

How do Owen and Auden express the negative effects of war in their poems, Disabled...

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How do Owen and Auden convey the negative effects of war in their poems 'Disabled' and 'Refugee Blues'? In the poems Disabled and Refugee Blues, the writers, Owen and Auden respectively, convey the negative effects of war in a variety of ways. Through the use of structuring, literary and figurative devices, Auden subtly shows the negative effects of war, whereas Owen does this more explicitly, showing the de-humanizing, gruesome effects of war. In the poem Disabled, Owen displays the more gruesome, horrendous reality; he does this in a variety of ways. Firstly he uses a randomized stanza structure, the stanzas do not have a consistent amount of lines. The stanza structure is emphasizing how the soldier's think, because most soldiers act upon their animalistic instinct, Owen has used this idea to rely on instinct to create his structure, not only does this confuse the reader but Owen also tries to emphasize on how the war has affected the soldiers. Owen also uses a lot of different literary devices to help him, metaphor is used throughout the poem to help develop the poem, "Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn", the voices of boys made the soldier feel sad; they make him remember his childhood, it was not long ago that he was like those boys, running freely, however it seems like a distant memory. Owen is emphasizing that the war robbed the soldier of his innocence and naivety, he is also a little jealous of them, they still believe in fairy tales and happy endings, whereas the soldier understands the true colors of reality. "In the old times, before he threw away his knees/All of them touch him like some queer disease" these two quotes, emphasize on the fact that the soldier threw away his legs when he enlisted in the army, if he didn't sign up he wouldn't be disabled and the girls would still be flirting with him. The girls do

not want to be with someone who is crippled; heroes do not get injured. It seems like he has given up on life as much as life has given up on him, he has succumbed into the idea that he is not a real man anymore; others can sense this about him and stay away because they do not want to be dragged down by his self-pity. Granted, the women could be touching him in disgust, it is also likely that it is him who is projecting his own feelings of disgust on them. The war can affect both the social life and the personal life negatively, thus creating a very negative atmosphere in the stanza. Owen also makes effective use of alliterations, " Legless, sewn short at elbow", not only does this quote tell us the exact extent of the soldiers disability, but during World War I it was common practice to sew shut pant legs and sleeves when someone is missing the limb or appendix, the quote makes us pity the soldier, moreover it is also common that soldiers lose a limbs during war, creating a very brutal and negative view upon war. Another alliteration that has been used, " And a leap of purple spurted from his thigh", a leap of purple could relate to blood or bruises, this quote indicates the severity of his injuries, although it was a large injury, the poem portrays it only as a ' leap of purple', this makes the injury seem small and insignificant, and which was likely how the government and the higher-ups viewed the disabled soldiers. Although W. H Auden wrote Refugee Blues half a year before World War II broke out, the Nazi's (Nationalists) have already been hunting Jews and ' exterminating' them, Refugee Blues is a Jewish perspective on the war. W. H. Auden has structured his poem into tersedes, and each stanza proposes a different theme and part of the Jewish refugees life, it also isolates the stanza, emphasizing each negative point Auden has made. Auden uses very

effective metaphors to convey the different negative effects of Hitler's reign, "Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin, /Saw a door open and a cat let in:/ But they weren't German Jews, my dear, they weren't German Jews. " In this quote, W. H. Auden was comparing the Jewish with a poodle and a mere street cat, not only does it emphasize how un-wanted the Jews were, Auden himself degraded the Jewish into something that was utterly despised and negatively viewed.