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Surrealistic Imagery as a Visionary Technique in the Poetry of Carol Ann Duffy

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Creative writers are endowed with special type of energy. This energy finds creative expressions in their works. Literature is not photographic representation of reality but it is the transmutation of reality into ideal or psychological reality. The very process of creativity involves analysis and synthetic elements. Surrealism is a step ahead in the creative process. It fundamentally operates on day today's mundane recognizable depictable experiences and emotions but allows them the freedom of organization provided by imagination. Therefore surrealistic imagery has visionary quality. It is to be noted that creative artist would successfully be able to handle surrealistic imagery that has creative capacity to transcend ordinary experiences and create the artistic world characterized by his extra ordinary vision. Many of Duffy's poems lend themselves to surrealistic interpretation. These poems represent high watermark of Duffy's imaginative and creative poetic powers. Surrealistic technique provides her with necessary freedom and framework to critically analyze the prevalent social and cultural conditions. The aim of this study is to critically analyze the use of surrealistic technique employed by Carol Ann Duffy in her poetry.

Introduction

"Four hundred years of male domination came to an end with the election of Carol Ann Duffy as the first woman Poet Laureate of Great Britain," declared the Guardian. Carol Ann Duffy is the first Scottish, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) woman poet laureate who openly publicized her lesbian relationship with Jackie Kay in the history of poet laureateship. She was conferred the title of laureate after Ted Hughes but was later on preceded over by Andrew Motion in 1999 and was appointed to such an honorary post in 2009 after which there was no looking back for her.

Born in a Roman Catholic family in Gorbals a marginalized part of Glasgow on 23rd December 1955. She is the eldest daughter of Frank Duffy and Mary Black and the only girl in a group of four boys. She received her education from Stafford at Saint Austin's RC Primary School, St. Joseph's Convent School and Stafford Girls' High School

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Surrealism as a cultural movement

Surrealism is a cultural movement that began in the early 1920s, and is best known for its visual artworks and writings. The aim was to resolve the previously contradictory conditions of dream and reality. Artists painted unnerving, illogical scenes with photographic precision, created strange creatures from everyday objects and developed painting techniques that allowed the unconscious to express itself and/or an idea/concept.

Surrealist works feature the element of surprise, unexpected juxtapositions; however, many Surrealist artists and writers regard their work as an expression of the philosophical movement first and foremost, with the works being an artifact. Leader André Breton¹ was explicit in his assertion that Surrealism was, above all, an avant-garde movement.

Surrealism developed out of the Dada activities during World War I and the most important center of the movement was Paris. From the 1920s onward, the movement spread around the globe, eventually affecting the visual arts, literature, film, and music of many countries and languages, as well as political thought and practice, philosophy and social theory.

Surrealist Manifesto

Breton wrote the manifesto of 1924 that defines the purposes of the group. He included citations of the influences on Surrealism, examples of Surrealist works and discussion of Surrealist automatism. He defined Surrealism as:

Dictionary: Surrealism, n. Pure psychic automatism, by which one proposes to express, either verbally, in writing, or by any other manner, the real functioning of thought. Dictation of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason, outside of all aesthetic and moral preoccupation.

Encyclopedia: Surrealism. Philosophy. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life.

Use of surrealistic imagery as a visionary technique in Carol Ann Duffy's poetry

Duffy's poetry certainly lends itself to surrealistic interpretations. Her imagery which is surrealistic in nature makes her poetry visionary as well. She is not only the observer of human life and society but is its critic. Her keen observation and analysis is not confined to scientific, rational, social, political or cultural dimensions but as a creative writer of a high order she devotes herself to understand human society and culture with her imaginative powers. This gives her a rare insight to see and express the occult, upward and unseen, suppressed and disgusting, morbid and fantastic. She in her poetry transcends the boundaries set by ordinary sense perception.

The use of surrealistic imagery in Duffy's poem *Adultery* is noteworthy the poem speaks out the disgust and depression felt by the betrayed partner in the relationship. The common place imagery such as dark glasses, new gloves, money tucked in the palms, phone wine, thrilling night, tell tale clock, face, white sheet, life, wedding cake, love, beautiful eyes etc are used with extraordinary, evocative sensibility. The initiated reader would not miss the satire, irony, disgust that the speaker is feeling in the relationship. *Adultery* is as old as the institution of marriage, poet draws our attention to it by using her visionary technique.

The simultaneous sense of danger and excitement of an adulterer is explored but the emphasis on the reaction of the person betrayed.

The opening line of this poem is enough to alert us to the unnatural and furtive behaviour of adulterers. It is hardly necessary to 'Wear dark glasses in the rain' except as a means of disguise. The details of deceit are gradually revealed through such details as 'money tucked in the palms' (stanza 2), 'Pay for it in cash' (stanza 6) and 'flowers dumb and explicit on nobody's birthday.' (stanza 9)

The imagery in the first stanza is notable for the way it uses the image of 'what was unhurt / as though through a bruise' effectively conveys the damage caused by betrayal. If we are bruised the undamaged tissue is still visible. The filtering experience is also presented in the concrete description of the abstract noun 'Guilt' as 'A sick green tint.' This could refer to the new view possible through dark glasses which is unnatural or distorted; 'sick' stresses what will unfold as a distasteful catalogue of betrayal, while 'green' connotes both jealousy and bile.

The adulterer is presented as someone intoxicated with the passion and danger of a clandestine relationship whose 'Hands / can...Phone. Open the wine. Wash themselves.' He or she can secretly communicate with the lover, intoxicate him or her and wash away traces of contact. The sexual encounters are presented as 'lethal, thrilling' emphasizing the mixture of danger and excitement. Are there other examples of this? Why is the adulterer presented as 'creative'? How is it possible to 'suck a lie with a hole in it'? The key could lie in the overall impression of disguise.

The way time is dealt with is significant. In particular, the image of the 'telltale clock / wiping the hours from its face' indicates the effects of time and the realization that the marriage is disintegrating, it 'crumbles like a wedding cake'. This simile signals the irreparable breakdown

that 'no moon can heal'. The 'ring thrown away in a garden' the symbol of fidelity now signifies its destruction.

Duffy does not shy away from the fact that this relationship is a sexual one. What does the rhythm of the sentence 'Do it do it do it.' (Stanza 5) suggest? Compare this with 'more, more' (stanza 3) and again / and again (stanza 8). The final stanza presents the adulterer being confronted. The repetitions emphasize the manner in which shock manifests itself while the short, terse sentences reflect the tension. The dramatic 'You did it. / What. Didn't you. Fuck. Fuck. No.' presents the frustration of the wronged party faced with deliberate evasiveness and then lies. Finally, the linguistic caviling indicates that the adulterer cannot see the affair in purely sexual terms. 'This is only an abstract noun' could refer directly to the word adultery, an abstract noun. Such a noun names a quality or feeling, something intangible. The point here is that adultery may only be such a word but it can nonetheless have devastating implications, as has been explored throughout the poem.

Duffy is gifted with wonderful creative power that allows her to use any ordinary image with surrealistic implications. Millions of women all over the world have taken to the exercise of losing weight in order to appear beautiful and attractive. This has turned out to be an obsession with many. In the poem entitled diet Duffy has ingeniously brought out the hidden meanings of the exercise of dieting. It goes much beyond the simple desire to look slim and pretty.

The poem "The Diet" by Carol Ann Duffy deals with women and body discipline, through the form of anorexia. Bartky writes about how the policing of women's bodies and the space they occupy.

"Today, massiveness, power, or abundance in a woman's body is met with distaste...Dieting disciplines the body's hungers: appetite must be monitored by all times and governed by an iron will. Since the innocent need of the organism for food will not be denied, the body becomes one's enemy...Anorexia nervosa, which has now assumed epidemic proportions, is...the crystallization in a pathological mode of a widespread cultural obsession."²

Our society is structured in a way that, as Foucault writes in his essay on docile bodies, we are told how our bodies should occupy the space around us³. Bartky takes this further and argues that women's bodies in relation to space are restricted and controlled even further. Women are expected to occupy as little space as possible, and this obsession becomes internalized in women. As a result of this, more women are becoming anorexic, as Bartky writes. The woman in Bartky's poem is striving to meet the societal expectations written on her body, and we watch her as her eating disorder progresses.

The first stanza of "The Diet" opens up with just that: the woman is dieting to the extreme, or as Bartky writes "disciplines the body's hungers." As the diet progresses, the woman begins to physically disappear. "By the end of the month, she was skin/ and bone," yet "she starved on," (SFN) showing how a diet to presumably lose weight has grown into a disease. Duffy writes that "her skeleton preened under its tight flesh dress." Her word choice here is vital to understanding the connection back to Duffy's work. Preened means "devote effort to making oneself look attractive and then admire one's appearance." The woman in the poem has

developed an obsession with meeting the unattainable standards society demands of a woman's body, so much so that she has turned into a skeleton. There is no space left to lose, yet she persists and continues to lose weight.

With no more weight to lose, the woman "started to grow smaller" and eventually ends up becoming "seed small." Carol Ann Duffy is taking Bartky's observation about how massiveness and excessive size of a woman's body is not allowed and the repercussions of this and exaggerating it. Not only does this unhealthy expectation of woman manifest in eating disorders, but Duffy writes that it goes further and has women striving to become insignificant and nonexistent. Once seed small, the woman in the poem is unseen by humanity. She exists only in "an empty beer bottle rolled/in the gutter," "the barman's eye" or "she lived in a tear." Not only is she no longer a part of society, but she engages in reckless behavior and parties all night. Her existence is irrelevant to anyone else, just like society wants it to.

The last two stanzas of the poem are incredibly powerful; the seed sized woman lands on the wrong tongue. "She knew where she was all right...inside the Fat Woman now, / trying to get out."(SFN) Despite all of her hard work, the woman is right back where she started, trapped inside the Fat Woman she tried to escape. The capitalization that Duffy uses here assumes that it's not just any fat woman the main character is trapped inside, but the Fat Woman. "The Fat Woman" symbolizes everything that women in society are taught to stay away from, taught to despise, taught to fight; Duffy's poem shows that no matter how hard the main character tried, she ended up right back where she started. Because, just like Bartky says in her essay, women are taught to hate their bodies, no matter what⁴. Thinness and the physical expectations of women in today's society are impossible to achieve. Everyone that attempts to be perfect by society's standards will fail. Duffy's poem voices crucial concerns about the current structure of our society.

In Duffy's celebrated poem *The Laughter at Stafford Girls' High*, there is a reference to the laughter of a girl that assumes the proportion of surrealistic image and brings out the difference of perception and behavior that is sometimes remains invisible between the two generations.

"It was a girl in the Third Form,

Carolyn Clare, who, bored with the lesson, the rivers of England

Brathay, Coquet, Crake, Dee, Don, Goyt,

Rothay, Tyne, Swale, Tees, Wear, Wharfe

had passed a note, which has never been found,

to a classmate in front, Emily Jane, a girl

who adored the teacher, Miss V Dunn MA?

steadily squeaking her chalk on the board

Allen, Clough, Duddon, Feugh, Greta, Hindburn,

Irwell, Kent, Leven, Lowther, Lune, Sprint

but who furtively opened the folded note,

torn from the back of the King James Bible, read

what was scribbled there and laughed out loud. (FG)

The laughter infects the class, then neighboring classes, and finally the whole school, which it gradually destroys.

The poem allegorically tells of inter-generational change - the liberation of the girls in a way that underscores the emotional suppression and depressed lives of their teachers. Gradually, some of the teachers are freed and some are broken.

The biblical quotation remains in the background the girl in the poem never reads it out. What poem present is the neurotic response that the writings of Bible evoke in girl. She gives out a hysterical laughter which is stretched to the entire school. Duffy with her surrealistic technique of writing is capable of elevating and expanding any mundane or ordinary experience into eternal world of imagination. The King James Bible's piece of writing must have contained a moral statement, a parable or a quotation which in ordinary circumstances is expected to be viewed by school girls as something that should guide her behavior. However, in this case girl is able to see imaginatively that this writing in Bible has been rendered so obsolete or has been out of tune with post modern morality that she cannot help but give a loud laughter like a fire. This laughter envelopes the entire school in no time. Here we witness extraordinary visionary technique of Duffy's poetry. It is to be noted that the image of laughter destroying entire school must not be rejected as meaningless or poet's obsession with surrealistic imagery but Duffy whose poetry is never devoid of social concerns emphatically brings out the hollowness, insignificance and worthlessness of education that it stands for.

Traditionally face is considered to be a reflection of identity we recognize other people by their faces. Primarily, memory of someone brings the image of face of the remembered person. Psychologists have proven beyond doubt that face may not reveal the true identity of a person. Freudian psychology has emphasized on significance of dreams to understand the true identity of any individual. Dreams are characterized by freedom of conscious working of mind and therefore what appears in dreams does not follow the logic and dictates of reality. Very often distortions, juxtapositions, absurdities and fantastic occurrence form the very essence of dreams. Dreams refer not what the person is but what he could have been or should have been. In sense they are not the realistic measures but are aspiration techniques to understand and recognize any person. Duffy is surely aware of the importance of dreams. The narrator of the poem *I Remember Me* is demolishing the image of a face as identity and subscribes to the notion that the dreams are the better guides to recognize and fathom the layers of one's personality. Dreams the narrator argues define identity, they make us different even though humans have a common shaped skull.

Initial lines give the description of neurotic urban life which is hardly different from that of a nightmare. Aesthetic definitions of surrealism consist of juxtaposition of opposites to evoke absurdity as in the infamous poem of Dali's "lobster telephone"⁵. The question of individual identity becomes blurred in urban setting when narrator who borders on narcissism looks for familiar face of his lover in the crowd, all the people around him faintly reflect his own face. This is to be interpreted in a surrealist tradition where all the boundaries dissolve and the notion of fixity is rendered absurd. The very idea of remembering presupposes the existence of two one who remembers and the other who is remembered. This idea is also transformed in surrealism is an attack on the tyranny of rationality. The very title of the poem "I Remember Me" upsets this traditional notion of the existence of the two in the process of remembering. The poem reveals the psychological truth that in the act of remembering one is trying to remember oneself. Instances of platform, faces and a crowd in "I Remember Me" are reminiscent also of Ezra Pound's "In a station of the metro"⁶, with its surrealist juxtaposition of petals with the apparition of faces on the underground network. Pounds haiku certainly connects with Duffy's espoused desire in 1988 to present the object as it is, rather than cloud it with emotional slither.

Theme of love and surrealism

Love is universal subject all poets at one time or the other do write love poems. The theme of love can be considered as one of the central concerns in Duffy's poetry. Her delineation of the theme of love is certainly different from other poets. She describes love in a surrealist way.

Standing female nude marks the high point of the amorous poetry in terms of its celebration of surrealist love. Sean O' Brien has argued that "I Remember Me" form this collection is a promising love poem, but does not contain her most successful lines⁷. Eliot's or Baudelaire's influence is hinted at; Andre Breton's first principles of surrealism, the Liverpool poets, Larkin, and surrealist elements of modernist writing might be added to the list. French surrealism by stressing that dreams and unconscious life, coupled with poetry, 'contain solutions to the gravest problems of human existence'⁸. Pure 'psychic automatism', he argued, expresses 'the real functioning of thought'⁹.

In Standing female nude, the imagist chimera of objectivity results in a love poetry that strives to present the amorous 'in itself', as a simultaneous affirmation of Bretonian psychic life amongst the alienating cityscape.

In a station of the Metro might be surrealist, but a grave difference between surrealism and high Modernism can be detected in the former's celebration of 'mad' love as anti-bourgeoisie. Deryn Rees- Jones analyses Duffy's relationship with surrealism and provides an illuminating commentary on the influence of the female surrealist Meret Oppenheim in relation to the overt lesbian eroticism in Oppenheim's cup and saucer from standing female nude. Duffy's appropriation of first surrealist principles can also be seen in her commitment to giving a ventriloquised voice to the under privileged, and her anti-capitalist poetics. Surrealism has been regarded in the popular imagination as a purely aesthetic movement which lauds outrageous silliness, and yet Breton constantly stressed the early French Surrealist adherence to the cause of the proletariat, which occasioned a brief alliance with the Communist Party in the 1930s.

Duffy would have been well aware of this, since in 1978 she appears to have brought a book by Franklin Rosemont entitled “Andre Breton and the First Principles of Surrealism”¹⁰, which emphasizes throughout the revolutionary potential of the movement. Mad love is presented in this context as wary of sex and eroticism. Procreation is regarded as a possibly commodified entity, whereas the amorous, practiced preferably between two passionate, committed heterosexuals, attains transgressive potential with the possible “irruption of desire into ordinary existence which could lead to the transformation of our being”¹¹. After the first manifesto, surrealism became synonymous with love, and poetry; Breton commented that the latter is ‘made in a bed’ like the amorous; one of the early slogans for French Surrealist’s was ‘if you love, you’ll love surrealism’. This shape from *Standing Female Nude* can be read as an exercise in amorous derangement, and as an antidote to the urban nightmare in *I Remember Me*, owing to its appropriation of pastoral signs of desire. Dreams and anti-capitalist verve also pervade the poem; the amorous object comes to the lover only ‘in sleep’; the subject moves through a vast world without goodness, and returns to childhood in the final stanza after orgasm. In the first manifesto, innocence and the amorous are inextricable, since Breton contends that ‘It is perhaps childhood that comes closest to true life’¹². In an interview in 1991, Duffy recalls this remark: ‘Andre Breton said, I think childhood is the only reality’¹³. This links to Duffy’s exploration of origins as contested site of ‘truth’ in *The Other Country*. Love and childhood become metaphysical sites of exploration in the early poetry; the structuralism Duffy searches there for meanings which are, tantalizingly, just beyond her reach.

‘This Shape’ confirms a commitment to the surrealist concept of ‘mad’ love in Duffy’s early work. This utopian notion elides gender difference, whereas elsewhere in *Standing Female Nude* masculinity constitutes an opposite pole in an amorous dialectic. At its extreme point, in Duffy’s next collection, *Selling Manhattan*, this results in the poem ‘Psychopath’, in which an adolescent character seeks sexual favors from a minor. Lesser symptoms of masculine, amorous discourse contribute to the diminishing prevalence of amorous lyrics in Duffy’s later works, but *Standing Female Nude* already signals the difficulty of reconciling heterosexual love poetry with pragmatic representations of men. Hence a contradiction persists in the collection; utopian, ‘mad’ vies constantly with expositions of male violence. This Shape promises the jouissance of surrealist pairing early in this collection, but by the nineteenth and twenty-second poems of *Standing Female Nude* (*A clear note* and *You Jane*), the equating of violence with masculinity upsets this possibility. Even the twelfth poem ‘where we came in’, presents an end to the defining (and unnamed) amorous tie in the collection, if *I Remember Me*, *This Shape*, *Saying Someone*, *Jealous as hell*, *Naming parts*, *Till our Face* and *Lovebirds* are read as the script of a developing relationship. ‘Where we came in’ is followed by *Free Will*, a poem on abortion and *Alliance*, in which Duffy aborts the cycle of love poems by depicting men as drinkers, *Scrooges* and unemotional retrogrades. In *Alliance*, the husband’s paradoxical empowerment and bitterness through his status as bread winner is figured by the moment in which he returns from the pub and ‘plonks his weight down’ on both the wife’s tired and unresisting body, and her life in general (SFN, p.26). Love has capitulated to the scourge, for surrealism, of disastrous marital sex by the half way point of *Standing Female Nude*. This trope is repeated in *You Jane*, in which Duffy depicts a perceived aspect of proletarian masculinity with the thuggish ‘Man of the House’ who farts a genuine smell against the wife/who snuggles up to [him] after he’s given her one/ after the *Dog and Fox* (SFN, p.34). It is as if Duffy cannot equate the French surrealists’ desire to encourage ‘mad love and working class emancipation with her sense of tangible gender

inequalities. Masculine imperatives frustrate Breton's idealist search of *jouissance*; the erection shoved into the wife in *You Jane* is linked to the purple which throbs in the master's neck. It is as if Duffy argues that the patriarch's identity is essentially constructed in the male body; equally, she might be indicating that the masculine penchant of violence produces culturally determined expressions of desire. Whether nature or nurture is to blame, the amorous behavior of masculine, working-class men is ultimately presented in this poem as analogous to the articulations of the clumsy ape-man referred to in the elided part of the title.

'The Light Gatherer', meanwhile, is a beautiful, visceral and slightly surreal celebration of the magical experience of having a child:

'Light gatherer. You fell from a star into my lap, the soft lamp at the bedside mirrored in you, and now you shine like a snow girl, a buttercup under a chin, the wide blue yonder you squeal at and fly in [...]'(....)

This is an ecstatically maternal poem. Carol Ann Duffy seems to discover before our gaze her reverential joy at the miraculous evolution of another human being. The tenderness is palpable and the line, 'Your kissed feet glowed in my one hand' is magical! How emotionally humbling is the admission of 'my one hand'....

In eastern philosophy life on earth is perceived to be a part of bigger dream which is world itself. Duffy's this poem has dreamy quality. Dream stands for higher level of bliss which is unattainable within the confines of the reality of life. Duffy is able to see the bliss of other life only when she succeeds in enhancing perception to the level of surrealistic imaginative understanding. The poem glitters like a beautiful dream before our eyes.

As these poems rejoice in new life, 'Death and the Moon' mourns those who have passed on: '[...] I cannot say where you are. Unreachable / by prayer, even if poems are prayers. Unseeable / in the air, even if souls are stars [...]'.(FG)

Surrealism transcends the boundaries of ordinary experiences. One of the accepted transcendental experiences for the mankind is passion of prayer. Prayer is supposed to go beyond this world and evoke divine blessings. It is also the means to get connected with those souls who have departed from this world.

In many cultures it is believed that the departed souls are transmitted into stars. It may sound to be superstitious when judged under the cold light of scientific rationality but it can be unquestionable truth in the realms of spirituality which is claimed to be reality by many especially in the oriental cultures. The concept of Brahma, the universal and comprehensible soul retains every form of energy in one form or the other. Individual soul is immortal it changes only its states of existence. It is a living human being or a shining star at the distance of billions of miles is a part of that universal soul. Prayer being transcendental in nature is capable of moving throughout the universe and can connect the various elements of the universal soul. This oriental wisdom seems to pervade Duffy's concept of surrealism. At the same time it is to be borne in the mind that Duffy does not inherit the great tradition of oriental spiritual thought but being the

artist of the high order she is intuitively capable of realizing and faithfully rendering that mysterious oneness which pervades all forms of existence.

The poem entitled Tall is sure to attract the attention of readers the image of ever growing tall woman is presented before us with visionary touches. Duffy here has captured the unconscious wish of each one of us to grow in life. Everyone wants to be taller than others. Given biological constraints this wish to be taller than others drives many to attend achievements in different walks of life to prove their superiority to others. As an imaginative reality Duffy presents before us an example of a woman who goes on becoming taller and taller every day.

Then like a christening..... Taller daily (FG)

First day she became 8 foot tall which means she had to bow down to take a shower and her clothes hung like curtains. Man looking at her filled with awe and fled away like a boy. She was getting exposed to new experiences and activities apples hung so that she could directly bite and eat. She was as tall as trees and the birds sang on her ears. She went on becoming taller and taller everyday now she could peek through the windows of upper floors and saw lovers' love-making. She had to be presented with a drink placed on the high roof. Now her head could touch clouds. When she was 32 feet in height she was able to see at the distance of many miles. Now she was becoming taller than moon, stars and planets. The ordinary world was not fit for her. She had to sleep in the open, walk bare footed. Duffy asks an existential question what she could see up there. Perhaps, she was able to see the approaching hurricanes and storms. Stars were within her reach but the sad truth was by now she was out of touch with humanity people on the earth appeared to be tiny creatures with which she had nothing in common. Duffy has presented a wonderful and visionary picture of a tall woman everyone is fascinated by surrealistic touches with which the poem proceeds. Poet brings out the meaninglessness and futility of once ambition to be taller than others. If at all, one in her life becomes tall like the woman in the poem would be of no use. Life is meaningful and pleasurable only when we share it with others on equal footing.

Sheburning towers. (FG. p)

The last lines are indicative that this tall woman despite her high stature is not completely devoid of human feelings. When she sees the burning souls falling from the tower she stoops down to catch them.

Conclusion

'Feminine Gospels' written in 2002 showcase ample vicissitudes of her surrealistic vision. In the poem 'The Diet' she talks about a woman who goes into strict dietary restrictions so much so that she ends up gasping only air and water. Eventually she becomes so thin and obscure that she is blown away by the wind and swallowed by a fat woman and it is hauntingly grotesque imagery to visualize the heavy woman trying to burp out the emaciated one. In another poem she talks about a woman who becomes so tall that she outreaches wide expanse of the sky and is able to reach out to the souls of the people who died in the terrorist attack on World Trade Centre reach out to the souls of the people who died in the terrorist attack on World Trade Centre.

Surrealistic imagery is the most prominent technique that is used in her poems whether in terms of myths or bizarre imagery. In one of her interviews she claims to be inspired by Andre Breton's surrealist imagery and his vision on childhood which he feels is the only reality, this idea is incorporated in her poem "The Laughter of Stafford Girl's High". In it, she envisions a girl who scribbles something on a piece of paper torn from her Bible. What was written is not revealed in the poem. But how that invokes an infectious laughter that spreads through the corridors into the classrooms breaking rules of silence and obedience is the curiously baffling theme of the poem.

Duffy's surrealism is also apparent in the way she gives voice to the oppressed and the marginalized when she addresses the umpteen issues capitalistic policies, astigmatic gender norms, and the subaltern issues of the contemporary society reach out to the souls of the people who died in the terrorist attack on World Trade Centre.

Thus, the use of surrealism imparts charm, fascination and visionary quality to Duffy's poetry. She is able to recognize and see the grotesque and unusual elements which lay beneath the layer of realism. In fact, this grotesqueness of surrealism lies hidden in the unconscious of every individual. It requires the genius of a great artist like that of Duffy who is able to use these surrealistic elements poetically rendering commonplace realistic experiences into visionary dreams. It is under the force of surrealistic imagery realism is elevated to the level of fantastic, magical, metaphysical and magnificent. With surrealistic technique Duffy succeeds in liberating experience, idea, feeling or thought from the confines of rationality and imparts it with freedom and flexibility so that this experience, feeling, ideas or thought not only put on form but they succeed in conveying far more than could be conveyed by the technique of realism.

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