

The Unknown Citizen is the
piece of poetry in discussion
here, composed by the
great poet W.H. Auden.

W. Auden spent his childhood in
Birmingham and later ~~passed~~
~~went~~ to college at Oxford
where he met his companion.
He travelled to Berlin but
~~was~~ moved out of there as
the Nazi sentiments were on a
rise and due to the
nature of his sexuality,
he would have been among
the first to be killed. The
move onto the United States
where the mentality was somewhat
more liberal for homosexuals.

P.T.

The poem. 'The Unknown Citizen'
falls under the genre of an
allegory or a satiric elegy.

~~The poem has~~ ✓ ~~been made~~
The poem has been made
deliberately unpoetic. The poem
begins with a epitaph

JS/07/M/378 (monument erected
by the State) which is like a
parody to 'The Unknown Soldier'. The
bodies of soldiers who die in battle
whose bodies are burnt beyond
recognition are given a similar
serial.

The speaker of the poem seems
to be a fat bureaucrat
working for the state
who tells us about the
unknown citizen. The State
has all data upon him,

✓
The Bureau of Statistics show
him to be a man who
thought about the greater good. whose
reactions to advertisements was
normal, who was aware of
what was going on, was a
good worker and did not
protest and went to war when
the country needed him while
otherwise peaceful. He also
added five children to the
population which the Eugenists
saw as an ideal number.
Throughout the poem, the poet ~~poet~~ delivers
backhanded compliments not once
in actual appreciation of the
citizen.

Even though the entire poem
revolves around the citizen.
we see more about the State
than about the citizen. The
~~totalitarian~~ attitude strikes

is from the very beginning.
we see now at the very and
when faced with the
question that was the citizen
happy? , the state / dismisses
it as an absurdity and
that had something been
wrong, they would have
known. This once again ~~shows~~
~~how the~~ gives us an insight
into how happiness is just
an absurdity for the State.
We see now individuality of
the citizens is lost, how
the state only wants the
ironical ~~ideal~~ 'ideal'
citizen who is at the
end of his life is just left
as a random serial number
on a tombstone.

The fundamental question we are
faced with after this poem is
whether this the kind of state
we want. Do we want to
live in a place where we are
reduced to nothing but a number?
Where the State itself suppresses
individuality? The state knows
everything about you, but
ironically it doesn't know the
answer to the most fundamental
question of humanity: "Was he
happy?"

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