

Standing female nude

- Carol Anne Duffy

- Analysis by nikita k

Standing female nude is about a woman struggling to make a living in her time and era due to the social injustice. The poem displays her thoughts while she poses for an extended period of time for an artist in order to make a few francs.

- Themes: objectification of women, class struggles
- Tone: cynical
- Structure: 3 stanzas, irregular meter
- Global issue: politics, power and justice.

Stanza 1

Six hours like this for a few francs.
Belly nipple arse in the window light,
he drains the colour from me. Further to the right,
Madame. And do try to be still.
I shall be represented analytically and hung
in great museums. The bourgeoisie will coo
at such an image of a river-whore. They call it Art.

The gender dynamics are visible here. Being “represented analytically” suggests that she is an object for people to comment on and to be disregarded as a human being.

Light is a symbol for hope and liveliness and yet her “colours” are being drained from her. The literal meaning of this may be that she is feeling cold and is becoming pale but it could also be a metaphor for her dignity or her pride being stripped away as the time passes.

Aimed to shock the reader. Shows that she is being objectified.

A very sarcastic and mocking tone is used here as she points out the unjust social class system. The bourgeoisie respect her existence in a painting but not in real life. The use of the word ‘coo’ can be seen as the bourgeoisie viewing her as a toy (with childish excitement), further objectifying her.

The tone of annoyance is set for the entire stanza within the first line.

Irony to emphasize her disgust towards the artists objectification of her.

The respectful word ‘madame’ is ironic in this situation as he’s clearly treating her as an object and not being respectful. This adds to her mocking tone.

Stanza 2

Maybe. He is concerned with volume, space.
I with the next meal. You're getting thin,
Madame, this is not good. My breasts hang
slightly low, the studio is cold. In the tea-leaves
I can see the Queen of England gazing
on my shape. Magnificent, she murmurs,
moving on. It makes me laugh. His name

She doubts the concept of art here and it's also clear that she's aware that he views her as an object.

Insinuates her low social status and her need to continue her work in order to ensure survival even if it costs her self-esteem.

This implies that she's either starving and that she cannot afford to make herself plumper or that she's getting older and this may affect her work in the future. This brings out the unjust class system.

Shows her lack of interest for what is considered "good art"

His disregard for her comfort shows his lack of respect for her due to her social class.

Tea-leaves are a symbol for the future. - cruel irony

Further objectification. It's ironic how he fails to understand her hardships when he is a struggling artist himself. The gender dynamics are clear here gain. The artist recognises that her has a higher potential to achieve success and wealth in the future than she does.

Condescending tone. She is mocking the system.

Odd ending- creates anticipation

Stanza 3

is Georges. They tell me he's a genius.

There are times he does not concentrate
and stiffens for my warmth.

He possesses me on canvas as he dips the brush
repeatedly into the paint. Little man,
you've not the money for the arts I sell.
Both poor, we make our living how we can.

This is a moment of triumph for the model as even though he is called a genius and she a whore, they both are still of the same class and experience the same struggles with money and it implies that she knows that she's not of a lower standard than that of him.

She does not have any control over how she's going to be portrayed and hence the use of the word "possesses". This is another reference to how she is being objectified as this shows that at the moment, the model does not belong to herself and that she's treated like the property of the artist. There could also be a sexual reference in this line.

Enjambment- free flow of ideas. His name is revealed and hers is still 'madame' even though she is the protagonist of the poem. This highlights how insignificant she is according to Braque-objectification of women

This shows the double standard. she is reprimanded for selling her body and he is called a genius for his work even though he's buying her body. - gender and class imbalance

This may refer to his erection due to staring at her naked body for hours. This also may be a reference to his humanity. He refuses to accept her as a human being and therefore, further objectifies her.

I ask him Why do you do this?

Because I have to. There's no choice. Don't talk.

My smile confuses him. These artists

take themselves too seriously. At night I fill myself

with wine and dance around the bars. When it's finished

he shows me proudly, lights a cigarette. I say

Twelve francs and get my shawl. It does not look like me

Now the model has a more superior attitude and she displays more confidence than in the beginning of the poem because his painting would not exist without her.

This may be interpreted as her personality not being captured in this painting because it clearly wasn't taken into consideration as she was being objectified or it may be a reference to the cubist art used which she couldn't understand.

The quick pace of this indicates that he is uncomfortable with talking to her and that he doesn't want to start a conversation. - lack of respect for her as a human.

He is confused by her smile because he had just cut her off and also because he feels awkward.

Their roles are reversed. He feels uncomfortable where as she feels more confident.

This may imply that she enjoys her job- drinking wine and dancing to earn money and this supports her smile in the previous stanza and compares to how serious and unhappy Braque is with his job.