destiny.

Hoping to end oppression, paradoxes continue in urging people to teach their sons to bend over, although "lowering one's head is better!" (25).<sup>18</sup> Although the tone of the poem seems very pessimistic, it is ironic at the same time. Dunqul implicitly pushes people to rebel asking for their rights, fearing that the coming generation will end up like them either hanged or submissive. Dunqul addresses his people, as he believes that it is his role as an intellectual to help his people resist injustice and hegemony, rather than being on the side of the authority.

Being unable to escape death, he cries out the following provoking lines:

Don't dream of a happy world  
after every dying Caesar: comes another one!  
and after every dying revolutionary: vain sorrows  
and vain tear! (37-40)<sup>19</sup>

These lines are meant to provoke people to move in order to change their pessimistic future; the irony is asserted via the usage of the exclamation mark, whereby people are instructed not to dream of a better future, nor to become revolutionaries; yet, the very act of writing is in itself an act of hope and revolution. He later uses a cross-reference from the Bible,

<sup>17</sup>"وَقُتِلُوا زَوْجَاتِكُم .. هُنَّا .. عَلَى قَارِعَةِ الطَّرِيقِ" (٢٣)

<sup>18</sup>"فَلَا تَحْنَأْ مَرْ" (٢٥)

<sup>19</sup>لا تحلموا بعالم سعيد

فَخَلَفَ كُلُّ قِيْصَرٍ يَمُوتُ : قِيْصَرٌ جَدِيدٌ  
.. وَخَلَفَ كُلُّ ثَانِيرٍ يَمُوتُ : أَحْزَانٌ بَلَا جَدْوَى  
وَدَمْعَةٌ سَدِى (٤٠-٣٧)!

"Blessed are the meek: for they will inherit the earth";<sup>20</sup> the "meek" in Dunqul's poem simply "don't get hung! "(34).<sup>21</sup> By sarcastically praising the future of "meek", however, the poem subtly calls for revolution!

In the third movement of the poem, the sarcasm continues, he glorifies authority, represented by Caesar saying:

Oh great Caesar: I blundered, I confess  
let me, on my gallon, kiss your hand  
here I am, kissing the rope around my neck  
it is your hand and glory which force us to  
worship you.

.....

Oh my executioner: I have forgiven you  
the moment you were relieved of me:  
I was relieved of you! (44-56)<sup>22</sup>

Dunqul, in this movement, addresses power, represented by Caesar, unlike the previous two movements in which he addresses people. He chooses to address people at first, hoping to raise their awareness towards their rights and face them with the atrocities of power represented in the persona's prosecution. Thus, they may revolt against the tyrannical authority when they view the dreadful experience of Spartacus/ the persona.

In this movement, however, Spartacus/ the revolutionary cynically asks Caesar/ the oppressor to forgive him for daring to oppose his mighty power. The persona sarcastically stresses people's perspective of the

<sup>20</sup> (The bible, *Matthew*5:5).

<sup>21</sup>" لا يشنقون " (٣٤)

يا قيصر العظيم: قد أخطأت.. إني أعترف<sup>22</sup>

دعني  
ها أنا ذا أقتل الحبل الذي في عنقي يلتف  
 فهو يدك، وهو مجدك الذي يجبرنا أن نعبدك

.....  
يا قاتلي : إني صفحت عنك  
في اللحظة التي استرحت بعدها متنى  
: (٤٤-٥٦)! استرحت منك

mighty powers of the authority by using a hyperbole: he asks Caesar to use his skull, after his death, as a cup of his drink, as they should be at his service. The image of Caesar locked in his ivory tower sucking the blood of his own people, reflects both his violence and people's utter submission.

Furthermore, Dunqul employs satire and hyperbole to show that he is not afraid to confront Caesar and his so-called mighty powers. He even provokes him by depicting that he is unable to give life to people to be able to end it which means that he is not afraid to die by Caesar's hands, as his body is mortal, unlike his immortal call of freedom. The repetition of the pronoun "I" denotes that it is not an equal relationship; he, as a freedom fighter, is as powerful as Caesar and his power, and he is the one who will allow forgiveness. He even adds in his sarcastic tone that if he is willing to hang all people, "don't cut off branches...to be used as gallows", otherwise the country will be cursed due to his irrational decisions, and it will be " a year of starvation" (57-62).<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the mighty powers of Caesar will not be of use while running along the desert, suffering from "dangerous summer", "looking for shade", hopelessly searching for a drop of water, and you will behold nothing but " heat, sand, heat, sand" (62-69).<sup>24</sup> He also by the end of this, calls Caesar "the master of graves" and "the Caesar of coldness"<sup>25</sup> which symbolizes his tyranny and violence, unlike the beginning in which he called him "glorious". This paradox of glorifying power while debunking its atrocities again stresses the way the poet sees the authority as both "glorified" and mean at the same time (71-72). Through this movement, Spartacus, the symbol of the fearless guerilla fighter, and the daring intellectual ridicules dictatorial authority represented by Caesar. In this regard, satire, irony, and hyperbole are all are employed by the poet in his attempt to speak truth to power.

Dunqul through this poem reflects the voices of the post-1952 revolution youth who believed in the mottos of the revolution, represented by Spartacus, yet soon they were disappointed due to the culmination of what he regards as state violence practiced by Nāṣir's

<sup>23</sup>"لا تقطع الجنوبي تتصبها مشانقا" "والعام عام جوع" (٦٢-٥٧).

فلا تر سوي الهجير والرماد والهجير والرماد" (٩٦-٦٢) // فتقطع الصحراء . باحثا عن الظلال... "الصيف الخطير"

<sup>24</sup>"سيد الشواهد...", "فيصر الصقيع" (٧٢-٧١)

regime. Therefore, Dunqul wrote *Spartacus' Last Words* to empower people to reject all forms of state violence and tyranny, aspiring change in the future. In fact, this poem is an example of resistance poetry as its main aim was instigating people to ask for their rights to get rid of oppression, as Kanfani defines that type of poetry. Moreover, Spartacus here represents all the revolutionaries or the dissident voices who get executed, prosecuted, or detained due to their oppositional ideologies, as the authority has its own deformed version of patriotism and vain slogans. Through the poem, Dunqul stands out as a "real intellectual", who "denounce[s] corruption, defend[s] the weak, def[ies] imperfect or oppressive authority"(Said 6); he fearlessly attacks power due to its incompetence and tyranny represented.

### The Intellectual as a Witness

Dunqul in his poetic Career has reincarnated many historical and literary characters as personas to remind people of their glorious history to instigate them to revolt against their oppressors. He believes that Arabs are not going to be able to gain their freedom and reform their societies except by reconsidering of their history employed many historical figures as his mouthpiece; aiming at providing his readers with a deeper insight into their past to be able to change their future (qtd. in Al-Dowasari 92).<sup>26</sup>

In delineating the controversial relationship between the poet-intellectual and power, Dunqul wrote his poem *The Papers of Abi Nawwaas*<sup>27</sup>( min 'awraaq Abi Nawwaas). Abi Nawwaas was a famous Arabic poet who was known for his unorthodoxy. That's why Dunqul chooses him to be a representation of the non-conformist intellectual, or the disturber of the status quo, as Said defines the outsider intellectual, or generally the intellectual who is viewed by the authority as a lustful person. There is a great affinity between Dunqul and Abi Nawwaas, so reading the poem evokes a lot of resemblance between their ideological stances. The poem is divided into seven papers; each paper displays a different scene from Abi Nawwaas's life. In the first paper, he remembers his peaceful childhood with his friend while flipping a coin. His friend chooses "head" which is in Arabic symbolizes the king (malik), while Abi

<sup>26</sup>"لم تأخذ العودة إلى التراث والتاريخ العربي -الإسلامي عند أهل شكل السلفية... بل كانت هذه العودة تتخذ لدّيه شكل الثورة... وكان يرى أن الإنسان العربي الجديد لا يمكنه أن يعتبر نفسه انساناً باحث عن الحرية أو ساعياً إلى تغيير المجتمع ما لم تكن لديه هذه الرؤية التاريخية...". (الدوسي ٩٢)

<sup>27</sup>Abi Nawwaas is one of the most important poets in the Abbasid era. He was known for writing erotic and controversial poetry due to his love for lust and pleasure. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Nawwaas chooses "tail" which symbolizes "writing" (kitaaba) which could be read as a symbol of the act of writing dissident poetry. As time flips, just as the coin, we get to know that his friend chooses to work for the king, unlike him who prefers to write poetry, aspiring his own freedom away from the authority. This also reflects the discrepancy between the outsider and insider intellectual; the one who rejects belonging to the authority represented by Abi Nawwaas, and the one who propagates the views of the authority represented by Abi Nawwaas's friend.

The second paper states that "who owns the coin has it all/ while the poor are crushed as the coin flips"(29-30)<sup>28</sup>. Being written after the culmination of the economic openness reflects the gap between classes; as the poor will continue to be crushed under the wheel of capitalism. The third paper reflects the violence caused by the martial regime to his family, as he was young when the authorities arrested his father for being a political activist; as revolutionaries were always viewed as heretics and traitors. He describes how guards have violated the sanctity of their house, leaving the family behind. He adds, they "left us orphanhood dressed as mutism" (78);<sup>29</sup> this personification shows the outcome of being a revolutionary intellectual in such an oppressive context. Dunqul in this poem scandalizes the authority and how it employs its coercive measures against revolutionaries and intellectuals.

Dunqul goes to the fourth paper referring to the everlasting dilemma of poets to Abi Nawwaas's experience, "Oh poetry....oh my stolen happiness!!/... .../all what I have been writing in this papers/ was censored by the securities? "(49-51).<sup>30</sup> In this verse, he reflects the main dilemma of intellectuals in dealing with censorship; he reassures that all the time they are exposed to restrictions due to being watched and closely observed by the state's "securities". He even wonders in a later verse that why people are occupied with lots of existential issues, rather than being aware that "the Sultan"; the head of the state, "is a thief, or a half prophet" (68-69).<sup>31</sup> In this part, he directly accuses the state officials of being thieves, especially after economic openness and the unplanned economic strategies. He bluntly attacks the authority regardless of the consequences he may face.

<sup>28</sup> "من يملك العملة يمسك بالجهين" (٣٠-٢٩)! "والقراء: بَيْنَ.. بَيْنَ" (٧٨)!!"لاركين لنا اليتم.. مُشِحًا بالخرس"

/ كل ما كنت أكتب في هذه الصفحة الورقية/ صادرته العددان؟؟ (٤٦-٥١)!!..... "أيها الشعر.. يا أيها الفرح المختلس/<sup>31</sup> "بل سألهي إن كان السلطان/ لصاً.. أونصفَنبي" (٦٨-٦٩)!!

Dunqul concludes his poem asking can poetry fix what swords failed to resolve, "can poets' chattering be able to save truth?" (80).<sup>32</sup> It is a kind of a rhetorical question in which he questions the role of the intellectual/ poet who shall save truth while facing power rather than being a conformist intellectual. Accordingly, he refers to the controversial relationship between poetry and politics, as well as poets and power. He uses Abi Nawwaas, the most unconventional classic Arab poet, as a mask to refer to the suffering of poets at this time, like censorship and imprisonment; especially after decoding the pains of people in their poetry which irritates the authority. Accordingly, Dunqul dressed as Abi Nawwaas was an outsider intellectual who couldn't be co-opted by power reflecting Edward Said's definition of the real unorthodox intellectual.

### **Dunqul as a Fierce Opponent of Sadat's Policies**

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<sup>32</sup>"أتفقدُ أن تنقد الحقّ شرثة الشعراء" (٨٠)

After the glaring victory of 1973, Sadat was evidently preparing for an unfair peace treaty which allegedly aimed to restore the Arab lands. Such political changes took place after the war, radically affected the literary production of Dunqul. He was fully aware that the series of treaties Sadat was involved in will jeopardize the future of the Arab countries. Dunqul, as an outsider intellectual, was fully aware of the conspiracy being plotted against the Arabs after Sadat's announcement of going to Jerusalem to initiate a treaty with the Israeli officials. Shortly before Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, Dunqul wrote his own masterpiece *Don't Reconcile (la tosalih)* in his collection *New Testimonies on Basos War (aqwal gadida 'an harb al-basos)* (Al-Dowasari 54).<sup>33</sup> This poem is considered by lots of critics as one of the strongest attacks on Sadat's policies after 1973 war, so it is a very strong reflection of Said's "speaking truth to power".

As an upper Egyptian, Dunqul was deeply affected by the idea of vengeance, especially after the continuous sociopolitical changes happened after the defeat of 1967. Thus, after the victory when he sensed the inclination of reconciliation; he wrote his poem *Don't reconcile (la tosalih)* in the form of ten wills in which Kolaib 'ibn Al-Mohalhal advocates his brother Salim Al-Zyr to continue the war to avenge his own blood and restore the tribe's dignity. Being inspired by Basos War,<sup>34</sup> he skillfully employed these testimonies to reflect the perpetual war between Egypt and Israel and how people refused any form of reconciliation with Isreal.

The poem displays the way 'ibn Al-Mohalhal was killed by his so-called cousin due to long-term conflicts between their tribes. Thus, he did not want his brother to rest or accept any reconciliation till he avenges his brother. Dunqul, throughout the poem, employs the ten commandments of 'ibn Al-Mohalhal to reflect his own rejection of the potential reconciliation between him and his cousin's tribe. He reincarnates the words of 'ibn Al-Mohalhal to reflect the gravity of the consequences of such an unfair pact. The poem reflects people's rejection of the unfair treaty, so Dunqul uses 'ibn Al-Mohalhal's allusion to speak the words of every martyr was killed by the Israeli occupation.

<sup>33</sup> كان أمل دنقل يراقب مسرحية سلسلة المعاهدات التي بدا يتورط بها السادات والتي بدأت بمعاهدة فض الاشتباك الأولى والثانية، ويستشعر مدى الخطير الذي يمكن أن تتحققه بالأمة. منذ البداية عرف المسرحية او المؤامرة التي تحاك ضد الانسان العربي (الموسري ٥٤) والتي توجها السادات بزيارة الى القدس، فكتب أمل قبل هذه الزيارة صارخا "لا تصالح".

<sup>34</sup> Al-Basos is the woman that caused a great political turmoil between the tribes of Bani Bakr and Bani Taghlob. She was the sister of King Hassan Al-Yamani who was killed by Kolaib for his fiance Al-Galila. He was known for being a brave warrior and the hero of his tribe. (qtd. in *The Complete Works of Amal Dunqul* 377)

Dunqul as the 'prince of refuseniks' values the virtue of rejection, so he opens his poem with a call for rejection by *Don't Reconcile (la tosalih)*. Throughout the first will, Dunqul/ the persona of 'ibn Al-Mohalhal shows the potential concrete profits that will be offered by the enemy like gold and jewelry disregarding the martyrs' blood; so he advocates the state's leader to reject any kind of reconciliation, and not to trade the blood of the martyrs even if "he was offered gold" (2).<sup>35</sup> Gold is, of course, used as a symbol of compromise that will be made to achieve such pact due to its value. Additionally, he wonders if one's "eyes were gouged out and replaced by two jewels/ will you be able to see? / these things are priceless" (4-6).<sup>36</sup> Using verb as "gouge out" reflects the viciousness of the assault caused by the enemy. Then, he recalls different scenes from 'ibn Al-Mohalhal's childhood with his brother, showing the childhood serenity, which was lost due to his assassination. Dunqul, as a guerrilla fighter, evokes the feelings using such nostalgic childhood scene to make the reader realizes the tragedy and to increase the feelings of anger and rejection of such a compromise. He even stresses that his death caused the loss of the backbone of the family after they were unified as brothers by both their swords and voices that eventually guarantee the security of his home and children:

This eternal tranquility between both of you,  
that both your swords became one  
both your voices unified  
that if you died:  
there will be a godparent for the house  
a father to the son. (13-18)<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> لا تصالح ولو منحوك الذهب  
<sup>٣</sup> أترى حين أفقا عينيك  
 ثم اثبت جوهرتين مكانهما  
 هل ترى ؟  
 هي اشياء لا تسترئ (٦-٣)  
 تلك الطمأنينة الابدية بينكما:  
 ان سيفان سيفاك.  
 صوتان صوتاك  
 انك ان مت:  
 للبيت رب  
 وللطفل اب (١٨-١٣)

Furthermore, he questions the value of his blood into the eyes of his brother as being just water and instead of wearing mourning clothes he wears "clothes decorated with gold and silver" (21).<sup>38</sup> Though he understands the eternity of war, he believes that revenge is the only solution rather than being disgraced. Thus, Dunqul through the poem once again addresses the feelings of his people in order to make them realize the consequences of the treaty.

Dunqul, in the second will, urges the authority not to trade the blood of the martyrs even for blood as it won't be the same; the blood, the heart, and the eye of the stranger won't be the same as his brother's. He even asks if the sword of a brother equals the sword of a backstabber which reflects the deceit of the enemy:

Don't reconcile over blood .. even for blood!  
Don't reconcile! Even if they say head for head  
are all lives equal?  
is the stranger's heart equal to your brother's?  
are his eyes the same as your brother's?  
do you equalize the sword that was yours to the sword that  
caused your grieve? (27-33)<sup>39</sup>

٢١ تلبس - فوق دماني- ثيابا مطرزة بالقصب؟ (٢١)

٣٩ لا تصالح على الدم .. حتى بدم!  
لا تصالح! ولو قبل رأس برأس!  
أكل الرووس سواء؟  
أطلب الغريب كقلب أخيك؟  
أعيناه علينا أخيك؟  
وهل نتساوى يد .. سيفها كان لك  
بيد سيفها أشكالك؟! (٢٧-٣٣)

Then, Dunqul moves to the pretext of the reconciliation which is their so-called 'cousinhood'. The Israeli always claim that they are the cousins of the Arabs which functions as a justification to end the war and ask for reconciliation. 'ibn Al-Mohalhal was a knight, a hero, a brother, a father, and finally, a king which implies the ruler's political duty by which he orders his brother not to let down his revenge.

Based on Harlow's definition of resistance poetry, Dunqul, in *Don't Reconcile*, typically reflects his rejection of "hegemonic domination and oppression" (29). It is a manifesto by which Dunqul clearly refutes Sadat's inclination to naturalize the relations with Israel after a very long history of bloody conflicts. Throughout the poem, he employs the commandments of 'ibn Al-Mohalhal to provoke his brother to avenge him, just as Dunqul wanted the authority to avenge martyrs of different wars against Israel. Basos War represented a valid setting for Dunqul's theme; it echoed the perpetual as the conflict between Israel and Arabs just as it was between tribes. He could through Basos War's testimonies use 'ibn Al-Mohalhal as a persona to provoke the reader's mind and emotions towards the rejection of this unfair treaty. He also urges them to restore their lost dignity. In addition to the value of the memory of their martyrs by condemning the authority's plans to validate the reconciliation after years and years of blood. Then, Dunqul's poem turns to "an arena of struggle" that aims at "mobilizing a collective response to occupation and domination" (Harlow 33-34).

To sum up, the paper proves that "speaking truth to power" is a tool of political activism, opposition, and resistance against the norms imposed by the authority. It also shows that Dunqul's poetry functions as a means for social mobilization, and a medium to propagate the norms of freedom and justice which are manifestations of Said's "speaking truth to power". At the same time, it traces how the radical sociopolitical changes, especially after 1952 revolution, the defeat of 1967, Camp David treaty provided a comprehensive subject matter for Dunqul's poetry. He did not only document historical events but also, he motivated people to ask for their rights via disclosing the incompetence of the authority in his writings. He, as a guerrilla fighter, fearlessly opposed the policies of the post-revolutionary regimes, asserting his role as a real intellectual who fearlessly attacks power in order to be the voice of the oppressed rather than being the voice of the authority.

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