

How do "jasper jones" and "bora ring" explore change?



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What happens when a book known by heart is torn up and thrown in the air? What happened when a tribal story is lost in an alien tale? Craig Silvey and Judith Wright examine, explore and display such changes in their respective texts *Jasper Jones* and *Bora Ring*. The idea of change as a maturing yet calamitous and estranging force is conveyed onto the audience through demonstration of its dynamic effects. The skilful use of literary techniques—metaphors, similes and symbolism—allows the reader to fully comprehend the consequences of this perpetual force. Metaphors and personification display the idea that change is cataclysmic when it is not required. Change emerges in the life of *Jasper Jones*' protagonist Charlie Bucktin which results in chaos in his life. By being exposed to a horrific situation at the tender age of thirteen years old, "the world breaks and spins and shakes" for him. Charlie laments on this by saying "I can't unfurl from my cocoon when I'm good and ready (p. 30)." These metaphors show the adverse effects that change has had on him and his lack of preparation for current circumstances. Meanwhile, in *Bora Ring*, the submersion of Aborigine culture is forced. On the site of a previous *Bora Ring*, "Only the grass stands up / to mark the dancing-ring; the apple gums / posture and mime a past corroboree (lines 5-7)." Wright uses personification to demonstrate the diminution of vitality in their culture. Wright's use of this technique demonstrates the previous liveliness of the *Bora Rings* in contrast to the present state of dormancy. The metaphors in *Jasper Jones* assist the reader in realising the disastrous effects of the changes imposed on Charlie, since an animal cannot possibly survive without proper development inside its cocoon. *Bora Ring* likewise uses personification to portray the submission of an entire culture which was flourishing but changed from verve into inertia. The use of such techniques

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explores the idea of change being cataclysmic, since the societies it affects are functional without it. The idea of forced change is explored by Silvey and Wright through Symbolism. Although change is shown as chaotic, the symbolism in Jasper Jones presents change as a prerequisite for maturity. When Charlie returns from Jasper's hideout where " everything happened (p. 164), " he claims that he has been " pulled out early and left in the cold (p. 30). " The use of the passive voice in this metaphor indicates that this action has been imposed on Charlie, thus rendering it a forced change. Upon his return, he shucks off his " pansy sandals (p. 52). " These sandals, typically a child's footwear, are a symbol of immaturity. Judith Wright conversely portrays forced change as an agent of displacement. Her use of contrast shows native Australian culture gradually being forced out of the country. The description of current society as an " alien tale (line 4)" is in direct contrast with the ideas of land ownership espoused by modern Australia. The antithesis of " nomad feet" being " still (line 12)" presents the notion that lively nomad feet were forced to a stop resulting in the end of the " dance (line 1). " In Jasper Jones The metaphor of Charlie being left in the cold depicts the grand change which has occurred. This idea progresses to the symbolism of him throwing away his sandals of childhood, demonstrating his maturity due to the forced change. Wright portrays the conflicting idea that forced change leads to eradication of culture. She uses antithesis to show the contrast between the lively way Aboriginal culture ought to be and its actual state. The uses of symbolism and antithesis in Jasper Jones and Bora Ring convey convincing, though contrasting ideas about forced change, displaying the varied views on this matter. The maturity that comes with change also brings scepticism. Silvey shows how negative change causes

perspective to become more cynical, while Wright shows it to be a reason for cynicism. When Charlie sees the cricket coach laughing at Jasper he poses the questions " if he can watch this with a thin grin, what else could he watch? What other cruel things could he view without intervening? (p. 64)" These rhetorical questions demonstrate Charlie's newfound scepticism by furtively implying that the coach could witness a murder. Bora Ring uses a metaphor to describe the manner in which Aboriginal culture was overlooked. It is described as " a dream the world breathed sleeping and forgot (line 11). " Wright describes the world as " sleeping, " as she sees the disregard the world has for the Aboriginal lifestyle a sign that they will remain latent and will not progress. The repeated use of words such as " useless, " " lost" and " sleeping" creates a negative tone of monotony and helplessness. This depicts the change in perspective of the Australian people as reason for being pessimistic. Jasper Jones comparably shows through rhetorical questions how change in Charlie's perspective has led him to become more distrustful. The tone that Silvey and Wright create with their literary techniques shows that change creates an aura of scepticism that can affect people's relationships. Silvey and Wright continue to explore this theme, expanding on how change affects relationships. Through the use of simile and metaphor, Jasper Jones shows how change can strengthen relationships between individuals. When Jasper first leads Charlie to his hideout, Charlie stays " close behind like a loyal and leashless dog (p. 10). " Later on however, when the two are struggling against change together, Charlie believes they are " comrades in some private war (p. 50). " Charlie changes from instinctively being led to becoming an equal. The distrust of the rest of the community brings the two boys closer together. In Bora Ring,

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change is shown to ruin previously strong relationships. The poem finishes with a biblical allusion " the fear as old as Cain (line 16). " Cain, the first child of Adam and Eve killed his brother Abel. The simile of " the fear" being as old as Cain refers to the fear of being expelled from one's own land. Wright implies that as fellow humans, Aborigines are naturally the Australians' brothers. Yet similarly to Cain, Australians have shattered the relationship and effectively killed their brothers. As a natural result, indigenous Australians are now mistrustful of an Australia that excludes them. The metaphor in Jasper Jones contrastingly shows how Charlie and Jasper have been brought together like military compatriots. Their strong bonds of unity are due to the mutual change inflicted upon them. Wright and Silvey use different, but equally effective literary techniques to display contrasting views about change's effects. It is portrayed as a catalyst for companionship, yet a reason for fear. The diverse use of literary techniques explores various ideas of change in Jasper Jones and Bora Ring. Craig Silvey and Judith Wright reveal with the aid of these techniques that the effects of change range from causing chaos to forming friendships. The texts accordingly show that change results in calamity and scepticism. Jasper Jones further portrays change as a foundation of maturity and a basis for strong friendships, while Bora Ring contrastingly illustrates the unnecessary and destructive nature of change. They both demonstrate that change is an unavoidable and significant process of nature.