

Editorial

This issue opens with papers on colonial Queensland by Kerry Heckenberg and Denis Cryle. Heckenberg's paper, 'Conflicting Visions', explores the life and art of the Queensland-born painter William George Wilson, whose work graces our cover. In a serendipitous connection with Denis Cryle's paper, William George Wilson (1849–1924) was the son of the wealthy Scottish squatter William Wilson, who arrived in Moreton Bay in 1843. Cryle's paper, 'Scottish Intellectuals in Colonial Queensland', argues that the dominant narrative of the colonial Scots as entrepreneurial and often ruthless pastoralists, politicians and businessmen fails to take into account the contributions of Scots to education, journalism, and the life of the mind and soul more generally. His case studies of two exemplars of 'Scotus Intellectualis' — John Dunmore Lang and George Wight — outline the intellectual and civic contributions of these two Protestant clergymen to the early colony of Queensland.

Two papers on women follow. In 'Lady Parachutists and the End of Civilisation in Queensland', Bill Metcalf recounts the extraordinary tale of Queensland's reception of a troupe of American gymnastic performers in 1890. The highlight of the Van Tassell troupe's spectacular show was the ascent of a scantily clad woman in a hot-air balloon and her return to earth by parachute. Metcalf's paper explores the scandal that erupted in Townsville over the 'sinful show', analysing both the political and psycho-sexual motivations behind the response of clergymen and politicians. Metcalf also identifies this episode as the genesis of the pivotal event in the plot of a dystopian science fiction novel, *The Ruins of Brisbane in the Year 2000*, which was published by the eccentric Dr Thomas Pennington Lucas (of Papaw Ointment fame) in 1894.

Joanne Scott's paper, 'Making Ends Meet: Brisbane Women and Unemployment in the Great Depression', looks at a very different aspect of women's history, but she too remarks on the circumscription of women's lives. Although married women in employment faced hostility, charitable institutions often made aid to unemployed women contingent on the women's personal morality and their upholding of conventional family structures. In her attempt to retrieve the lost voices of women during the Great Depression, Scott emphasises that the archival documents, pictures and oral history leave many silences, but her paper demonstrates how an imaginative, empathetic reading of a wide range of historical sources can help the researcher pose questions and tease out inferences.

Simon Ryan's article on travel writing in Queensland between 1860 and 1950 is a contribution to an ARC-funded project on the literary history of Queensland. The article covers exploration and settler journals, the publicity texts published by the Queensland State Government Intelligence and Tourist Bureau, and the beginning of modern tourist writing. Focusing on the period 1860–1950 (i.e. between the last

stages of land exploration and the dawn of the new age of mass tourism) enables Ryan to encompass the transition from colonialism to post-colonialism in Queensland travel writing: his paper begins with the Jardine brothers, who report killing at least 30 Aborigines in a single clash on their journey to Somerset, and ends with Jean Devanny, whose *Travels in North Queensland* (1951) not only records the attractions of the north, such as the pristine beauty of the Great Barrier Reef, but also exposes the brutal treatment of Aboriginal people by church and state.

The issue concludes with an eloquent and passionate account of more than a quarter of a century of committed action against racism by one of the most articulate white advocates of Aboriginal rights and reconciliation in Queensland: Noel Preston. 'Confronting Boundaries: Racism' is excerpted from Preston's memoir, *Beyond the Boundary*, which was published by Zeus Publications in May 2006. Preston's reflections on his ethical, political and spiritual journey give valuable insights into the role of radical dissent during a turbulent period of Queensland history. His recollections of working with Aboriginal leaders like Pastor Don Brady (Kwangji) and Don Davidson, of the early days of FAIRA, and of the protests at the 1982 Commonwealth Games make a significant contribution to the historical record.

— *Belinda McKay*