

Wilfred Owen, the author of 'Disabled' presents the handicapped soldier as shadow of what he was before he enlisted in the army. In the first stanza, the poet depicts the soldier's attire as 'a ghastly suit of grey'. He used alliteration here to grab the reader's attention. His colourless description depicts him as lifeless, inactive and weak. The poet builds upon this colourless attribute by saying that the soldier 'lost his colour very far from here, Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry' the word 'colour' is personified in this quote, and it was being 'poured' down shell-holes. 'Colour' could be representative of blood in this quote, which builds upon what could have caused the soldier's injuries, but it could also be a metaphor for his vitality, or soul. The word 'poured' is an active verb, and it makes his decision of joining the war seem wasteful, and that his younger self was naïve for enlisting. These quotes coupled present the nameless soldier as someone who lost their vitality in the war and is now a purposeless shadow of their former self. Owen's message here is that the young boy shouldn't have been allowed to chose to waste his life in this way, and that there should have been some protection against naïve boys like him putting his life in danger like this, and becoming just a shadow of what he was.

'Disabled' presents the former soldier as simple and innocent before joining the war. When the soldier is recollecting on why he decided to join, not only are the reasons he gives trivial, but there is a childish rhyme scheme accompanying it, 'leg ... peg', 'guilt ... hilts'. This rhyme scheme highlights the soldier's childishness and naivety before joining, he didn't believe that the war would impact his life in such a drastic and permanent manner. He also talked about what he thought would experience or have in the war, like 'jewelled hilts' or 'care of arms', which greatly illustrates his mistaken belief of what the war would be like. He even talked about 'jewelled hilts', which he used for swords, not guns. This all demonstrates that the soldier did not know what he was signing up for, and that he too innocent and naïve to deserve a lifelong, crippling injury. This contradicts with the government's presentation of the war at the time, they were pushing the opinion that war was a courageous and character-building endeavor, they were even censoring letters from the soldiers themselves that described the real, gory side of war. Owen believed, wanted to demonstrate how the governments carelessness with its push of a pro-war agenda could lead to the ruining of innocent people's lives.

The soldier in 'Disabled' is presented as a helpless veteran, who has lost his independence and is now a victim. In the very first line, Owen says 'He sat in a wheeled chair'. The word 'wheeled' is striking because it implies that not only has he lost the ability to walk, due to him being in a wheelchair, but because of the -ed on the word wheeled, it also illustrates that he can't move himself anymore. In the very last lines, Owen links back to this, and says 'Why don't they come and put him to bed'. This also builds up his childlike and innocent aspects, as he must be put to bed like a child would be. But in addition, it says how he was forgotten about outside, which says how his friends and family had left him due to his injury. There is poetic irony in this, as his country, family and friends relied on him to fight in the war, and he enlisted dutifully, but when he came back and was in dire need of help and assistance, he was sent off to a medical institution to live out the rest of his life alone.

In conclusion, in 'Disabled' Wilfred Owen uses diverse methods such as metaphors and historical references to tell the reader that the countless soldiers conscripted for WW1 were too innocent to deserve having half their lifetime taken away from them, and that there was a lack of any empathy for the casualties of war, he was forgotten about and left outside.