

Faceless bureaucracy in the unknown citizen

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



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Introduction

Wystan Hugh Auden was a writer from England and the United States.

Auden's poetry has been noted for its stylistic and technical achievement, devotion to politics, values, romance, and spirituality, and diversity in sound, type, and material. The Unknown Citizen it's a poem Auden wrote at a defining time in his life, when he left England to live in the US, and when he gave up the idea that her poetry could change anything in the world. His move to America led to expanding his creative output. Auden was a prolific poet who wrote long and technically astute poems, but he also took the change to free verse, mixing modern and traditional elements.

The Main Idea

Satirical and upsetting is the poem. Auden wanted to emphasize the individual's position and the increasingly faceless bureaucracy and voice that can emerge with any kind of government in any country. From the first five lines it is clear that the state is in total control and that this individual's existence has been designed and organized to create a complete conformist,

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someone with a clean identity and serving the greater good. There is mention of the Department of Social Psychology, part of the state that probably studied his history when he died and found that his fellows were all healthy. Day after day he purchased a newspaper, that is, he read ads spread by the biased press and had no adverse reaction to that newspaper's advertisements. For being a decent but unquestionable man, this individual is treated like a little child. The speaker describes the eugenicist and coldly states his five children are his generation's "right number".

Narration

The narrator in this poem, likely a faceless bureaucrat, with a generic set of lines to play out, establishes a voice of cold and computer ignorance. The flat, emotionless text takes control as the reader continues, and by half it is obvious that monotony is queen. There is no color, no personal reference points, no personality description, no life.

Phrases and Irony

Auden showed an intriguing and ambiguous attitude. He used phrases and phrases that define sadness and at the same time the conformity of being a voiceless, no personality citizen who just follows the script that was dictated. He uses beginnings of phrases like 'and then he' and that makes his poem colder and duller. The use of irony is quite explicit in Auden's poem. The external forces on the current body economy are too strong and serious for Auden to be repelled without much opposition or resistance. Through his refurbishment of the current world, Auden expresses sadness as a feeling of desperation echoes.

A Warning

Moreover, Auden's poem is a warning of the dangers inherent in any system of government, in any organization, everywhere, at any moment, a man may lose his individuality and be a voiceless person who obeys the pre-established rule of the government.