

Editorial

This issue of *Queensland Review* opens with a deeply felt appreciation of the life and work of Ross Laurie (1960–2010) by his former thesis supervisor and good friend over many years, Raymond Evans. A graduate of both Griffith University and the University of Queensland, Ross Laurie made a significant contribution to Queensland history over recent decades, and published several papers in *Queensland Review*. Raymond Evans's recollections of Ross as a student, colleague and friend provide a vivid and memorable portrait of a man whose premature death we mourn, but whose work will remain an important resource for historians.

In the current environment of intense public debate in Australia on population size, migration and refugees, it is appropriate that this issue of *Queensland Review* includes a focus on the history of migration. In the opening article, 'Brisbane's Radical Russian Community, 1911–1918', Louise Curtis investigates the first wave of Russian migration to Australia, which consisted largely of political refugees from Tsarist Russia in the years after the 1905 uprising and before the 1917 February Revolution. As the first port of entry to Australia for Russians departing from Siberia and China, Brisbane developed a sizeable Russian community – the largest in Australia. The article examines the conditions that led to the formation and increasing radicalisation of the Russian Workers Association, which achieved notoriety at the end of World War I due to its involvement in the Red Flag March and Riots of 1919. In particular, the article examines the effect on the group of censorship and surveillance by the fledgling Australian Intelligence Service.

Kerry Heckenberg's article, 'Out of the Frying Pan: Voyaging to Queensland in 1863 on Board the *Fiery Star*', looks at earlier migrants. Using case studies of two families who left Lancashire for Queensland in 1863, the article explores the push and pull factors involved in decisions to migrate and – in the case of one of the families – to return to the homeland and then migrate a second time. The main push factor was the Lancashire Cotton Famine, when the blockade of Confederate ports during the American Civil War caused a shortage of raw cotton. The colony of Queensland actively recruited unemployed Lancashire cotton workers, with the promise of land grants for the establishment of cotton plantations. Heckenberg, however, is more interested in what these stories tell us about working-class colonial migrants from Britain. Although one family achieved considerable prosperity and the other struggled, Heckenberg argues that both families were canny agents of their own destiny.

The second theme of this issue is the arts in Queensland. Glenn R. Cooke, curator of the Queensland Art Gallery's recent *Vida Lahey: Colour and Modernism* exhibition, describes the principles behind the exhibition in his paper, 'Vida Lahey: Beyond *Monday Morning*'. Cooke explains that he excluded Lahey's iconic painting *Monday Morning* – which is on permanent display in the gallery – from this exhibition because its iconic status has obscured the fact that during Lahey's lifetime her major contribution to art in Australia was considered to be her handling of brilliant

colour, particularly in watercolours of floral still life paintings. He elaborates on Lahey's experimentation with intense and vibrant colour in the 1920s and 1930s, and points out the connections with modernism. The exhibition also included later floral studies, using less vibrant but nonetheless uncommon colour values, and a number of works that reflect the changing urban face of Brisbane.

In 'Queensland Literary Culture in the Long Decade After Joh: Institutional Development and Narratives of Change', Stuart Glover discusses the transformation of the profile as well as the scale of literary activity in Queensland, and the renegotiation of the place of Queensland literature in the national context that has occurred over the two decades since the fall of Bjelke-Petersen and the National Party government in the late 1980s. While acknowledging that depictions of the parlous state of literature in Queensland may have been exaggerated, he argues that proactive government policy and a greater emphasis on the professional development and networking of writers have been extremely effective in promoting literature and writers. Of particular interest is the way in which the literary community and the media have together developed a narrative of cultural change, so that Brisbane – once depicted by David Malouf, Gerard Lee and others as inhospitable to writers – is now represented as the natural home of celebrity writers like Nick Earls.

In 'Living in the End Time: Ecstasy and Apocalypse in the Work of H.D. and Janette Turner Hospital', Belinda McKay explores thematic and cultural connections between the work of American-born modernist poet and novelist H.D. (1886–1961) and the Australian-born postmodern novelist Janette Turner Hospital (born 1942). Both women were formed as writers by their early exposure to ecstatic Protestantism, a transnational phenomenon that is a significant but under-researched cultural influence on all Anglophone cultures. Literary criticism remains heavily focused on national cultural traditions, but the introduction of a comparative dimension promotes greater insight into the patterns of flow and connection between colonial and postcolonial cultures, as well as the negotiation of tradition and modernity by writers.

This issue concludes with an article by Blake Singley on the Charity Organisation Society of Brisbane during the Great Depression. Singley explores the origins of the non-denominational Charity Organisation Society in England in 1869 as a point of liaison between a range of charitable groups and the poor. Its agenda of social reform was based on distinguishing between the indigent and the 'deserving', with charity supporting only the latter. Its 'scientific' casework approach to assessing the worthiness of applicants for charity was brought to Australia, and underlay the organisation's response to the Great Depression in Brisbane. Singley demonstrates that the Society's philosophy that 'indiscriminate giving ... often did more harm than good', and its expectation of moral improvement by recipients of its charity, were severely challenged by the rapid expansion of need and shrinking funds in the early 1930s. Not all those deemed to be deserving of charity could be assisted, and the charitable instinct seemed to have abandoned many donors. As charities in 2010 identify 'compassion fatigue' as a reason for a decline in donations, this article is an interesting reminder of historical precedents for current crises.

– **Belinda McKay**