

The Evolution of Violence as Manifested in the Poetry of Carol Ann Duffy

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Abstract

Artistic expressions that incorporate themes of violence are similarly ever-present across time and cultures, as can be readily seen in poetry from the earliest classics to the present. Of interest is how violence is portrayed in poetry (and elsewhere in society and the media) has changed over time. Carol Ann Duffy, one of the contemporary most prominent poets, infuses the vast majority of her poetry with themes of violence particularly for individuals society has left behind. A brief comparison of Duffy's contemporary poetry to that of Robert Browning's disturbing portrayal of violence in Victorian England is then completed with an analysis of violence in several poems of Duffy's poetry. The evolution of how themes of violence are presented in poetry will be demonstrated to have grown more specific and significant in today's rapid-paced culture.

Keywords: violence, crime, madness, Carol Ann Duffy

Introduction

Carol Ann Duffy, a Scottish poet and playwright, is one of the most noteworthy and influential poets of the 20th and 21st centuries. While her poetry has been viewed as feminist, she has philosophical elements of violence embedded in her stanzas. In 2009 Duffy became the first woman, the first Scot, and the first LGBT person to earn Britain's Poet Laureate.¹ It is not surprising that her works continue to be popular, to date Duffy has published 26 books of poetry and garnered 14 major awards across her 44 years of writing.² Among her collected works are *Standing Female Nude* that earned the Scottish Arts Council Award; her 1987 *Selling Manhattan* winning the Somerset Maugham Award; 1993's *Mean Time* won the Whitbread Poetry Award, and her latest publication *Rapture* in 2005 won the T.S. Eliot Prize.³ Her poem "Education for Leisure" became one of the most controversial poems in modern poetry. "Poetry is the music of being human," Duffy stated an ingrained part of all cultures.⁴ Her poetry comes from her own experience, from memories, and from the minds of others within the poetic framework of "rhyme and form and structure," turning emotions derived from experiences into an art form.⁵ Therefore, it is worth defining the main purpose of the current study as an exhaustive and profound discussion of themes of crime and violence particularly by and against individuals the society has left behind.

The theme of violence is rampant throughout Duffy's poetry. She typically saves a violent surprise for the very end of her poetic stories, although from time to time the violence is subtle, such as when it is in the form of cultural oppression. Duffy occasionally gives voice to historic male authors' female characters to put her own contemporary interpretation of what the women may have been truly feeling instead of how they were originally presented. She provides an evolved point of view in a female voice that demonstrates changing mores and values around violence which is derived from the pressures of contemporary culture. A detailed discussion is offered for works by Duffy that have perceptible themes of violence, as well as those with a more indirect approach with sensitive moments in a kind, yet still quietly melancholic manner that reflects social repression, its own form of violence. Duffy is a paramount example of the importance of poetry in society and how powerfully themes of violence continue to pervade our lives, expressed more fully in today's most celebrated poems.

Evolution of the Concept of Violence in Poetry

The tenets of violence and its related concepts evoke various theoretical frameworks that seek to explain interpersonal, institutional, and structural violence. Traditionally, theories on violence tend to account for regularities observed in the execution of both isolated and self-contained violent incidents.

In his study of the impact of positivism on violence, Auguste Comte introduced a societal universal law that contains three phases: theological,

metaphysical, and scientific. The theological phase is the most primitive of the three, characterized by the use of religious and supernatural explanations for behaviours rather than a keen desire to establish the origins of causes. The metaphysical phase provides more advanced explanations for behaviours and events and includes such abstract forces as accident and fate as causes. Comte identified the scientific stage as the most advanced and referred to it as the positive stage when humans focus on outcomes which can be controlled rather than uncontrollable causes of behaviours or events.⁶ Positive stages seek to establish relationships among the various components of violence through experimentation, observation, and logic. Scientists emphasize the significance of this phase because of its ability to address most problems associated with violence in modern society.

With regard to domestic violence, theorists argue that men who batter their wives learn violence from their childhood families and that women who saw their mothers abused while growing up tend to seek out abusive men. The theory of learned violence behaviour is based on the supposition that witnessing domestic violence serves as a source of information. The loss of control theory is closely related to the learned violence theory and supposes that domestic violence results from an inability to control oneself. Critics of this theory, however, note that abusive partners tend to carefully target their partners and not anyone else. The theory can also be criticized for the fact that abusive partners often choose to batter their partners in private. It could be interpreted that such individuals follow well stipulated internal rules and regulations when engaging in domestic violence. Cogitating prior domestic violence theories, one could argue that the vice remains inadequately understood in the literature.

There are several political views of violence. According to some scholars, violence is one of the failures of our social system, advanced by poverty, discrimination, and a poor educational system. Some view violence as a vice resulting from media influence. Poor parenting has been identified as a possible root cause of violence. There are also those who believe violence has a genetic basis, a theory discounted over concerns of promoting racism.

The evolution of violence in the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy seeks to explain the relationship between entities such as class, gender, and ethnicity using principles and theories grounded on the disciplines of sociology, psychology, biology, and culture. Her work tends to analyze issues that affect people in their day-to-day activities based on her experiences and her fantasies. She endeavours to bring into focus issues that have influenced her life from childhood to adulthood with a significant focus on elements of violence and its related consequences. Proper analysis requires an

examination of some of the more prominent scientific theories of violence and non-violence.

Giving parameters to the concept of the evolution of violence appears to be somewhat problematic. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as “The exercise of physical force so as to cause injury or damage to a person, property, etc., physically violent behaviour or treatment.”⁷ Narrowing the broad idea of cultural violence and seeking its origins becomes necessary.

The current study focuses on lyrical manifestations of interpersonal violence with the inclusion of sexualized forms. The history of humanity is replete with violence and hatred, acts of torture and murder caused by social conflicts, wars, or maniacal individuals. All these aspects of violence have found their demonstrations in the poetry of all types, genres and ages. However, the presentation and expression of violence, particularly violence for leisure, offer more explanations of the causes of violence than earlier works that broached the subject.

Critical discussions of violence have a variety of forms according to their respective schools of thought. For example, futurists advocate the use of violence, power, industry, and dynamic movement in art while rejecting the past. Violence has been so heavily incorporated into all forms of art and social expression that it has become engrained and socially acceptable.⁸ Contemporary anthropologists define violence-related themes as drawing from real life. Violence has constantly invaded all aspects of humanity, yet its prevalence is little understood; such exposure provides virtually unlimited creative space for artists.⁹ This notion is clearly upheld by prevailing expressions of violence across a variety of fictional, historical, and social poems.

Scenes of violence and madness articulated by a poem’s protagonist are not new, readily found throughout English literature and the study will provide few prominent examples of these scenes. For example, Robert Browning’s “Porphyria’s Lover,” one of his earliest works published in 1836, is viewed as one of the most shocking, becoming representative of the dramatic monologue. In perfect meter and rhyme pattern except for the woman’s name, which vaguely disrupts its lines, the poem exposes a twisted philosophy of murder as an act of admiration and lust for a beautiful young woman who has professed her love for the narrator. When the young lady “made her smooth white shoulder bare/And all her yellow hair displaced,/And, stooping, made my cheek lie there/and spread, o’er all, her yellow hair,” Victorian views of sexuality considered such descriptive as virtually pornographic.¹⁰ In an unexpected and unexplained act of violence, the man strangles her with her own hair “In one long yellow string I wound/Three times her little throat around”¹¹ He is at peace with the violent act, content to be near her corpse, self-assured he will not face any

punishment from God.¹² Browning's imagery and careful adherence to the rules of form are in keeping with 19th Century Romantic poetry that embraces nature, rural life, beauty, the cottage providing comfortable familiarity. Yet he calmly brings a violent change to the bucolic scene with sexual symbolism and overt descriptions that challenged the morality of Victorian society where it was not acceptable to engage in sexual relationships without marriage, and it was not discussed. For a contemporary reader, such scenes would not be perceived as vulgar and unacceptable, because our tolerance for violence has become considerably higher in the last century. Browning's intent was to protest moral values, to provoke a deep emotional jolt when the storyteller kills the girl, intent on making sexuality incidental rather than inappropriate.

Unlike Duffy's clarity of character motive, Browning's work leaves supplementary space to the reader's imagination; for example, he does not offer precise motifs and recognizable reasons for the murder. He offers only the idea that the narrator wants to make the handsome girl's perceived love a never-ending condition, one unfamiliar to society at large. One must infer society's grim impact on the suppression of sexuality and the violence that may result. "Porphyria's Lover" might also be viewed as a poem that describes murder and violence as leisure.

The concept of violence and leisure is explicitly discussed by Stephen Dunn, the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, in his "Poem for People that are Understandably Too Busy to Read Poetry," which describes the life of always-busy people stuck in everyday routine, willing to seek any sort of entertainment that might satisfy their desire for diversifying their lives.¹³ Dunn opens with "Relax. This won't take long" as he attempts to take the reader out of the realm of the chaos of life.¹⁴ He suggests poetry "can offer you violence/if violence is what you like" followed by a graphic description of an injured man in the street.¹⁵ He gives a sad description of a clandestine sexual encounter between strangers, references products considered family fare in popular culture, reminding the reader of the unhappy lives people are trying to escape. In the end, Dunn shifts to giving a small measure of hope in the guise of poetry as a source of escapism into imagination, urging his audience to laugh at themselves and at poetry.¹⁶ "Imagine yourself a caterpillar./There's an awful shrug and, suddenly,/You're beautiful for as long as you live."¹⁷ Unlike Dunn, Duffy rarely, if ever, leaves on a light-hearted note, preferring to make her themes of violence the point and finale of her poetic stories.

Roger McGough's protagonist in the seven-line "Survivor" thinks "about dying/About disease, starvation/violence, terrorism, war,/the end of the world" every day as a survival mechanism to "keep my mind off things."¹⁸ From beginning to end McGough ironically uses violent cultural

norms to turn the reader's attention back to their importance and perhaps generate a feeling of helplessness in the face of its enormity. Duffy is more prone to startling or shocking her readers with a violent twist at the end of each poem, while McGough grabs the reader's anxiety and tweaks it throughout.

Derek Walcott, the winner of Nobel Prize in Literature, uses sweeping, vivid images of violence of man against man, divided by racism as he battles to come to terms with his own split identity as a half-Black, half-white Englishman in "A Far Cry from Africa." Walcott uses layers of symbolism to invoke angst and concern in his audience for war-torn Africa. For example, the common phrase "a far cry" is suggestive of a multitude of interpretations, as in a far cry from what was purported to be civilization, an outcry from the natives, a protest of Western culture's "brutish necessity" that justifies preying on others.¹⁹ The poem draws a horrific scene of death and destruction, bodies of innocent people slaughtered for the colour of their skin, visceral visions of "bloodstreams," "corpses scattered through a paradise," and what "colonial policy" as caused.²⁰ As the narrator faces such atrocities with a cultural and racial foot in both camps, "I who am poisoned with the blood of both," his allegiance is torn, the depth of his confusion over such violence against others apparent in every line. His depiction of war that inhabits the lengthy first verse becomes a metaphor for the violent conflict within him as a man.

In contrast, Duffy gives us a strong feminine perspective in the majority of her first-person protagonists, building her story, laying character groundwork often beset by society's foibles, saving the most graphic concepts and depictions for her endings. Walcott cuts to the heart of the dramatic matter immediately while Duffy blindsides the reader, both ending with powerful, violent inner conflicts of spirit.

There are many images of acts of violence in poetry, including the incorporation of a touch of leisure in those poetic depictions. Duffy and other poets may use violence as a form of wicked leisure, an outlet for personal satisfaction. Violence is a complex area of study that has been the subject of intense research. By cross-referencing Robert Browning, Stephen Dunn, Roger McGough and Derek Walcott, the study critically engages with the transnational parameters of violence *vis-à-vis* the act and theme of violence. Moreover, the textual and technical analysis of the aforementioned poets with regard to the categories of terror, gender, sexuality and race contribute to the depth of violence critique. The examination of the question of identity in relation to unbalanced economic, social, political, cultural, and religious perspectives and responsibilities in Duffy's poetry sheds light on how the axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels.

The Evolution of Violence in Duffy's Poems

An examination of Duffy's poetry offers descriptions of contemporary forms of violence in our changing society.²¹ She dramatizes human impulses towards violence, most often in her dramatic monologue and most often in the poems written during the 1980s. Her dramatizations are complex and usually consist of co-existing and conflicting impulses. Most notable is how she uses the form of the dramatic monologue against the grain, by inviting the reader to sympathise with a character with which we might not normally find sympathy. For example, Duffy's poem "**Havisham**" is a brief monologue given by Miss Havisham, a pivotal character in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. It helps considerably to be familiar with Dickens' characterisation to fully grasp Duffy's poetic, yet asymmetrically versed point of view. Miss Havisham was left at the altar by her treacherous fiancé, leaving her mentally broken. She never takes off her timeworn wedding dress and sits at the remains of the wedding table in the stench of her unwashed body. She is not capable of doing anything, just lying in bed and screaming in complete denial of her state. Focused on the act of violent revenge, her monologue expresses disgust with her spinster status and her obsession with avenging the moral damage she feels was done to her. Duffy opens with the oxymoron "beloved sweetheart bastard" to establish her hatred for her betraying fiancé with metaphoric "ropes" on the backs of her hands with which she could strangle him.²² Duffy's poem focuses vividly on the violence of revenge as Havisham drifts in and out of her own version of clarity, seeing and remembering her own madness, with metaphors of "stabbing at a wedding-cake" and wishing for a "male corpse for a long slow honeymoon."²³ Duffy uses colours to great effect as violence descriptors. Havisham's eyes are "dark green pebbles" of rage and jealousy, her dress "yellowing, trembling," cursing to herself "puce," her "white veil; a red balloon bursting in my face" all powerful metaphors for what she has become.²⁴ Duffy has recast Miss Havisham as filled with violent, vengeful thoughts, ironically juxtaposed against the societal belief that women's reason for existence was to marry and be a beloved wife, a standard still often thrust upon women in today's society.

In a considerably lighter vein and voice, Duffy's female protagonist is a cloistered nun defined as "**Elvis's Twin Sister**." Duffy employs slightly asymmetrical metered stanzas and occasionally but not regularly rhymes, yet the verses roll one into the next with ease as she paints a portrait of a feminine Elvis. Perhaps representative of how Duffy views society's role for women, she looks at a popular male figure from a woman's sheltered perspective. In a sisterly voice akin to Presley's with references to "blue suede shoes" and thinking of her convent as "Graceland," the nun's self-description ends with "Long time since I walked down Lonely

Street/towards Heartbreak Hotel.”²⁵ While the narrating nun has found her “land of grace,” she intimates that what brought her here was feeling alone and heartbroken.²⁶ Duffy may be implying that society’s expectations and judgments can be forms of social violence when making individuals feel ostracized. Duffy may also be reminding the reader that there was no difference between a singer accused of singing and playing the Devil’s music and a nun devoting her life to God singing Gregorian chants, save their gender-assigned stations. Still, the nun is apparently infatuated with the Elvis in her mannerisms that make her recognizable as Elvis’s twin sister, which she embraces, perhaps to create a persona acceptable to a critical society, one she can hide behind to escape the violence of others’ opinions and find a measure of happiness behind her closed garden walls.

Another female protagonist speaking in dramatic monologue among Duffy’s narrators is “**Anne Hathaway**,” William Shakespeare’s wife to whom he bequeathed his “second best bed” when he died. This perceived slight led scholars to believe Shakespeare did not love her. Duffy refutes this notion, giving voice to Hathaway in a poetic structure that echoes Shakespeare’s own sonnets with somewhat more contemporary wording and more evenly metered lines than much of her poetry, even closing the sonnet with a rhyme. Hathaway metaphorically defends her loving and intimate relationship with her husband by making the bed symbolic of their love and passion for one another, of their private world of “forests, castles, torchlight, cliff-tops, seas where he would dive for pearls”.²⁷ Duffy expresses erotic moments in metaphor with Hathaway’s “lover’s words were shooting stars which fell to earth as kisses on these lips” as she becomes “a softer rhyme.”²⁸ Duffy’s voice for Hathaway moves to the violent permanence and loss of death at the end of the poem.

While not incorporating violence per se within the lines of poetry in “Anne Hathaway,” Duffy’s defence of her against negative public opinion, perhaps embodied in the guests in the best bed “dribbling their prose,” is evident. It could be said that the best of Shakespeare’s passion and emotions were given to his audience, leaving Duffy to highlight the violent destiny of being wife to a famous man, continually sharing him with a demanding, even jealous public, forcing Hathaway to tell others she loved her husband and he loved her in return. The poem’s ending reminds the reader Hathaway is a grieving widow as she holds him close “in the casket of my widow’s head as he held me on that next best bed,” once again violence becomes a metaphor as Duffy compares death to unbridled sexuality.

Duffy’s broad education and glance into the lives and characters of other writers to offer an alternative point of view is another facet of her poetry, as seen in the foregoing poetic tales. The impact of ancient history as described in The Bible and other religious dogma is also evident in some of Duffy’s works, as evidenced by “**Salome**.” Duffy discusses the New Testament character in the first person in a contemporary setting while

keeping her image true to its Biblical depiction of committing violence, unsanctioned sex, and murder. The original Salome demanded John the Baptist's head on a platter from her Uncle Herod, a wish he fulfilled.²⁹ Once again in the first-person voice of a contemporary female protagonist, Duffy uses a rapid, even tempo and steady rhyme to carry the story of awakening to a stranger in her bed that leads to swearing off alcohol, cigarettes, and one-night stands. She uses simile when she describes the man's lips as "colder than pewter."³⁰ Using hypophora, or asking, then answering a question, she mentally rattles off four Biblical names as she tries to recall the forgotten man next to her. She establishes herself as wealthy by mentioning she rings for the maid, hoping the distraction will make the man leave. It is time to "turf out the blighter, the beater or biter/who'd come like a lamb to the slaughter to Salome's bed" to hint even more strongly at what is to come.³¹ The last verse graphically reveals the protagonist has beheaded her lover and is so nonchalant that she has forgotten the deed.³² The Biblical Salome wanted to avenge her mother and punish John the Baptist for shaming her family. Duffy's version of Salome is a predatory psychopath, a violent woman who takes no responsibility for her murderous actions, akin to the female praying mantis that bites off the head of its sexual partner. For her, committing murder is a form of evolution over weaker species.

Duffy's poem "**Before You Were Mine**" is one of her most complex and perhaps challenging to understand as she moves back and forth across time in the interconnected relationship between a daughter, the narrating protagonist, and her mother.³³ The title infers a romantic relationship, and the narrator gives us a visual of a teenager laughing with her friends in vintage clothing and a classic pose reminiscent of Marilyn Monroe. It was a time before the teenager entertained thoughts of motherhood in spite of its social and religious requirement in 1950s Scotland, still risking a beating for a visit to an illicit dance or a movie house, ten years before the birth of her child.³⁴ Her grown daughter longs for those better days her mother had before she was born in a melancholy, nostalgic backward look at how she perceives her mother's life was, a time when she was happier "where you sparkle and waltz and laugh" as Duffy creates movement throughout.³⁵ Representations of violence are reflected in the references to a "hiding for the late one," referring to her own birth cry as a "possessive yell," and most markedly when she sees her mother's "ghost" with "small bites" that give away a youthful stolen intimate moment that reflects her mother's life passing away in the wake of motherhood or perhaps more literally passing away entirely.

Another verbal and stylistic experiment is the mixing of senses, as in the line "I see you, clear as scent," reminding the reader a scent can trigger a vivid memory.³⁶ The poem opens and closes with dancing on the pavement,

first in Glasgow on her mother's street, then in London where the child was growing up.³⁷ Duffy herself explains "stamping stars from the wrong pavement" alludes going home from Sunday mass and dancing with her mother in shoes with metal cleats that made sparks on the sidewalk.³⁸ The scene also harkens back to her opening verse of her mother on a city pavement with her young friends, a time when her mother was free of the bonds of motherhood. On a deeper level, perhaps the 'wrong pavement' was wrong for both of them from Duffy's personal perspective, as expressed with a measure of melancholy and nostalgia, respectful of the sacrifice her mother has made to raise her. The poem thus touches on the theme of short-lived happiness, one captive in the realm of that metaphorical violence of social norms. For Duffy's mother, social and religious pressures made her a victim of oppression, taking away her choice to pursue a different destiny. Duffy manages to describe the victim of violence as accepting her fate yet imprinting the image of sadness and unfairness for women during Duffy's childhood.

"We Remember Your Childhood Well" is a dark, potent poem that speaks from the point of view of parental denial in a strident effort to quash a child's memory of violence. Duffy incorporates fearful memories of violence from her own childhood and collages them into a swirling power play of adults over children that can also be seen as a metaphor for governments over their citizens. Written in a rapid-fire six three-line verses with a few well-chosen rhymes, the narrator uses "we" to reinforce a position of threatening control, insisting the child is wrong, using violently terrifying phrases like "Nobody hurt you . . . That didn't occur the Nobody forced you . . . The whole thing is inside your head" in an impossible effort to convince the child it was all imagined.³⁹ The parents refer to themselves as "the secret police" and state flatly "Nobody sent you away," reinforcing the violent political metaphor.⁴⁰ The poem's meter is deliberately abrupt, demanding, each stanza beginning with a short, stabbing sentence that cuts to a child's fears, making them worse when they are denied. By the end of the poem, the reader sees the child is now an adult, asking his parents important questions as they attempt to repaint the childhood reality. Their way of laying fears to rest is to say they did "what was best" and deny what truly happened to the child – "What does it matter now?" – without giving any credence to the grown child's point of view and likely need for closure. For reasons left open to conjecture the parents were unable to provide a safe environment for their child, then blamed the child for violent and unhappy circumstances and violated his trust by denying the truth.

Beyond doubt, this poem is a clear contradiction to the previously discussed poem, where the child willingly takes responsibility for taking the years of youth from her mother by also being grateful for her love and care. The current one demonstrates the other side of parenting that also exists in a great number of families all over the world and appeals to the reason of

current and potential parents to take responsibility for the life of their children.

The protagonist's voice in "We Remember Your Childhood Well" could be male or female, as could the child. The poem is replete with violent images and phrases that can be seen from both the parental and child's perspective. Are the parents, in their minds, endeavouring to protect their grown child from frightening memories? Did he or she imagine them all? Or are they protecting themselves and denying any responsibility in whatever horror befell their child? Like all Duffy's poems, words and language are kept simple, direct, brief, specific, yet multiple points of view can be derived from the delivery, particularly in this poignant piece.

In the midst of the 1980s political and social upheaval of war, strikes, and rampant budget cuts that led to marginalised young people being deprived of a decent education and job offerings, Duffy wrote "**Education for Leisure.**" In a non-gender-specific voice of an angry adolescent that appears to be more youthful male than female, violence is the theme from the first line: "Today I am going to kill something. Anything."⁴¹ The adolescent is unemployed, as indicated by "Once a fortnight I walk the two miles into town for signing on," a euphemism for putting one's name on a list for work.⁴² The government does not care about him, the school does not care about him, he has a desire to achieve that has been crushed in a failed system. The rhetoric seen in the narrator's words is reflective of the time frame and political circumstances in which little has changed, creating a vortex of social violations. The poem continues to crescendo with violence to the very end when it is clear the narrator is going to go out into the world to deliberately commit a violent crime. Five verses of four lines each are once again in a staggered, slightly off-balance near-meter with a near-pattern of short sentences blended with longer ones that lead the reader through the stages of the young person's profound frustration at being ignored by everyone in his world. Ultimately the reader feels the threat of young people with nothing better to do like the narrator, knife in hand threatens us.⁴³

The controversial tone and motif of the poem are both captivating and disturbing in the potential for the situation to be all too real. The protagonist is representative of the many directionless, marginalised youth who has been left without job and life skills, missed opportunities to engage them in interesting pursuits, and what the level of despair being made to feel insignificant can cause. His propensity for violence shows flashes of having gained some scholastic insight, though misdirected, as he reflects on the act of killing a fly in the style of Shakespeare's King Lear's description of youth. Caught up in desperation, rage and powerlessness, the narrator connects "genius" with acts of violence in his quest to "change the world."⁴⁴

Flushing a pet fish, pets panicking and fleeing from him speak to the terror he casually invokes to get any kind of attention he can garner, something he has apparently done several times. In typical Duffy style, the full extent of the violence, terror, and mania climaxes in the last two lines of her poem when the protagonist is ignored for the last time: "He cuts me off. I get our bread-knife and go out./The pavements glitter suddenly. I touch your arm."⁴⁵ In his mind he will achieve significance one way or another.

"Education for Leisure" is a prime example of Duffy's invocation of violence as a breakdown of the educational system that has reinforced this concept. It became controversial when officials saw it as inciting rather than the insightful piece it actually is, leading them to ban it from schools. Yet Duffy's intention was in the form of an anti-violence protest, putting the truth on the page, speaking for the nation's deprived, directionless youth. The repressive response by an educational system that feared the ramifications of too many angry young people is telling.

Conclusion

Violence and the evolution of violence in all its guises and descriptions continue to be studied extensively as we seek to find solutions to its origins, underlying factors, and continued growth. We must come to better understand the causes and triggers of violence to create feasible societal changes to circumvent it.

An examination of Duffy's poetry reveals that violence is prevalent in the lives of ordinary people striving to adapt to unbalanced economic, social, political, cultural, and religious perspectives and responsibilities. In addition to being remarkable modern poetry, the works of Carol Ann Duffy hold tremendous social and intellectual significance. They demonstrate paramount literature development, particularly as they address issues of violence. Her themes, plots, and styles vary widely, yet her voice remains one of nearly universal appeal as she presents her honest authentic assessment of social problems. She allows readers to make their own interpretations about relationships between children and parents, lost and lonely individuals, using both humour and dramatic interplay of single voices in the first person to express profound and fascinating topics to which readers can readily relate. Duffy's protagonists show us that murderers and psychopaths are created by society and the conditions it generates. They become lost and only find meaning in their lives through acts self-destruction or violence toward others. Violence as a form of leisure becomes a desperate means of bringing purpose back into the life of a broken person.

Duffy also represents the evolution of violence in her poetry, as shown when compared to Browning's "Porphyria's Lover." Browning's poetic story lacks a level of profundity, a more in-depth look at human nature and social conditions to explain a willingness to kill. Duffy, on the other hand, gives us a vivid picture of her protagonists' actions that describe

influencing social, intellectual, and emotional elements, giving the reader a relatable rationale for the narrator's thinking. Whether we agree with it or not, we come away with a clearer understanding not only of her protagonists' beliefs, we are often shocked into a new awareness about aspects of human life and personalities we may have not considered before. She has found accessible avenues to bring the evolution of violence as a result of today's societal and cultural pressures to elevated understanding. In short, Duffy gives us a viable reason to read poetry as a means to understand the evolution of individuals, as the poem "We Remember Your Childhood Well" can possibly discuss one of the reasons, why an individual can become a protagonist of "Education for Leisure".

المستخلص

تجليات تطور العنف في شعر كارول آن دافي منيرة المهاشير أمل رياده

لا غرابة أن يكون للتعبير المجازية الفنية المرتبطة بالعنف حضور مماثل في مختلف العصور والثقافات، إذ تستوطن الشعر منذ بدايات الشعر الكلاسيكي وانتهاء بالشعر المعاصر. لكنه قد لا يكون من السهولة بمكان تتبع صور تطور العنف في الشعر (وفي مجالات أخرى على مستوى المجتمع والإعلام) والذي تغير مع مرور الوقت. تعد كارول آن دافي أحد أبرز الشعراء المعاصرين والحريصين على دمج مواضيع العنف في قصائدها وتبني قضايا المغمورين والمعنفين ممن تركهم المجتمع خلف ظهره. وتوضح هذه الدراسة أوجه الشبه بين تصوير روبرت براوننج للعنف في إنجلترا في العصر الفيكتوري مع تطورات العنف في قصائد مختاره للشاعرة دافي، كمحاكاة هامة لواقع متغير اتنا الثقافية والمجتمعية.

كلمات مفتاحية: عنف، جريمة، جنون، كارول آن دافي.

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⁴ Grier, "Interview: Carol-Ann Duffy."

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Violence: Theory and Ethnography* (London, UK: Continuum, 2002), 74.

⁷ William R. Trumble, Angus Stevenson and Lesley Brown, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 3535.

⁸ Maggie Nelson, *The Art of Cruelty* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011), 15.

⁹ Neil L. Whitehead, *Violence* (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 2004), 61.

¹⁰ Robert Browning, "Porphyria's Lover," in Arthur Quiller-Couch, ed., *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250-1900* (1919. Accessed August 9, 2016. <http://www.bartleby.com/101/720.html>.)

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¹² Helen Gardner, *The New Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 225.

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²⁵ Carol Ann Duffy, *Rapture* (London: Picador, 2005), 46.
²⁶ Ibid.
²⁷ Duffy, *Poetry*, 113.
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