

Compare the ways in which two or more Carol Ann Duffy poems explore relationships

Although there are more contrasts, there are some similarities between Carol Ann Duffy's two poems, 'Mrs Midas' and 'Frau Freud', in terms of the way they portray relationships.

Mrs Midas has a much longer structure. It has eleven stanzas whereas Frau Freud has only one. Even before we read these two, we can infer that Mrs Midas is likely to give us a more in depth insight into her life, than Frau Freud. On closer inspection of the two poems we find that this is true; that Mrs Midas has a much more detailed emotional insight into her life. It shows her as a nurturing character,

'Fingers wiped the other's glass like a brow'

This description gives a homely feel to the atmosphere whereas as Frau Freud quite obviously doesn't. We are given no insight into her life; it just gives us an insight into her sexual attitudes, and she is representative here of women in general.

They are both bitter women in these two poems, Frau Freud in response to the attitude of men towards sex and she is perhaps quite sick of hearing about it. This is because of her husband and his attitude to sex and his beliefs that many behaviours are related to sexual issues, and she states that she is 'sick up to here'.

Mrs Midas is very bitter because her partner made a selfish decision to satisfy his need for gold and money and showed no regard for her when making his decision. He effectively changes her life, ruins their marriage and puts her in physical danger, because if he touches her she could be turned to gold like all he has touched already:

'He was busy turning the spare room into the tomb of Tutankhamun'.

She is quite afraid of his new 'gift' as she puts 'a chair against her door' to make sure he cannot get in. Just including the word 'Tutankhamun' gives a sense of excess about the whole situation and also suggests her cynical sense of humour in this passage.

Even though they are both bitter women, they both show some compassion, especially when 'Mrs Midas' says that she 'misses most, even now, his hands, his warm hands on her skin, his touch.'

Here she states how she really does miss being close to him and feeling that passion she used to feel 'in those halcyon days.'

Even though she sells the house and moves on, she still regrets leaving him there and the poem ends on a sad note, with Mrs Midas sharing her nostalgia and regret, not for leaving him but for his choice to be so selfish and throwing away what they had:

'What gets me now..... but lack of thought for me. Pure selfishness'

In Frau Freud 'pity' is expressed for men, in general, who regard the 'Penis' as being so significant. This statement implies that she regards the relationship as more important than the sexual aspects; this is the only part in the poem where any sort of emotion is shown; the rest of it is just a mocking repetition of quite bizarre colloquial terms. The humour created also has an effect on the reader and makes Freud's ideas regarding sex seem all the more ridiculous.

There is humour shown in both of the poems, although in very different forms. The humour shown in Mrs Midas deals more with her enjoyment of his misfortune, which is in response to his selfishness

'The toilet I didn't mind'.

This is just dry wit, perhaps saying it to herself as a little joke. She also relishes the humorous notion of him now 'be able to give up smoking'

This is just a funny jab at him really. It's not meant to be anything more, but it calms her down slightly so she can move on and think about what she has to do with him next. Frau Freud is humorous but a more excessive humour. It is quite bizarre, over-the-top-humour; the notion of having thirty different terms for the male genitalia adds humour.