

Disabled, does it matter and suicide in the trenches



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The poem 'Disabled' by Wilfred Owen tells of one man's turmoil due to the effects of war.

Owen describes a man whose life is ruined because now he is 'legless' due to the fact that his limbs were blown up in the battlefield. This is evident in the third line of the poem where it says 'Legless, sewn short at the elbow. I think Owen tries to express his sympathy and wants us to sympathise with the man. Owen chooses his words carefully.

'He sat in wheeled chair, waiting for dark, And shivering in his ghastly suit of grey,' I think 'waiting for dark' could be a metaphor for waiting for death. His 'ghastly suit of grey' could symbolise his feelings. He hears 'voices' of 'boys' and 'play' these could remind him of his youth. In the second verse Owen refers back to this man's younger days when girls 'glanced' at him before they 'threw away his knees'. But Owen soon reminds us that he will never feel how 'slim girls' wastes are' because they see him and take pity on him now.

'All of them touch him like some queer disease' I think this line shows that they don't really want anything to do with him now that he is disabled because Owen refers to him as a 'disease'. The third verse talks about how he lost his legs and what he lost along with that. 'And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race And leap of purple spurted from his thigh' What this shows me is that along with losing his limbs he lost his youth and wasted his life. The fourth verse is the longest in the poem and describes how and why he signed up for the army in the first place. It tells us of how once he liked the 'blood-

smear' down his leg after a football match. However I think this is ironic since now he has no legs. It also has the words ' He wonders why'.

To me this shows that he regrets signing up in the first place.'Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts, That's why; and may be too, to please his Meg'People encouraged him to join, that's why he signed up but now he regrets it. I assume ' his Meg' is his girlfriend. He also had done it to please her. This is also ironic because no girls want to go near him.

They think of him as a ' queer disease'. They signed him up without hesitation even though he was still quite young.'Germans he scarcely thought of; all their guilt, And Austria's did not move him. And no fears, Of fear came yet.'These three lines from the fourth verse tell me that he hardly thought of Germans and Austrians he didn't really care about the war and he didn't really fear it.

The rest of the verse tells me that all he thought about were the ' smart salutes', ' care of arms' and things like ' Esprit de corps'. 'He was drafted out with drums and cheers' This shows me that he was sent away still being encouraged by crowds.'Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal. Only a solemn man who brought him fruits thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.'His expectations weren't that great when the crowds cheered him home because they only cheered to keep up the propaganda of war going. They cheered in pity and maybe not in pride.

And now only a ' solemn man' a priest thanks him and ' inquires' about him. By the priest and the rest of the country he must feel betrayed because only one man, a holy man check up on him. Nobody else seems to care.'Now, he <https://assignbuster.com/disabled-does-it-matter-and-suicide-in-the-trenches/>

will spend a few sick years in institutes, And do what things the rules consider wise' This again shows irony as he can't do much anyway since he has no arms or legs, so the 'rules' in these institutes won't even matter to him.

Now he will take whatever pity they give him. He notices how one woman looks at him and then looks to the 'strong men that were whole' meaning men with limbs. He is saddened by this. The final line is 'Why don't they come?' This phrase could represent his need for attention and makes him seem uncared for. His expectations of 'salutes' now mean nothing.

He feels worthless and used. The second poem I chose 'Does it matter' by Siegfried Sassoon uses sarcasm. This poem deals with every handicapped soldier's ordeal with sarcasm and rhetorical questions. 'Does it matter? - losing your legs ..

. For people will always be kind' Yes, people will be kind but only because they pity you, and it does matter that they lose their legs with it, one would lose a great deal more: pride, dignity, youthfulness. 'And you need not show that you mind, When the others come in after hunting to gobble their muffins and eggs.' Perhaps this is another use of sarcasm. They needn't show they mind because they can't do anything about it when people come in to eat their food. They're handicapped and need assistance.

'Does it matter? - losing your sight?' Such splendid work for the blind; And people will always be kind' Again this a rhetorical question followed by a sarcastic statement. There is no splendid work for the blind. Blind people, people with no limbs or a combination of them both means they need <https://assignbuster.com/disabled-does-it-matter-and-suicide-in-the-trenches/>

assistance.'As you sit on the terrace rememberingAnd turning your face towards the light.'Sassoon could be referring to the soldiers ' remembering' about the terrible experiences they had during the war and the way they got due to war or he could be referring to their happy childhoods and wasted youth. I think maybe Sassoon uses the word ' remembering' to let us decide for ourselves.

' Turning your face towards the light' could possibly mean or refer to death or dying. Like the phrase ' light at the end of the tunnel'. The last verse of this poem says that you can drink your troubles away and be happy about it and no one will say your crazy because they know you've fought for the country. But Sassoon soon changes the mood by saying ' And no one will worry a bit'. By this I think he means that people will soon forget them forget the hero's of war because they're disabled, limbless, handicapped and now deemed useless.'Suicide in the trenches' by Siegfried Sassoon describes a ' simple' man with a simple life.

' He grinned in life in empty joy' this line makes me feel as if this man didn't care too much about the war, as he also ' slept soundly' and ' whistled early with the lark'But it doesn't go into to much detail about how he got into the army. In the second verse Sassoon skips straight to the battlefield.'In winter trenches, cowed and glumWith crumps and lice and lack of rum, He put a bullet through his brain, And no one spoke him again.'The first two lines of this verse describe the harsh condition he and many other soldiers had to suffer with. The second two lines simply describe his suicide. But the words ' Never spoke of him again' remind me of the other two poems, where no one seems to care.

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The 'smug faced crowds' cheer the other soldiers' top keep up the propaganda of war. 'The hell where youth and laughter go' refers to the battlefields of war. In conclusion, each poem is very unique in its own way but very similar. 'Disabled' deals with one mans turmoil after the war and the effect it had on him.

'Suicide in the trenches' however deals with a troubled soldier during the war. The poem 'Does it matter' deals with all the handicapped war veterans. Each poem mentions some sort of essence that there is no honour in dying or losing a limb for your country because the cheers are false and hollow. The cheers are only to hype up and keep the propaganda of war going. The unsatisfactory cheers and salutes of crowds only there for show, only there to encourage new soldiers and to pretend to praise old ones, when they're really just there to pity them and to keep it all going.