

Americanised

1) *What is it about?*

Bruce Dawe's poem *Americanised* is about a mother and her child.

The first stanza is set in the morning at breakfast time. It involves a mother and her child, instead of seeing a warm loving mother we see a mother that is cold towards her child and is doubtful of her love for her child.

The mother & child are also conveyed to be separate from each other by them being on opposite sides of the table.

In the second stanza shows a baby that is well looked after but lacks affection. The child experiences a "vague passing spasm of loss." The mother blocks out her child's cries, showing there is a lack of contact and warmth between the mother & child or a lack of connection between them.

Stanza three again shows doubtfulness about the mother's love for her child. We see how the mother locks her child in because she fears the modern world. She sees the world as dangers and especially fears men. Her fear of men is emphasized by the italics used. In the final line of the stanza, the mother puts her son on a plastic pot. This is somewhat symbolic of the consumerist society i.e. manufactured and cheap.

Dawe's poem 'Americanized' portrays consumerism indirectly as an evil to some, yet, it largely reveals the effects and origins of consumerism. Dawe artistically concentrates on an allegorical meaning of the relationship to America with Australia and the influences of the media.

In the opening stanza of the poem it says "She loves him and what small child could beneficence of that motherhood beamed across the laminex breakfast table top each day". This is already depicting Australia as the small child, the states as the mother and therefore having control and influence over us, we look up to our mothers for direction, young children need guidance from their parents to distinguish the differences from right and wrong. Australia is in this same position as the child; we ourselves as a nation have been widely influenced by the United States in the form of consumerism. We wear their clothes, eat their food, watch their television, buy their appliances and pretty much look up to and rely on them as a guidance like figure.

"She loves him... but will not allow him out" This is showing that control again, mothers for the most part especially while their children are young are over protective. "The streets are full of nasty cars and men". In this part of stanza three we look at how Dawe interprets the situation, Australia is being somewhat protected brought under Americas wing so to speak to be kept away from the threats and dangers the rest of the colonised World portrays. "She's off to nurse an invalid called the World". This line from the fifth stanza is stating that America sees themselves as the guide and saviour to the rest of the World. They see themselves as the mother figure. "Crammed in a carton on the nursery floor are the varied treasures Mummy's world contains from Pepsi-Cola figures to spam". This is another example of the influence of the United States on Australia.

What is the author trying to say?

Dawe is trying to say that Australia is a young country & America is the mother figure to Australia, it is the country Australia looks to for advice or help.

Poetic devices used in the poem:

Tone- Dawe uses a bitter & Ironic tone in his poem 'Americanised'.

Dawe uses cold language such as 'beneficence', 'beamed' and 'laminex' as well as the pause after 'she loves him'.

Rhetorical questions are used often throughout this poem by Dawe to not only generate thoughts of the reader about this scenario, but to represent that the child in this instance or in any other simple family, knows no better than what they are exposed to through their lives. Example: "what child of simple origins could want more?"

2) How does it fit into the theme?

Australia's identity is being taken over by American consumerism, therefore Australia is losing its identity because it follows America. Australia is losing its identity in order to 'belong', in a way, to America.

3) Make suggestions for the writing task.

An opinion piece/ Letter to the editor - Your view on Australia & America & the relationship between them. Is Australia losing its 'identity' because it follows American culture?