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*The Unknown
Citizen*



In H. Auden
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A NOTE ON AUTHOR

Life Facts

- ▶ Wyston Hugh Auden was born in February of 1907, in York, England.
- ▶ Auden became versed in all poetic techniques.
- ▶ He worked as a reviewer, lecturer, and essayist.
- ▶ Auden served as Professor of Poetry at Oxford University.
- ▶ In 1973, after giving a reading of his poems in Vienna, Austria, Auden died.

Interesting Facts

- ▶ He exhibited poetic talent as a young boy.
- ▶ He disliked Romantic poets like Byron, Keats, and Shelley.
- ▶ Auden created and was part of the “Auden Group” in university.
- ▶ He traveled to many different countries including Iceland and Spain.
- ▶ His final works were, ‘Epistle to a Godson’ and ‘Thank You, Fog’.

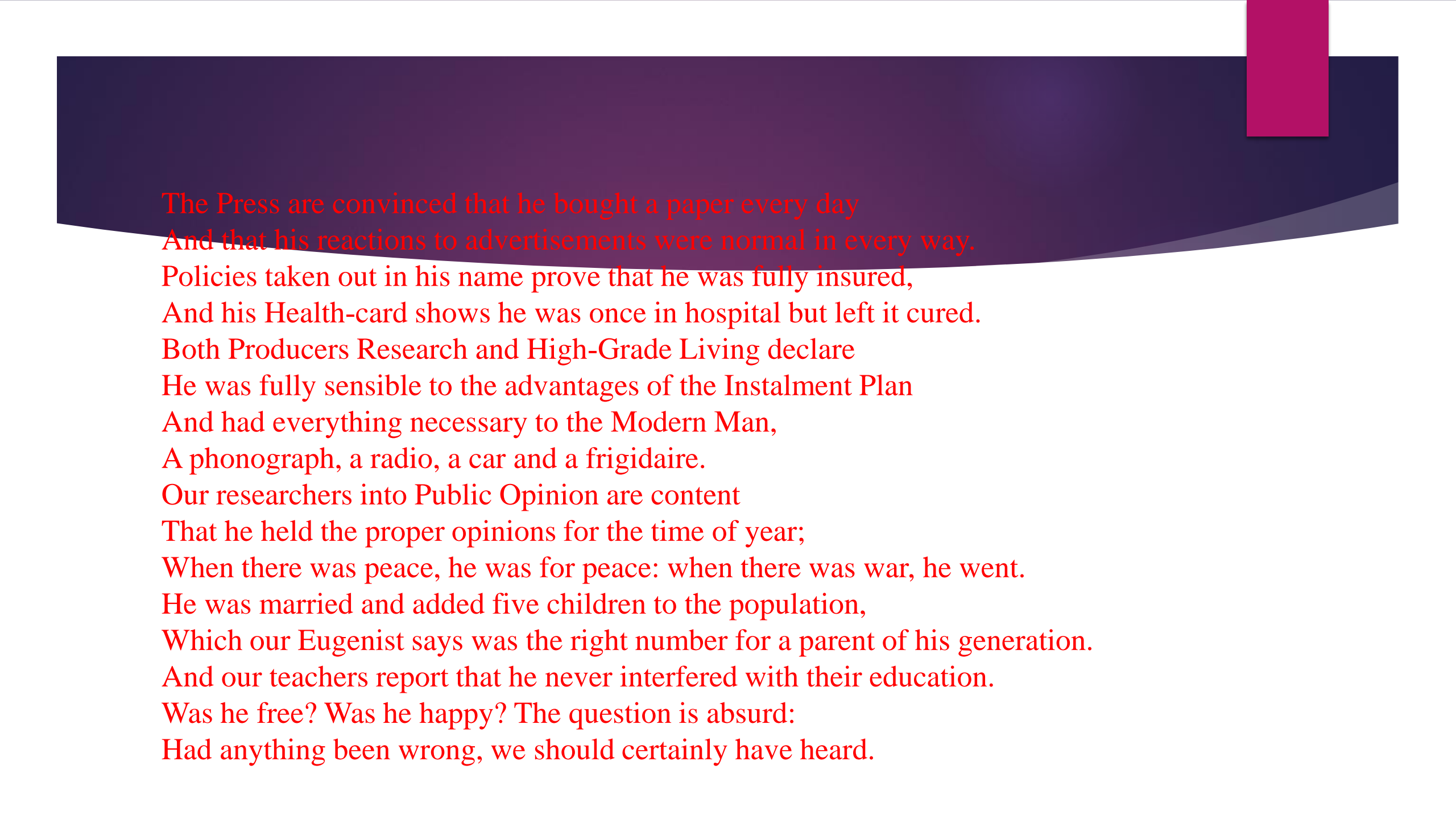


POEMS OF AUDEN

- ▶ Lullaby
- ▶ As I Walked Out One Evening
- ▶ Epitaph on a Tyrant
- ▶ In Memory of W. B. Yeats
- ▶ The Unknown Citizen
- ▶ September 1, 1939
- ▶ In Memory of Sigmund Freud
- ▶ The Fall of Rome
- ▶ The Shield of Achilles
- ▶ The More Loving One
- ▶ On the Circuit.

POEM

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)
And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.



The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.
He was married and added five children to the population,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation.
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

THEME OF THE POEM

Theme of the Poem Deals with the effect of science and technology on man. A satire on the modern society, which is devoid of religion and human values of life. The theme of conformity and absence of individuality. Bureaucracy does not bother about the happiness of the individual. A modern man who has lost independent thinking Man has become a cog in the machine of society.

LITERARY DEVICE

Metaphor - : a figure of speech that draws comparison between two unlike things to bring out the points of similarity . comparison between the Unknown Citizen and a saint. the entire poem is an elaborate comparison between the Unknown Citizen, whose accomplishments are ridiculously overstated, and the Unknown Soldier, which was created to honor heroic sacrifices that were never witnessed or confirmed. Symbolism - Something that on the surface is its literal self but which also has another meaning or even several meanings. The "Bureau of Statistics" is a symbol representing the way bureaucracies treat people as mere numbers and figures.

SUMMARY OF THE POEM

Reading like a passive report without any sign of human feeling, the speaker reflects on the life of an unknown dead man. The speaker states that the dead man was an exemplary citizen because he did everything correctly according to the government. No one ever made a complaint about him, he worked at the same job for all of his life, only leaving to serve in the war, he had a wife and five children which was the perfect number, and he owned all of the right things. He always had the correct view on the issues of the state, being a pacifist in times of peace and fighting for his country in times of war. He bought the newspaper every day and read it just like he was supposed to. He was only in the hospital once and he left there cured. He did everything correctly in order to serve his society and lived a perfect life. It is ridiculous to wonder if he was happy or free, the narrator states, because if anything was wrong with him the state surely would have known.



THANK
YOU! 😊