

Analysis of ave maria

Science



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Bethany Thompson Professor Breese English 266 3 February 2009 Analysis of "Ave Maria" Frank O'Hara's poem, "Ave Maria," encourages overprotective mothers to let their children experience life. The poem begins with the command, "Mothers of America / let your kids go to the movies!" He proposes a series of rationales for following this advice, including the conditional love of children who "won't hate you" if they are permitted to do what they want.

The true reason behind this directive, however, is made clear in lines 13 - 16: "they may even be grateful to you / for their first sexual experience / which only cost you a quarter / and didn't upset the peaceful home." The idea that a parent could provide a child's first sexual experience may be shocking to parents, but O'Hara's poem implies that by allowing them this experience, you have readied them for adulthood. Also, the image of sexuality being priced like popcorn, "a quarter", is amusing; it's the pleasures of adulthood at quite a bargain.

O'Hara initially contrasts the "peaceful home" - a room, a yard, "mothers," and "little tykes" - with the movie theatre, "embossed by silvery images." He then contrasts the parents' overprotective instruction with that of a "pleasant stranger" who offers the equivalent: "they will know where candy bars come from and gratuitous bags of popcorn as gratuitous as leaving the movie before it's over with a pleasant stranger whose apartment is in the Heaven on Earth Bldg near the Williamsburg Bridge"

These children will learn about adulthood through gaining sexual knowledge. O'Hara paints a win / win situation. If "nobody picks them up in the movies/ they won't know the difference / and if somebody does it'll be sheer gravy."

<https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-ave-maria/>

He suggests that if they don't get their first sexual experience, they will at least have seen a movie, instead of staying in their room "hating you." O'Hara concludes his poetic admonition with a warning. He cautions mothers not to blame him if they don't take his advice and their families fall apart.

The connection between keeping kids home from the movies and families falling apart may seem far-fetched, but the movies are symbolizing all the things a child is forbidden to do. Too much restriction will push them away. The final image is that of children growing "old and blind in front of a TV set" watching the films they weren't allowed to see when they were small. This gives the impression that no matter how much a mother tries to shelter her children, they will eventually do all the things that were forbidden them.

There are several things that draw attention to the mothers, the first being the title of the poem. Perhaps it is an ironic statement on the imperfection of mothers in comparison to the "Holy Mother." There are two lines that suggest the mothers might have ulterior motives for sending their children to the movies. Lines 3 and 4 suggest mothers "get them out of the house so they won't know what / you're up to," which implies the mothers also have something to hide.

These motives are not the main focus of the poem and are undisclosed by the author. We are left to guess what the mothers are really "up to." In short, O'Hara recommends that parents let their children experience life on their own terms. Parents are told that preventing their children from making their own choices will cause resentment and leave the children fantasizing about the experiences they wish they had. A wise parent allows their

children to grow into experienced adults by letting them to go out and explore, not coddling by them.