

The importance of places in birdsong.

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The importance of places in Birdsong. Birdsong is a novel written in a tripartite structure, which uses many different places in the novel to help emphasise the key elements and also foreshadows certain events which will happen and can also link back to events which have happened which helps to make the specific parts have more of an impact overall. In Birdsong the three different time periods in which the novel is set all have significant places throughout. In part 1 of the novel it talks a lot about the Azaire's house which is shown as being secluded from people and blocking people out ' the Azaire's house showed a strong, formal front towards the road from behind iron railings' which can also reflect Stephen's personality before we find much about him as a person. When describing the house Faulks also mentions the house having ' conflicting angles' which can be linked to WW1 as it talks about the conflict so helps to show what will happen later on through the novel. The front of the house is described as having ' a formidable front door' which makes the house appear unwelcoming. The description of the house seems to be trying to prevent people from going inside and portrays it as being a hostile environment, this can reflect the violence in the book, both inside the house between Azaire hitting Isabelle, and also could foreshadow the violence which appears in the war in which Stephen ends up fighting. The house also appears to be separated from the outside world which could be a reason why Stephen and Isabelle end up having an affair as they are separated from the outside world and it would be acceptable for them to be together as they aren't connected to anyone else at that time. The description of the different corridors and how they are connected also helps to show the future in the war as it can be linked to the

tunnelers in part 2 of the novel ' he stood for a moment disorientated' In part 1 the description of the nature and the surroundings help to make a bigger contrast to then what happens in the war ' The Boulevard Du Cange was a broad quiet street'. The way Faulks used the word ' quiet' to describe the street helps to show the difference that war can make to a place or city. Also when the Azaires go out for a picnic Stephen talks about ' the stagnant water unmoved by any breeze seemed to emphasise the unnatural heat of the day.' This foreshadows what happens later on in the novel, during the war which helps part 1 of the novel to still have sections which can be linked to the war which will damage the area in which part 1 is set. ' Behind the gardens the river Somme broke up into small canals that were the picturesque feature of Saint-Leu' many of the quotes used to describe the places in the novel are also used to foreshadow the war. In part 2 the use of showing the tunnelers being stuck in a small, cramped space and the individuals having ' several hundred thousand tons of France above his face' helps to show the real environment many people in the war were having to deal with and also helps to make a stronger attachment to the characters as we see the different types of things they have to go through in their jobs. Also when Stephen is in the war it shows him and Captain Weir are sat in their dugout it helps to show the different classes and the different ranks the soldiers have and the importance that this held in the time period the section was set, this can reflect the relationship between Stephen and Isabelle as they are both from different places in their life. When the soldiers are in the trenches and when they are fighting ' Stephen lay in the shell hole with the bay and the man who had died in the morning'. It shows the contrast

between the life that Stephen had been living when he had been with Isabelle so that helps to show the big contrast between the life he had been living and the one he has now. The use of showing Stephen and Weir going to see the prostitutes helps to show the effects that war can have on people and the damage it can cause to the soldiers mentally ' He hated her for not having seen what he had seen' so it can help and make the difference that war can have on people. With part 3 being set in London and set being later on in the time it showed how life goes back to normal and yet the families are still affected by the past and how people have had to live. Also London can reflect the war with the London Underground being able to symbolise the tunnelers back in the war so it is still able to be like life in the war. ' a winter coat was pressed in her face by the crush of passengers in the aisle of the carriage' ' the train of the Central Line fitted its tube like a bullet in the barrel of a rifle' In part 7 the way in which Elizabeth and Robert went to a cottage where they had their child helps to show the intimacy between the two of them and also gives the idea of the two of them starting a new life together as they have just brought a new life in to the world and the two of them will be starting a new life. The main theme in the novel is war and its legacy, many different places are used to help show the difference that war can make. The use of showing the effect that war can have to people many years after shows the impact that it can make on families and the people who have fought in the war, it shows the soldiers in care homes and one man who is so affected by the war he was described as ' this man lives in a world of his own, they all do' which shows the aftermath of war being traumatic unlike some people believe it to be. The use of places in Birdsong is used

throughout the novel to help and foreshadow events which take place further on in the book and also to reflect the past and back up certain points Faulks makes. The most important places used in *Birdsong* I feel are the places used during war as Faulks uses many different techniques during those particular sections of the novel to help link other parts of the book together and symbolise some of the experiences that Stephen has had previously in the novel.