

Birdsong: man and stephen

Literature



**ASSIGN
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Birdsong Essay Sebastian Faulks shows us many horrors of World War One by using language and structure of the novel. For example this shows the imagery of the horrors of war at the hospital when Stephen got injured and what happened with the boy. Faulks starts off with Stephen Wraysford and how he is coming back to life but with pain. His pain is nothing compared to the man next to him, the man apparently could “visualize the pain” also it says he could see it hovering over him this I think could relate to two things either his pain or the man's spirit.

Faulks describes the imagery for us how bad it is- “His body decomposing as he lay there, like those that hung on the wire going from red to black before they crumbled into the earth leaving only septic spores”- this shows us the horrors of what war does to people. Also Faulks uses this one man to describe the many other men that go through this in the war. Faulks uses descriptive language and we can visualise the boy when “His mouth was pulled open and his neck were stretched” and also “The skin of his cheeks and forehead was marked with bluish-violet patches. His eyes were oozing, as though with acute conjunctives”- shows us the graphic imagery of the boy's eyes. Stephen tells us in about this boy, not knowing who he is and having no relation to Stephen at all this shows that Stephen has sympathy and thoughts about what these soldiers go through I think he is comparing on how lucky he is that his pain was very minor to the ones that other people suffer. Stephen describes the boy's body “The soft skin on the armpits and inner thighs was covered in huge, raw blisters”. Makes the reader visualise and actually see what Stephen is seeing.

On page 187 it tells us that the boy's voice came back to Stephen and "He begged to die"- this shows us the effect on how the damage and the pain that the boy actually must be going through. Faulks also shows us how hard the nurse's job is and how her love can take over her job "Impotently, she held both her arms wide in a gesture of motherly love, as this would comfort him." Stephen hopes that the boy would die soon, it is all so reverse he should be praying for him to live soon, but seeing and hearing the agony the boy is going through death would be more peaceful.

On page 188 Faulks describes the boy the last time before he dies and we can see and imagine how his condition would be like for example-"He lay motionless, trailing his raw skin. His infected lungs began to burble and froth with yellow fluid" Faulks shows Stephen with no emotion or sympathy for the boy no remorse "Stephen prayed that the boy would die" the nurse was the opposite to what he was like she was "pale, shocked, then burst into shuddering tears. She has sympathy for the boy and some feeling of lost.

The next horror incident is when they go over the top to attack and Faulks uses emotional horror in the letters when they write back home. Faulks shows in Michael Wiers' letter is formal like he says "Don't worry about me, please. It is warm enough."-shows he is covering up reality and not showing or telling the real truth because even if he does they would be able to understand it. And he says that "May your prayers be with the men who will go over the top"- shows respect and feelings to all the other soldiers. Stephen's letter to Isabelle shows how lonely he is and what he has experienced