

female characters the job of nursing during the war. It makes them more important and less of a housewife like he didn't believe women should be. He was an atheist, however, and so did not believe any other religions, only what was right and wrong. He said '*contrary to reports, my remarks were not about Islam, but about Islamism – perhaps 'extremism' would be a better term. I grew up in a Muslim country – Libya – and have only warm memories of a dignified, tolerant and hospitable Islamic culture.*' – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_McEwan

Historical context

- The period in which this story takes place in is one of great political turmoil near the beginning of and during WW2.
- This story takes place exclusively from about 1935-1999. The war is the primary focus of this novel, as it shapes the lives of all the characters.
- Ex, Briony in the war Hospital and Robbie at Dunkirk.
- Without the war, the love story between Cecilia and Robbie would not be as interesting. With Robbie fighting in the war, as described by the second part of the novel, the lives of all members the Talis family are effected.
- This was common during the war as nobody was exempt from service. - <http://feld.wikispaces.com/Social+%26amp%3B+Historical+Context+of+Atonement>

Social context

- The novel takes place during a time when divorce was a rare thing. Early on in the book, McEwan talks about how the children of a divorced couple weren't even able to say the word because what it would mean socially. This shows in the detail about the social norms of England during this era.
- The society on the home front in England during the war is also slightly influential, as it effects Briony and influences her involvement in the war. Because of the societal pressures to join the war effort, along with her family ties, Briony involves herself in the British nurse corps. - <http://feld.wikispaces.com/Social+%26amp%3B+Historical+Context+of+Atonement>

Historical Context

- The story of Atonement takes place throughout three different time periods over the course of basically the whole main character's life, Briony's. The time period ranges between 1935- 1999; between Briony's life, ages 13- 77. The first section of the novel/film takes place in 1935, 4 years before World War Two begins.
- World War Two began on September 1st, 1939; by this point, Robbie had spent 3 years in prison. The war began because Germany invaded Poland without any warning what so ever, which sparked the initial conflict. On the evening of September 3rd, Britain and France were at war with Germany; within one week, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and South Africa had also joined the fight. It had been 25 years since World War One, and the immense battle had a severe impact on every one involved, and