

Analysis of style in JTH's "The Second Coming of Come-by-Chance"

Element of style	Examples	Impact on meaning	Impact on response
Lyrical prose, punctuated by incursions of the vernacular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Ahh, knock it off</i>, people said, but not too savagely. Long droughts of continental proportions induce nervous piety in many breast – though not all.” • “Her bougainvillea made a dead parchment sound against the fence. Like a sleepwalker, she got into her car and followed the columns of dust.” • “Four-X, the Queensland beer... A true-blue bit've history. She was a bugger to rip off the wall but.” • “Boongs. Abos. Everyone says it.” • “What she remembers: spiky grass and ants against her skin, and words marching in ranks through her head.” 		
A focus on interiority which is often emphasised by italicised or parenthesised asides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “She laughs nervously. (She'd been terrified, as a matter of fact; and so relieved when the police car had pulled up.” • “What she remembers: spiky grass and ants against her skin, and words marching in ranks through her head. <i>I don't believe this, I don't believe it, it doesn't make sense, it isn't happening.</i>” 		
Sophisticated vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There was considerable divergent opinion on the erstwhile economic base.” • “If Queensland is our own Gothic invention, a kind of morality play, the Bosch canvas of the Australian psyche, a sort of perpetual <i>memento mori</i> that points to the frailty of the skein of civilisation reaching out so tentatively from our southern cities.” • “...one has the sense of emerging from a drugged and aberrant condition.” 		

Use of literary references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “He alluded to Ern Malley and the whole literary hoax.” • “He quoted Banjo Paterson, and left readers to draw their own conclusions: <i>But my languid mood forsook me...</i>” • “<i>Come-by-Chance, we who are sane dilute you.</i>” 		
Use of biblical allusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The titular reference to the second coming of Christ. • References to the “tribulation” – the period of destruction prior to the second coming. • Tom Kelly and Davy Cobb are “unlikely angels of the apocalypse” who ushered in a “flight into Egypt”. • “Latter day madness” is a reference to the Mormons – who are based in drought stricken Utah. • The significance of the church being the first building that emerges. • The “exodus” the reappearance of the town causes. • The names of the Aboriginal children: Joshua, Evangeline. • The biblical quoting of the pastor. 		
Stream of consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People were kind. At dinner parties they said to her, Of course Queensland gets the government it deserves do you like the linguini? the salmon? in Brisbane we thought the food perfectly <i>ghastly</i> we do congratulate you on leaving, oh the Queensland police, the Aboriginal problem, no awareness at all, and Namatjira’s tonal effects are <i>exquisite...</i>” 		
Juxtapositions or contrasts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adeline’s two experiences in the town: “At dawn on the Burdekin banks (is she sixty or twenty?)” • “When the drought broke with the series 		

	<p>of maverick cyclones we all remember, there was flash flooding all throughout central and southern Queensland... In Melbourne and Sydney, where water restrictions were at last lifted to everyone's relief, people read of the Queensland floods and shook their heads. If it's not one thing, it's another."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "a jubilation of disgust" 		
Strong sensory imagery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tom claimed he looked through the rose window and saw a phosphorescent glow, then kept plummeting to the soft Gothic arch. The nave was full of green radiance." • "A hot wind blew. Her bougainvillea made a dead parchment sound against the fence." • "She dreamed of alphabets that sent down deep, webbing roots." 		
Interesting syntactical structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Adeline Capper dreaded the newspapers and read them with a compulsive doomed fascination. She had always known there was no way of expunging the past. One could flee it, drown it, bury it, tear up the newspaper record, but it went on skulking around today. It was always <i>there</i>. Inside one. <i>Here</i>." • "She was mute. The same hollow alphabet. No. Hollower. She could not acquire the knack of words that floated so effortlessly." 		
Motifs of liminality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The setting of Come-by-Chance emerging from the dam. • "I will never know for sure again if night is night or day is day, what is dream or not-dream." • The rape taking place in the landscape 		

	<p>between the town and the Aboriginal settlement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adeline's fever state. • The shift from drought to flood. 		
A highly evocative sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Hinders Highway was thick with four-wheel drives, the air with dust." • "...after so much analysis of the psychological effects of the drought, to note that those who live in the cities of the coastal plain, while not unaffected by years of water restrictions, are unlikely to be aware of the intensity of the inland thirst for something, for <i>anything</i>, to happen..." • "If Queensland is our own Gothic invention, a kind of morality play, the Bosch canvas of the Australian psyche, a sort of perpetual <i>memento mori</i> that points to the frailty of the skein of civilisation reaching out so tentatively from our southern cities." 		