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

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.

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.

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.
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

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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 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.

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

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.

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.

Their roles are reversed. He feels uncomfortable whereas she feels more confident.

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.

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.