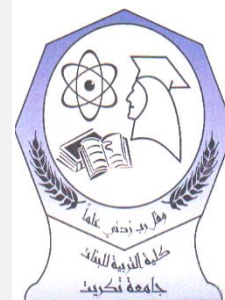




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The Role of Poetry in Gender Equality Awareness Education among Youth

Asst. Inst. Zainab Abdulkadhim Mhana*
Imam Ja'afar Al_Sadiq University
E-mail: m.zainab91@yahoo.com

Keywords: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Duffy</i>- <i>education</i>- <i>feminism</i>- <i>morality</i>- <i>poetic language</i>	Abstract: <p>Modern educational methods, in general, and literary texts, in particular, have played immensely important roles in bringing awareness to young students concerning the notion of the female-male binary relationship in society. This objective has been fulfilled through women's literary works, which are considered powerful materials contributing toward female empowerment in the culture of masculinity. Post-1980s, feminist works are used in education as a part of the teaching curriculum to address gender equality imbalance in society. The analysis of feminist writers' texts and their discourses is at the core of ongoing debates and the evolving pedagogical methods of the contemporary educational sphere. Accordingly, Carol Ann Duffy, a most notable feminist poet, known for her poetics dexterity, has worked on addressing gender and female identity. Her poems have been published and referred to in academic works, magazines, and internet forums. At the same time, her poetry has been instrumental in improving the themes and goals of educational syllabuses at the primary and secondary school levels as well as those of higher education institutions at the national level. This paper sought to reveal the vital role of literary language and mainly feminist literary works in radically enhancing educational syllabuses. The study will be conducted through examining the main themes of</p>
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* Corresponding Author: Zainab Abdulkadhim Mhana , E-Mail: m.zainab91@yahoo.com
,Tel: +964077 , Affiliation: Department of English, Imam Ja'afar Al_Sadiq University -Iraq

Available online	selected poems from Duffy's <i>The World's Wife</i> which have been taught in academia. This paper concludes that Duffy's poems have encoded the importance of literary language in communicating a specific morality as well as stimulating a target generation or society.
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دور الشعر في وعي المساواة بين الجنسين عند الشباب
م. م. زينب عبدالكاظم مهنا، جامعة الإمام جعفر الصادق

<p>المخلص</p> <p>لقد لعبت مناهج التدريس الحديثة بشكل عام، والنصوص الأدبية بشكل خاص أدواراً مهمة في زيادة وعي الطلبة الشباب فيما يخص العلاقة الثنائية بين الذكر والأنثى في المجتمع. وقد تحقق هذا الهدف من خلال الأعمى الأدبية النسوية التي تعد من المواد المهمة التي تساهم في تعزيز دور المرأة في أوسط الثقافي الذكوري. استخدمت الأعمال الأدبية النسوية في المناهج التعليمية بعد ١٩٨٠ لتبين عدم المساواة بين الجنسين في المجتمع. ويعد تحليل خطاب الكاتبات النسويات شيئاً جوهرياً في الجدل الدائر والمناهج التعليمية الحالية في الواقع التربوي المعاصر. وهكذا نجد أن كارول آن دفي، وهي شاعرة نسوية بارزة، تتناول في قصائدها مسألة الجنس والهوية الأنثوية. وقد نشرت قصائدها ويتم إقتباسها باستمرار في الكتابات الأكاديمية والمجلات والحلقات النقاشية على مواقع الإنترنت. كما نجد أن أشعارها كانت ذات أهمية كبيرة في مناهج التعليم الثانوي والجامعي. تحاول هذه الدراسة أن تبين الدور الرئيس الذي تلعبه اللغة الأدبية وخاصة في الأعمال الأدبية الأنثوية في تعزيز المناهج التربوية. يركز البحث على دراسة الثيمات الرئيسة في قصائد مختارة للشاعرة دفي من مجموعتها زوجة العالم والتي تدرس في الجامعات. تستنتج الدراسة أن قصائد دفي تثبت أهمية اللغة الأدبية في توصيل درس الأخلاقي إضافة إلى خلق الوعي بذلك في المجتمع</p>	<p>الكلمات الدالة:-</p> <p>معلومات البحث</p> <p>تاريخ البحث:</p> <p>-الاستلام: ٢٠١٩ ١١ ١٢</p> <p>-القبول: ٢٠١٩ ١١ ٢٥</p> <p>التوفر على الانترنت</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Scholars have long believed that language reflects the people, situations and conditions in society, concluding that “If language is used by literature, then literature, too, mirrors the society where it belongs and emanates” (Bulusan, 2019, p. 224). They emphasise the role of literature in raising the awareness of students and people in general. They hold that the significance of literature extends beyond language instruction, assuming a central role in promoting the structural congruity and resilience of specific social networks. Literature has held a high status in societies of the ancient past which has persisted to the present time. A society’s appreciation of the value of literary works represents an unquestionable cultural requirement in terms of social advancement. Literary works may be considered materially valuable as cultural artefacts, or they may be wielded as instruments for improving social awareness within communities. This is on the grounds that writing, in its different various manifestations, promulgates social messages which ideally foster social resistance or congruity among a nation’s various social and ethnic groups (Rahman & Weda, 2018, p. 151).

Gender and identity are among the most prominent problems societies have suffered from. Therefore, the Gender and Education journal has provided a venue for the dissemination of feminist research in education since 1989. It aims to represent key themes and debates in the field, drawing together papers which particularly represent these topics. In this way, the intended purpose is to provide readers with insight into the ways in which feminist education in literature has developed over the years and to serve as a source of reference for high-quality findings and feminist theory in relation to education (Narendiran & Bhuvaneswari, 2018). Post-1980s feminist works are used in education through universities’ curriculum components to address gender equality imbalance in the society by analysing the texts of feminist writers and their discourse which are at the core of on-going and provisional debates about women who have long remained under the control of males. The research literature about gender shows that it does make differences in language learning, but findings on the effects of gender differences on learning are not uniform. The discrepancies in the existing literature on language learning’s relationships with personality traits and gender have reduced the prominence of the research on the topic to a relatively mundane level, suggesting that any attempt to provide a conclusive account of such scattered findings has no benefit. In other words, a consensus regarding studies on gender and/or personality effects on second/foreign language learning cannot be reached because of the many other contextual factors that would need to be included in any confirmatory analyses, which would make the research impractical (Tajbakhsh & Gharakhanloo, 2015, p. 67).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The article includes the following selected poems, which are investigated to explore various representations of female characters in contemporary society: “Little Red Cap,” “Thetis” “Pilate’s Wife”, “Delilah,” “Mrs Aesop”, “Mrs Midas” and “Anne Hathaway”. The study deals with these poems because they cover various female character types in contemporary society. A qualitative research design was adopted to investigate the pervasive shifts of restructuring female convictions, configurations, and identity in the selected poems from Duffy’s *The World’s Wife*. Data for this paper were collected using literary books and journal articles.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Carol Ann Duffy, who is a feminist poet, In May 2009, was appointed as Britain's Poet Laureate. She is the first woman and the first Scot to hold the position. In recognition of this accomplishment, "Congratulations came from the Labour Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, along with the literati. The position was an endorsement to carry on taking poetry into many walks of life and signaled huge advances in the status of women as poets" (Dowson, 2016, p. 17). Concerning her talent of writing poetry, Wardle (2012) claims that "when Carol Ann Duffy called poetry 'the music of being human' [...] she was referring to the way in which poetry can transmit humanity through a peculiarly human medium and genre" (p. 8). The poetic genre reflects Duffy's feminist concerns in her poetry. In her *The World's Wife*, the poet portrayed the lives of women as victims of male bias. Duffy represents the persona in a stranded setting, which allegorically indicates her marginalization by the society. More interestingly, the society has traditional ridiculous attitudes towards women.

Duffy has a great role in the feminist and educational movements through using poetic diction as a means of empowering women's reaction against marginalization. Female marginalization is frequently conspicuous in the sense of Duffy's poetry, especially in *The World's Wife*. She introduced many stereotypical ideas about what it is to be a woman. She rejected the dominant male figures through many decades. Duffy wants to give voice to the silent woman by depicting a new side of old stories, myths, and popular characters. In Horner's (2003) words, "*The World's Wife* also very clearly presents itself as engaging with a tradition of women's writing and thought.

Dowson (2016) observed that Carol Ann Duffy's poetry has been discussed and published in various media from newspapers and magazines to academic works and internet forums. Emphasizing the important influence Duffy and her literary work have had in the education of youth, Dowson (2016) further noted that Duffy "has worked in primary and secondary schools where her poems have long been on exam syllabuses at GCSE, Advanced, and Scottish National and Higher levels" (Dowson, 2016, p. 2). Moreover, in terms of her social identity, "Duffy, as a feminist and bisexual poet known for her feminist writings, represents the voice of the Other and seems to be the bravest voice among the writers of her generation" (Mhana et al., 2019, p. 104).

In Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife*, "Little Red Cap" is an example of didactic poetic language as it offers children with deep insights concerning moral issues, such as austerity:

At childhood's end, the houses petered out
into playing fields, the factory, allotments
kept, like mistresses, by kneeling married men,
the silent railway line, the hermit's caravan,
till you came at last to the edge of the woods.
It was there that I first clapped eyes on the wolf. (1-6)

Feminist education is very common in almost all countries. It includes students from both genders, males and females. In some countries, feminist education is considered

necessary and important for students to exchange experience. Such experience is acquired in the early education or late periods of education. Thus, this experience is exchanged by students who may have different social perspectives. Therefore, society plays an important role in deciding whether to send their children to feminist schools or not. However, feminist education is opposed in some countries on ethical grounds. The justification of such opposition often depends on the prevalent religious trends of those countries. This is, therefore, the result of egoism and utilitarianism (Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018). In *The World's Wife*, "Little Red Cap," Duffy's focus on the importance of reading is emphasized in that even the wolf was portrayed as educated and literate.

he stood in a clearing, reading his verse out loud
In his wolfy drawl, a paperback in his hairy paw (Duffy, 1999)

The fact that many now talk of femininity and masculinity in the plural—femininities and masculinities—indicates the shifts in thinking that have taken place since the time when feminist education through literature started. In the early decades of gender studies and education, it was more common to find discussions that concentrated on differences between men/women and girls/boys than intra-gender differences, such as explorations of gender differences between females in literary works. In those earlier days, there was a recognition of diversity created through social class and ethnicity (Narendiran & Bhuvanewari, 2018). Duffy's *The World's Wife* echoes the position of women in society. They are subordinate to men. Her poem "Thetis" conveys this meaning:

I shrank myself/ to the size of a bird in the hand/ of a man (Duffy, 1999)

To understand the reasons for this is to understand the theories that were available and the major concerns that were occupying the efforts of educational literary feminists. The main belief underpinning second-wave feminism was that women were globally oppressed by men and something needed to be done about it. However, the notion that all women shared similar experiences of oppression was increasingly criticised, particularly by women writers and by working class women, who pointed out that middle-class feminists were able to exercise power over other women. There were also differences between feminists in terms of their aims and the theoretical perspectives in which these aims were contextualised (Narendiran & Bhuvanewari, 2018). In Duffy's *The World's Wife*, "Mrs. Midas" provides ample education dictums about greed and idiocy:

What gets me now is not the idiocy or greed
but lack of thought for me. Pure selfishness. I sold
the contents of the house and came down here.
I think of him in certain lights, dawn, late afternoon,
and once a bowl of apples stopped me dead. I miss most,
even now, his hands, his warm hands on my skin, his touch. (54-60)

In terms of education there were initially three very clear literary perspectives: liberal feminism, radical feminism, and Marxist-socialist feminism, and these were joined in the 1980s by literary feminism. All four of these perspectives focused to

greater and to lesser extents on structural injustices and inequalities, for example, the unequal career opportunities of women academic staff. At this point, notions of difference were related mainly to structural differences, with liberal feminists arguing that sex-role socialisation and legislation lay at the root of gender inequalities, Marxist socialist feminists seeing the reproduction by schools of social-class divisions as the major factor, and radical feminists identifying male power as the cause of female educational experiences. It was the increasing articulation of the concept of difference as espoused in identity politics that brought about greater attention to the various ways in which individuals went about constructing identities. Here, we can see the recognition and engagement with pluralistic notions of masculinities and femininities, including discussions of the ways in which gender is intersected by other literary variables such as ethnicity, culture, social class, literary depiction and so forth in shaping personal identities (Narendiran & Bhuvanewari, 2018). In Duffy's *The World's Wife*, "Pilate's Wife" is an illustrative example of the sense of belonging to homeland. This is also an education aspect conveyed through the poem:

I longed for Rome, home, someone else. When the Nazarene
entered Jerusalem, my maid and I crept out,
bored stiff, disguised, and joined the frenzied crowd.
I tripped, clutched the bridle of an ass, looked up
and there he was. His face? Ugly. Talented.
He looked at me. I mean he looked at *me*. My God.
His eyes were eyes to die for. Then he was gone,
his rough men shouldering a pathway to the gates. (5-12)

Feminist theories and methodologies have occupied, in recent years, far more space in gender and education than in the early days of literary feminism. This is indicative of the fact that feminist research is increasingly concerned with epistemological and methodological matters in contrast to earlier feminist research studies of education where the emphasis was on methods. As was indicated earlier, the various feminist perspectives informed where gender inequalities in literature were located, and there was, certainly in the early years of second-wave feminism, a general acceptance that qualitative methods were more appropriate to feminist research than quantitative. With the emergence of identity politics and the greater recognition of difference and otherness came the opportunity to explore in far more nuanced ways how a woman has been socially constituted in terms of what a man is not. At the same time, post-modern and particularly post-structuralist theory have posed a major challenge to feminist identity through literature, deconstructing truth claims and the apparent cohesion of groups such as women. The impact of post-structuralism on feminist thinking has been quite profound and not least because of the questions and challenges it creates for feminism. Despite these, literary feminism has been enthusiastically taken up by many feminists as a radical theory which offers the potential to engage with complex power differences (Chang, 2018). In Duffy's *The World's Wife*, "Mrs. Aesop" presents cardinal religious educational lessons:

By Christ, he could bore me for Purgatory. He was small
didn't prepossess. So he tried to impress. *Dead men,*
Mrs Aesop, he'd say, tell no tales. Well, let me tell you now

that the bird in his hand shat on his sleeve,
never mind the two worthless in the bush. Tedious.
Going out was worst. He'd stand at our gate, look, then leap;
scour the hedgerows for a shy mouse, the fields
for a sly fox, the sky for one particular swallow
that couldn't make a summer. The Jackdaw according to him,
envied the eagle (1-10)

The engagement of parents in the educational process is another benefit of educational ethics. If the parents are aware enough of their moral customs and traditions, they will sustain their children with good manners. In this way, educational ethics connects the school with society. If this happens, the school becomes more aware of the ethical requirements of the students. Both schools and education ministries will appreciate the social traditions of students while recognizing that in any educational situation, endeavours corresponding to both views may be taking place. Exploring the distinction between society and ministry regulations would argue the possibility to recognize women's ethical background and to be clear about the aims of school matters which may not impair the success of educational efforts and compromise ethical credibility from the perspective of educational aspects in literature (*Chang, 2018*). In Duffy's *The World's Wife*, "Delilah" deals with morality through exposing the defects of engaging women in devastating wars:

There's nothing I fear.
Put your hand here –
he guided my fingers over the scar
over his heart,
a four-medal wound from the war –
but I cannot be gentle, or loving, or tender. (15-20)

The breadth of scope of ethical issues relates to the society. In almost all societies, the ethical factor is one of the most important issues. How people treat one another depends on the way in which their ethical morality is acquired. In education, the establishment of various activities such as voluntary workshops and additional education courses will facilitate the understanding of women's common ethics. In addition, the early education of children will pave the way for better future school life. The conceptual foundations of good education, like pedagogical methodology, are important for preschool and feminist education. The establishment of extra-curricular activities will broaden the scope of students' ethical perspective via literature (*Almutairi, 2017*). In Duffy's *The World's Wife*, "Anne Hathaway" exemplifies the utmost denotation of the mother as the safe logging for her sons. Again, the poem presents devout insights regarding maternity and its ethical matters. Mother is metaphorically depicted as a forest:

The bed we loved in was a spinning world
of forests, castles, torchlight, cliff-tops, seas
where he would dive for pearls. My lover's words
were shooting stars which fell to earth as kisses
on these lips; my body now a softer rhyme
to his, now echo, assonance; his touch

a verb dancing in the centre of a noun. (1-7)

Dowson stated that, in one of Duffy's interviews, the poet considered poetry “the music of being human” (2016). Duffy was referring to the way in which poetry can transmit humanity through a peculiarly human medium and genre. So, she retells well-known stories with familiar characters in a way in which the women characters appear strong, wise, active and even elusive. Duffy is striving through her depiction of the personas of these characters to develop a new personality type for new generations of women to follow. Her intention is to establish strong, self-aware and stylish women far removed from the traditional feminine figures they used to hear about who were dominated and controlled by males.

CONCLUSION

This paper has accentuated the educational insights on Duffy's *The World's Wife*. The study has concentrated on the ethical aspects of selected poems from the collection to explore the education effect of the author's poetic language. More specifically, this study has revealed the feminist authorial artistic utilization of some themes in order to spread awareness about integral social issues that might be considered in the light of morality. Furthermore, the study has approached the implicit symbolical meaning of the selected poems for the sake of interpreting the essential education themes emphasized by the poet, Duffy. Thus, the paper has explored the role of poetic feminist language in spreading awareness concerning vital moral matters.

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