

Stanza 4 Analysis

In this stanza, the poet is describing the further transformation the city is going through as a tourist attraction. For example, in lines 2 and 3, it illustrates to the reader the city is undergoing a change for the supposed better, in this case from old to new. It shows how the character also appreciated the change until it started ruining the city. Moreover, the fact the old tree was described as being "the great..chopped down" and then the new trees as "little ones", portrays the old trees could have been a security blanket for the city and now the blanket has been lifted, leaving the evolving city to fend for itself. Furthermore it could also mean the new citizens of Singapore are trying to sweep the remnants of the War away and re-build Singapore as far away of it's traditional and conflicted heritage.

Later when it says "impound the hungry buffalo" it could literally mean destroying everything natural in order for singapore to appeal to tourists and incoming expats. In the next line it shows the growing mass of unstoppable population which are unable to "be curbed". Moreover the fact the sky is "chiselled" in the next line signifies nothing is ever good enough for Singapore and even man-made objects have to be improved. This negative connotation continues as the rest of the stanza basically describes Singapore as being completely fake and artificial in order to look good for incoming tourists and that no matter how unsatisfied and outraged the locals were it wouldn't matter because the tourists felt "at home".

Then I learnt to drive instead
and praise the highways till
I saw them chop the great trees down,
and plant the little ones;
impound the hungry buffalo
(the big ones and the little ones)
because the cars could not be curbed.
Nor could the population.
They built milli-mini-flats
for a multi-mini-society.
The chiselled profile of the sky
took on a lofty attitude,
but modestly, at any rate,
it made the tourist feel 'at home'.

Literary Devices

Enjambement:

Author uses enjambement a lot and often cuts sentences in half. She does this to create a staggering and jagged sound, to suit the tone of the poem.

- "are neither here nor there, nor / in the comfort of my preferences"
- "while the 'age' was quelling riots / in the street, or cutting down / those 'foreign devils'"

Contrast:

- The phrases 'boom of babies' and 'duck that would not lay' contrast each other.