

Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry: Reframing the World

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Abstract

In her poetry, Carol Ann Duffy looks into the concerns of the disregarded and humiliated people. Approaching facts fearlessly and disclosing realities in a way highly characteristic of her, she establishes the world newly and reframes it honestly. This research shows how Duffy reframes the world in her own peculiar terms, starting with her own creative use of the language, in particular, when the forms of things of the world are distorted, thus our perception of things will be reframed too.

As regards relations among people, the research elucidates how Duffy's strained characters abandon real life and reframe an eccentric way of living, while respecting faith, wherein Duffy notices that religious rituals confine the intellect, she reframes them by adopting the secular and familiar rather than the sacred and ceremonial. The hideousness of war is another motif in her poetry where she perversely reframes the entity and wholesomeness of the victims of war in order to leave us reflect on the tragedy of war. Duffy also challenges the misconceptions of adults about childhood, and she cleverly reframes the relationship between adults and children. Lastly, the research puts forth the subject of time and memory where her characters reframe a sense of satisfaction through mental mechanisms in order to adapt themselves to the vicissitudes of time. The research concludes that Duffy stands lofty, contemplating and suggesting extraordinary solutions for incurable problems.

إعادة تشكيل العالم في شعر كارول آن دُفي

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المستخلص

تبحث كارول آن دُفي في شعرها هموم المهمشين، ففي مقاربتها الجريئة و كشفها الحقائق بطريقة خاصة بها، تعيد تشكيل العالم بإخلاص تام. يظهر هذا البحث كيف تقوم دُفي بهذا التشكيل وفق شروطها. اللغة هي المجال الأول الذي تعيد به دُفي تشكيل العالم، فإذ تتغير أشكال الأشياء أو تتشوه فإن اللغة تعيد تشكيل إدراكنا لها. أما فيما يخص العلاقات فإن شخصيات دُفي المتوترة تهجر الحياة الاعتيادية و تشكل طريقة حياة مخالفة خاصة بها. المجال الثالث الذي تعيد فيه دُفي تشكيل العالم هو الإيمان حيث تلاحظ أن طقوس الدين تقيد التفكير لذلك فهي تعيد تشكيل الإيمان بأن تعير المألوف و الدنيوي اهتماماً و تهمل المقدس و الشعائري. و فيما يخص الحرب و شناعتها تعيد دُفي تشكيل كينونة ضحايا الحروب بطريقة بشعة لكي تجعلنا ن فكر ملياً في ما تخلفه الحرب من مأساة. أما في مجال الطفولة فإن دُفي تتحدى سوء فهم الكبار له و تعيد تشكيل العلاقة بين الكبار و الصغار بذكاء. وأخيراً فإن هذا البحث يتناول موضوعي الزمن و الذاكرة في شعر دُفي، إذ تقوم شخصياتها بإعادة تشكيل إحساس بالقناعة عن طريق وسائل عقلية لكي تستطيع هذه الشخصيات أن تكيف نفسها مع متغيرات الزمن. و يستنتج البحث أخيراً أن دُفي تقف شامخة و هي تتأمل ثم تقترح حلولاً غير اعتيادية لمشاكل مستعصية.

Carol Ann Duffy, the first female poet laureate (born 1955) is brought up in a period in which women are attaining a new position in society and are confirming their own liberation. She perceives she can represent those who are tongue-tied. Thus, we notice that so many of her poems represent the voice of the disregarded and humiliated—women, gays, vagabonds... etc. Duffy is quite aware of the social, economic and cultural conditions of her time, so subjects like poverty, exploitation, racism and political distrust occupy her mind, and are incessantly

tackled in her poems. Although she might have been brought up in a family that gives fair consideration to formalities and authority, she would not have given confidence to the religious or the political authorities, in particular in Scotland, where she was born, mainly because of their arrogance and domineeringness. She might have noticed that, in these domineering institutions and, maybe, in all society, what is said is not what is done, so she has attributed much more value to observation and personal knowledge rather than words. Through understanding the coherence, and sometimes, contrarily, the incongruity of the motives behind behavior, she begins to see things in a different perspective, and to dissect the behavior of others. She seems disillusioned in her expectations of society. Therefore, she reflects a sense of incompetence of representation, as if the poems fail to represent and expose reality. Paradoxically, this does not prevent her from showing naked reality and disclosing the concealed. In her poetry, she approaches bold facts fearlessly, yet 'there is an undercurrent—no a counter current—of honest emotion' as John Hildebidle (2000, 199) clarifies. Through the disclosure of realities and emotions in a particular way that is highly characteristic of Duffy, she establishes the world newly, or reframes it honestly. This research shows how Duffy reframes the world.

From her early writings, Duffy has tried to distance herself from the conventional viewpoint of the feminist and she states, 'Feminist poetry did play a very useful role in the seventies, but we've moved beyond that' (Dowsen, 1999, 15). Moreover, she wants, as Angelica Michelis (1998:1-14) discusses at length, to subvert classical traditions of the male poet and female muse. Duffy does not only refuse the dominance of the male over all activities of life and over the life of the female; she rather refuses all aspects of dominance even if it is a dominance of the female. She does not show interest in the gender; she seems rather interested in people and their experiences. Therefore, she is in a position to show the hurting effects of dominance on human relations. The damage caused by domination is reflected in the themes and form of her poems. The themes of the poems are the main concern of the research because she seems hopeful of reframing the world through tackling such themes. The damage of the form in her poetry is shown through displaying the uncommon arrangement of the formal components of her poem, where she uses incomplete sentences, separate phrases or single words as sentences.

Duffy shows interest in creating her own language by choosing her own vocabulary, form and discourse. For example, she uses the terza rima pattern in her poem 'Terza Rima' (SFN 20)¹ but she wrests the rhythm and the rhyme:

She feeds the ducks. He
wants her, tells her so
as she half-smiles and
stands slightly apart.
He loves me, loves me not
with each deft throw.

The re-ordering of the lines of her poems in her own particular way seems to be annoying to those who adhere to the conventional forms of verse. Simon Brittan(1995:58) criticizes Duffy's 'Miles Away'(SM 61) for having no form or poem structure. Brenda Allen (1999:103) attributes Duffy's disregard of form to her 'people-centered' attitude. She adds that Duffy 'declines the limitations that patriarchal and canonical stereotypes offer by refraining from making her poems gender specific, or sexual orientation specific, except where context demands it' (Ibid).

Because Duffy is concerned with social affairs, so her poems combine her own particular forms to social themes in penetrating dramatic monologues that look into the modern scene. In her Review of Duffy's poetry, Jane Satterfield (2001:123) indicates that Duffy 'explores' the world from 'surprising and unexpected viewpoints'. Duffy's poetry consistently analyzes

the different social aspects of life. She examines man at critical points. David Whitely (2007:104) explains that Duffy's characters 'can be read as symptomatic of attitudes and shifts in sensibility that are responses to changing social structures'. Duffy's poetry reflects the historical and social conditions of modern society, so the acute reader can notice a communion between the context of her poem and the political, social and philosophical context. In an essay in *The Guardian*, Peter Forbis (2002) assures that Duffy is capable of coping with the atrocity of social calamities through the characters of her poems that are able to intercede in the course of the calamity. He elucidates this capability of the characters through a few poems.

Duffy's great interest in people and experiences might have engendered inside her an inner apprehension that she, or any other great artist, might not be able to seize reality, and that something will be lost when they translate human experience into a poem or any other work of art—a painting, for example. In 'Poem in Oils' (SFN 47), the speaker observes that time, landscape and incidents cannot be represented in thorough expressiveness by the work of art. S/he absorbs the whole scene through sensory perception. It seems that things are closer to her/his mind and heart only when s/he lives them as an experience. It becomes clear, then, that the artistic representation of experience is less worthy in expressiveness than the body, although art is more steadfast and abiding.

What I have learnt I have learnt from the air,
from infinite varieties of light. Muted colors
alter gradually as clouds stir shape, till purple rain
or violet thunderstorm shudders in the corner of my eye.

The speaker of the poem portrays a painter who tries to seize the beauty of the landscape in his/her painting, but it seems that the painting is so limited in its perspective, and although 'the motifs multiply,' the speaker 'hesitate[s] before the love the waves bear/ to the earth,' and the painter is incapable of capturing beauty through his/her art. The reader deduces that what is captured through senses and real experience is superior to what is represented through art:

... . Is this what I see?
No, but this is the process of seeing.
Believe me, soundless shadows fall from trees
like brush strokes. A painter stands
upon a cliff and turns doubt into certainty where,
far below, the ocean fills itself with sky.
I was here to do this.

As mentioned earlier, the research aims at asserting that Duffy re-creates the world in her own terms. Since language is the main medium of communication, Duffy seems so much attentive to the role of language and to the problems in representing experience through language. Linda Kinnahan (1996:75) asserts that Duffy shares revolutionary forms and thoughts with the modernist poets in the USA and Canada. So we begin with Duffy's view of language and of the written text. She shows to understand that when we see or apprehend things, we project our own interests, prejudices, hopes, fears and doubts. Therefore, when we try to understand a written text, we misrepresent, or rather adapt it according to the previous extrinsic elements. In her poem, 'Education for Leisure' (SFN 15) the trace of the fly, after being trodden and flattened, becomes ambiguous. The speaker understands that when the relationships among the different external elements are changed, language will fall short of expressing the meaning of what is seen or heard.

I squash a fly against the window with
my thumb.
We did that at school. Shakespeare. It
was in

another language and now the fly is in
another language.

The speaker admits that the fly has no real existence now, but he can assure his own veracity, and can re-create his own world through writing his own name on a flat surface like that on which the fly was squashed, thus he establishes his own language and veracity. Moreover, he admits his talent and existence by exposing them on the glass. He admits, then, that the world will be changed.

I breathe out talent on the glass to write
my name.

I am a genius, I could be anything at all,
with half
the chance. But today I am going to
change the world.

Duffy re-processes the multiple facts or ideas she acquires and translates them into new knowledge, but she might not have absolute trust in the efficiency of language, so she breaks her text into fractions and incomplete sentences. The words themselves fail to express, like the fly which cannot be recognized by the speaker although he squashed it by his hand, so he says it is 'in another language.' The speaker confesses, 'Shakespeare. It/was in/ another language.'

In 'Litany' (MT 9), Duffy discloses women as having false faith in decorum and respectability, so forthright and unreserved words are not allowed. The speaker states that 'language embarrassed them,' and 'an embarrassing word, broken/to bits, which tensed the air like an accident'. Euphemistic words used in the poem distort the clarity of language, and reality becomes all a blur. Moreover, from the formal side, the litany of the ladies in which they make a list of beautiful things is inserted among the lines of the poem in order to emphasize the fragmentation of language. Duffy wants to show that it is language that creates our perception and feeling rather than the opposite, and language often fails to communicate, so sometimes we become a victim to our word, that is why the child, in the poem, has to apologize for a taboo word she uttered:

A boy in the playground, I said, told me
to fuck off; and a thrilled, malicious pause
salted my tongue like an imminent storm. Then
uproar. *I'm sorry, Mrs Barr, Mrs Hunt, Mrs
Emery,
sorry, Mrs Raine.*

Nevertheless, words and statements can be loaded with meaning and can be communicative when there is intimate and honest engagement; hence they can reframe the world. In 'First Love' (MT 27), the reframing is induced by faithfulness, and the speaker becomes aware of her surroundings and capable of investing the language properly far from the conventional language of a 'litany'. The speaker states, 'Waking, with a dream of first love forming real words/ as close to my lips as lipstick.' Pictures come so clear to her mind like 'an old film played at a slow speed. / All day I will glimpse it.' In 'Who loves You' (TOC 41) there is another litany at the end of the first stanza, 'Breathe in and out and in and out easy. /Safety, safely, safe home'. It is repeated with a little variation at the end of all the other stanzas. The litany seems like an appeal or a prayer which might strengthen the speaker's faithfulness. The simplicity and honesty of this appeal challenges the conventional religious prayer that is usually said in the church.

As regards relationships, Duffy's poetry shows how she feels that people's thoughts and behavior are not always governed by humanistic or philanthropic incentives. Her poetry also shows that people innately consider the advantages and disadvantages of their utterances or

deeds. They might also deviate from the natural and simple way of behavior in order to conform to their own way of thinking. In 'The Model Village' (SM 21), Duffy presents different personae, all of them abandon real life and develop eccentric way of living, and thus they reframe their existence in order to be able to manage it. They are not satisfied with their own life, so they adopt a quite queer career, though satisfactory to them. One example from the poem is the librarian who lacks personal courage to associate comfortably with people. He feels that he cannot predict the behavior of others, and he is afraid that coping with them might require efforts from him when he seems uninterested in such efforts. Therefore, instead of people, the librarian chooses books. He maintains total dominance over books, yet he does not have to be committed to them. He gives them life and feels safe in their presence. Whatever thoughts are there in the books cannot be hostile or unpredictable, as those in the minds of people. In his library, the librarian says:

... . This
 place
 is a refuge, the volumes breathing calmly
 on their still shelves. I glide between
 them
 like a doctor on his rounds, know their
 cases. Tomes
 do no harm, here I am safe. Outside is
 chaos,
 lives with no sense of plot. Behind each
 front door
 lurks truth, danger. I peddle fiction.
 Believe
 You me, the books in everyone's heads
 Are stranger...

In 'Terza Rima' (SFN 19), husband and wife are afraid that their relationship might not be genuine, and they might have been deceiving themselves on what they have considered a successful relationship. She is unsure of her husband's feeling towards her, although he confirms his love to her, and 'he swears/ his love is true,' and,

... . He
 wants her, tells her so
 as she half-smiles and
 stands slightly apart.
He loves me, loves me not
 with each deft throw.

At the moment when the husband declares that his love is 'forever,' abruptly 'the earth cries' and a kestrel 'drops from/ above like a stone,' reminding of the death of the relationship. In this poem, Duffy reframes relationships by simply accepting their relativity. The husband claims the immortality of his love to his wife, but Duffy demolishes this claim by the image of the bird that reminds us of the exposure of love to death, or at least to abatement. It seems that Duffy wants to say that a successful relationship needs a move from the confirmation of immortality to the indefiniteness of life.

Duffy reframes relationships by disclosing the defects of current relations. She might not present advice, or propose solutions; she just wants the reader to grasp her intentions without imposing her own perceptions or prejudices. In 'Alliance' (SFN 26), the husband dominates his wife and does not see her as an independent human being, thus the relationship is destroyed. 'Over the years he has inflated/with best bitter till she has no room'. The behavior

of the husband is apparently haughty and vulgar, and he downgrades the wife's ethnic ancestry and qualities.

What she has retained of herself is a hidden grip
working her face like a glove-puppet. She smiles
at his bullying, this Englishman who talks scathingly
of *Frogs* in front of his French wife.

In 'Standing Female Nude' (SFN 46), the woman, who is presented as a model to a painter, puts herself in the same category with the painting. By doing so, she shows how she is exploited, and how her feminine identity is annihilated. She states, 'I shall be... hung/in great museums'. In 'Lovesick' (SM 54), the apple is 'red and shining', but the speaker 'hid the apple in the attic' and 'took its photograph'. In 'Standing Female Nude' the painting stands for the woman, the photograph stands for the apple in 'Lovesick'. In both poems, there is an exotic reframing of the beloved which might create a new identity to her/it. Still it seems difficult to define which is more realistic—the original or the new identity. In 'Mrs Midas' (TWW 16), Duffy shows marriage relationship with regard to the hurt husband and wife inflict on each other. The life of the couple in the poem is apparently nice, but the husband has lost many of the human qualities and 'the look on his face was strange, wild, vain' because he has been dedicated to raise money so easily like the mythical Midas who was able to change whatever he touches into gold. The wife describes his capability saying that the 'twig in his hand was gold.' He does not behave now like any other man, so the wife describes what is supposed to be their intimate relationship in the following way:

Separate beds. In fact, I put a chair against my
door,
near petrified. He was below, turning the spare
room
into the tomb of Tutankhamun. You see, we
were passionate then,
in those halcyon days, unwrapping each other,
rapidly,
like presents, fast food. But now I feared his
honeyed embrace.

It is clear now that she is afraid of their intimate relationship because it has become seriously threatening to her. Duffy is not saying that the way this man lives is horrible; she is rather showing how he can change all natural things into gold or money. On the other side, Duffy shows us how his wife lives a natural life blinking at the defects of her husband's way of life. The wife tries to grant him love and sympathy, but he seems to receive her gifts in a restrained, arrogant and selfish manner. Duffy shows us the two disagreeing rules of life of the husband and wife, which might lead any relationship to failure, though the relationship of these two persons survives. It is the proficiency of the wife in reframing her attitude of life; first, she resists the ambition for wealth and fame which means she regards her husband's ideals a betrayal. She states:

... . Do you
Know about gold?
It feeds no one; aurum, soft, untarnishable;
slakes
No thirst.

Secondly, she maintains the components of her whole and intact personality after the death of her husband and retains a fair memory of him, so she says, 'I think of him in certain lights, dawn, late/afternoon', and 'I/ miss most,/ even now, his hands, his warm hands on my/ skin, his touch'

Another important field in which Duffy's poems reframe the world is faith and the church. She sees that the conventional religious rituals and ceremonies confine man's values and thoughts. She exposes the common religious attitude as false and hypocritical, and reframes new values based on the spirituality of the secular. She condemns the authority of the church and the double standards of the clergymen though there is no apparent indication that she is an atheist, and furthermore, she has never discussed any subject concerning the truthfulness of belief. In fact, her poems show that she has an inclination for God, pure faith and salvation. She is interested in reframing the religious attitudes of people by paying attention to the secular and familiar rather than the sacred and ceremonial. It is clear that she wants to say that conventional belief leads to an unexplained fanaticism and excessive desire to govern people. It is not enough for her to disclose the discrepant standards promoted by the church like the male superiority; she, moreover, gives rise to the marginalized and oppressed. The conditions of minorities, as Muslims, for example, worry her. Breda Allen (1999:164) states that 'in their day-to-day treatment of Moslems, white Christian Britons betray their own narrow stereotypes and lack of understanding, not only of other religious faiths, but also of their own Christian ethics'.

The reform Duffy looks for is how to be honest and sincere in faith. She surely has thought that the dishonesty produced its effect on language. Words are no more closely related to their meanings; they have become like the church, which lacks honesty and truthfulness. Therefore, in 'Moments of Grace' (MT 26), words frame a cover, 'thin skin' on the meaning, so the 'thin skin' over the 'adjectives' and 'nouns' covers the meanings and conceals the inherent discrepancy:

... . These days
 we are adjectives, nouns. In moments of
 grace
 we were verbs, the secret of poems,
 talented.
 A thin skin lies on the language. We stare
 deep in the eyes of strangers, look for the
 doing words.

The double standards of the clergymen are apparent in 'Ash-Wednesday 1984' (SFN 14). The priest is so cruel in preaching children as if coercion is part of religious life:

Get to Communion and none of your cheek.
 We'll put the fear of God in your bones.
 Swallow the Eucharist, humble and meek.
 St Stephen was martyred with stones.

The speaker comments on the priest's words:

It makes me sick. My soul is not a vest
 spattered with wee black marks. Miracles and shamrocks
 and transubstantiation are all my ass.

In this poem, Duffy seems to reframe faith by an opposite attitude; the corruption of the religious authority gets to a point where no reform is conceivable, so the speaker states, 'For Christ's sake, do not send your kids to Mass'. The unorthodox appears more upright and closer to devoutness.

'Model Village' (SM 21), ridicules the vicar's conception of guilt and punishment. The vicar identifies himself with a child refusing to become older, thus reflecting immature understanding of faith. His faith seems to have restricted his intellectual competence, and consequently, if he understands things properly, he might desert faith. Duffy reframes the conception of faith by presenting a dissenting, but naïve, and deranged understanding of the meaning of sin and punishment:

... I shall dress up
as a choir boy. I have shaved my legs.
How smooth
they look. Smooth, pink knees. If I am
not good,
I shall deserve punishment. Perhaps the
choirmistress
will catch me smoking behind the organ.
A good boy
would own up. I am naughty.

It becomes clear, then, that no faith is more satisfying and convenient than that founded on simplicity and honesty. Therefore, the scene of the funeral in 'November' (TOC 51) impresses the 'old woman who crosses herself as the hearse moves on'.

Hideousness of war is one important motif in Duffy's poetry. She shows that war causes abnormal and unhealthy interpersonal interactions, and distorts the thoughts and feelings of people. It is known that imperial voracity has been a reason for waging wars in different regions in the world. C. C. Eldridge (1996:12) assures that this 'imperial nostalgia' has 'tended to surface at times of crisis'. But Duffy is particularly worried about the damaging moral, mental and psychological effect of war on individuals. In 'Army' (FOP 15), a badly injured soldier seeks impatiently to regain his integrity and stability by prompting his parents to recognize him. He entreats his mother, 'Hello mother! / It's your eldest son back from the nuclear war, / well, half of me anyway'. The soldier's body and face are so much metamorphosed that his parents could hardly believe that he is their son. The soldier, who appears to his parents as 'real' and 'plastic' at the same time, finally wins a partial admittance from his parents. In an attempt to regain his wholeness by showing himself as a hero, he tells his parents that he killed a General in the battle and he shows them his medals. It seems that the parents are not so pleased that this new creature and killer is their own son. The soldier is painfully alienated from the world of ordinary people and even from his own parents, so he says that shaking hands is not possible now because he is 'not going to dig it [his hand] up just for that'. Duffy has pervertedly reframed the entity of the soldier in order to leave us reflect on the tragedy of war.

In 'War Photographer' (SFN 51), the photographer seems confused and lost between the violence and devastation of the 'fields,' which 'explode beneath the feet/ of running children in a nightmare heat,' on one side, and the seemingly quiet home, which looks like a 'church,' and himself, who looks like 'a priest preparing to intone a Mass' on the other side. By exposing such a state of distraction, Duffy wants us to ponder on the catastrophe of war even if it is not ours, but it seems that people have become desensitized to the scenes of war. The photographer discloses this indifference of people through the editor who will 'pick out [only] five or six/for Sunday's supplement' from the 'hundred agonies in black and white,' and through the readers of the 'Sunday's supplement' whose 'eyeballs prick/with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers'. Duffy reframes our compassion towards these victimized people, hoping that we might do something in this matter, by drawing our attention to the cruel carelessness with which we tackle this case. The anticlimax at which our sentiment is poked lies in the final scene in which the photographer becomes like the others and forgets how to sympathize with the victims, so 'from the aeroplane he stares impassively at where/he earns his living and they do not care'.

A flagrant example of violating the individual is in 'Woman Seated in the Underground, 1941' (SFN 50). Duffy shows us here a woman who survived the war but her life has been deranged; she states, 'I do not know my name', 'I live somewhere' and 'my mind/has unraveled into thin threads that lead nowhere'. At the beginning of the poem, she states, 'I

forget. I have looked at the other faces and found/no memory' epitomizing the mental inclination of man to flee to safety through forgetting horrible memories, but what she knows now and remembers well reveal the aftermath of war:

... There was a bang and then
I was running with the rest through smoke. Thick, gray
smoke has covered thirty years at least.

But in spite of everything, she can recognize her condition now:

... I have no wedding ring, no handbag, nothing.
I want a fag. I have either lost my ring or I am
a loose woman. No. Someone has loved me. Someone
is looking for me even now.

Although there seems no hope of a change because 'the skies were filled with sirens, planes, /fire, bombs,' salvation will certainly come, and this victim will reframe her world and cure her injuries; she announces, 'In a moment, I shall stand up and scream until/somebody helps me'. Victimhood leads her to refuse her condition and to state it publicly, and to look for people who would grant her love and sympathy.

Childhood is another domain in which Duffy challenges the misconceptions of many adults about the world of children, then, adeptly reframes the relationship between the two sides. She seems to remind of a worried side in the mind of the child which is unknown to many adult. This lack of knowledge from the side of the adult, who does not possess a talent for subtle imaginative realization, makes the relationship with the child disturbed or problematic. In 'Don't be Scared' (OGW 21), Duffy reframes the mind of the child in a way so far from the capability of many adults; by doing so, she mitigates the child's apprehensions.

The dark is only a blanket
for the moon to put on her bed.
The dark is a private cinema
for the movie dreams in your head.
The dark is a little black dress
to show off the sequin stars.

In his study of Duffy's poetry for children, David Whitely (2000; 106) states that 'Duffy's images are designed to be reassuring precisely because they take the place of unnamed fears.' Through innovated images, she grants the child a new magical and blissful understanding that will remove all their fears.

In 'We Remember Your Childhood Well' (TOC 30), the fallibility of the parents is disclosed through their unceasing denial of any abuse they might have inflicted on their child. The child has apparently had some wretched memories of their early childhood with their parents, but the parents do their best to convince them that their fears are ill-grounded, and that only the parents' statement of occurrences is true. The reader can simply overturn the parents' statement in order to see how insidious their intentions have been:

Nobody forced you. You wanted to go that day. Begged. You
chose
the dress. Here are the pictures, look at you, look at us all,
smiling and waving, younger. The whole thing is inside your
head.

Time and memory are also problematic for Duffy. The speaker in 'The Captain of the 1964 Top of the Form Team' (MT 7) tries to summon the past but he disappointedly discovers that it is a vain trial because the present, with all its frustrations, interferes. The incomplete sentences in the poem and its disassembled thoughts reflect how the speaker is left astray. Duffy re-creates the world of the speaker by giving him a short moment of relief when he

goes back for a while to a certain time in the past, and then, feels happy, 'I smiled/ as wild as a child who went missing on the way home/ from school,' and find answers to all his questions, 'I want it back. The Captain. The one with all the answers'. In her commentary on this poem, Angelica Michelis (1998:23) states that 'the only sign of a self is the frantic search for it'. It becomes clear that Duffy believes that one should not spare any effort to fetch the old moments of grace and bliss even if one feels it almost unattainable.

Duffy also reframes the lost joyful past through language and mental strategies that compensate for the sense of loss. Jody Allen-Randolph (1995:12) assures that Duffy's poems about nostalgia 'function both as social satire and as elegy, registering the loss of the communal aspects of cultural life'. In 'Nostalgia' (MT 33), yearning for the past 'was killing' the personae of the poem, and they 'pined' and 'wept'; someone has gone to his old hometown 'with his/life/in a sack on his back' and he finds 'the same/street/with the same sign over the inn, the same/bell/chiming the hour on the clock' but 'everything changed'. The sweet sensation of the past has been lost in the present, and it seems hard to recall it, but because 'some would never/ fall in love had they not heard of love,' the personae of the poem, too, can reframe a sensation of satisfaction through a mental mechanism; the priest finds his blissfulness in 'the colour of leaves' though he has been 'crying at the workings of/ memory', and the schoolteacher 'opened a book to the scent of her youth' though it was 'too late'.

In 'Prayer' (MT 17), language has a magical and spiritual bearing, and is granted as 'a sudden gift'. Therefore, 'some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer/utters itself', and as a result 'a woman will lift/ her head from the sieve of her hands and stare/at the minims sung by a tree', while 'a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth/in the distant Latin chanting of a train'.

Lastly, the researcher feels that it has been necessary to have this more or less inclusive look on Carol Ann Duffy's poetry, not only because she is a major poet, but also for her 'originality, unusual range, prolific output, and swelling influence,' as Jane Dowson (2016:1) describes her. In 'Tall' (TFG 20), Duffy depicts an unbelievably tall woman in a magical way that can be relatively applicable to Duffy, the poet:

She looked back and howled.
She stooped low
and caught their souls in her hands
as they fell
from the burning towers.

With this magical soul, in this intricate and, sometimes, brutal world, whereof no relieving solution for serious relational, ideological and psychological crises seems to protrude, and when man loses any hope in reform, Carol Ann Duffy stands alone, lofty, like a 'tower' contemplating and suggesting extraordinary and balsamic solutions for these seemingly incurable problems. These solutions are insinuated into her poems, and the current research has critically surveyed a few of these poems and solutions.

Notes

¹ Duffy's collections of poetry are abbreviated in the research as follows: *Fleshweathercoak and Other Poems* 1973, (FOP); *Standing Female Nude* 1985, (SFN); *Selling Manhattan* 1987, (SM); *The Other Country* 1990, (TOC); *Mean Time* 1993, (MT); *The World's Wife* 1999, (TWW); *The Oldest Girl in the World* 2000, (OGW); *The Feminine Gospels* 2002, (TFG). The page number follows the abbreviation. As all the quoted lines are from short poems, no line number is referred to.

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