

THANKS

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This edition of LiNQ is the second available for purchase online via via our LiNQ website www.linq.org.au. LiNQ is a labour of love. Our longevity depends on your support. We also welcome donations on our homepage.

We hope you will be as fascinated as we are with the contents. We also hope the website will provide an opportunity for us to be much more interactive and replace snail mail. We look forward to building the website further and getting your feedback.

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A GENERATIONAL TAKE FROM THE EDITORS' DESKS

As we go to press, generation 2.0 takes to the streets in protest against failing governments, economies, and systems. We are witnesses to graphic accounts of civil unrest in places like Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt. Once, news bulletins were controlled by mainstream media and overbearing governments. But nowadays, the bloodshed is immortalised by amateur journalists, albeit often unsteadily framed and out of focus, but graphically real on mobile phones. Streamed on 24-hour mainstream news services, these videos are prefaced by, 'We can't vouch for the validity of this footage...but here it is'. Fact morphs into fiction as we struggle to make sense of the world. Iconic news images, like the bloodied corpse of Muammar Gaddafi capture hands holding half a dozen smartphones whose faceless owners are recording, with their professional colleagues, a rough draft of history. Everywhere, the custodians of knowledge are under threat. The mainstream media model is collapsing as well as the rarefied world of the book publisher, who helplessly watches readers fervently embrace the electronic world of books. In the last three years, there has been an explosion in ebook reading on smart phones. So much so, write Lachlan Jobbins and Angelo Loukakis on the *Australian Society of Authors guide to Digital Self-Publishing*, that 2011 may well prove the transition point from print to digital publishing. No longer, they say, will digital publishing be 'the exotic' extra. And tellingly, they warn that elements of the future have arrived more quickly than the book industry might have anticipated or predicted.

The most profound change that is projected to occur in Australia is the ageing of the population. Early baby boomers (born from 1946) will impact hugely. By 2022, people aged 65-84 will represent 4m of the population, growing at a rate of 3.5% per year. So our theme of Generations, the question of what will happen to this world on the cusp of a massive generational change is a highly relevant one. Some of those 2.0 protesters are against rising university tuition fees. As costs rise and universities continue to be divested of public funding, students simply cannot afford Arts degrees. Dentistry, medicine, law, business, and engineering – vocational options - are courses of choice. So what about the humanities? That great ship that used to steer revolution and social change seems to be going down the gurgler. Or like the other traditional gatekeepers, has the debate left the hallowed corridors of academe and moved on to a wider public sphere online? Those universities that cannot inhabit cyberspace will perish warns our Higher Education supplement in the national daily newspaper.

"Every generation," Thomas Jefferson, author of the American Declaration of Independence once wrote, "needs its own revolution." Perhaps no pronouncement could be more aptly ironic than this one, spoken at the founding of a nation that itself is now foundering, while the hopeful Gen Ys who voted in Obama also begin to run out of youthful optimism.

In the context of the original Latin *tempus fugit*, the time-worn phrase “time flies” actually means “time flees.” Time is a fugitive. It’s running away from you. I know we felt that way with this issue, which is hot off the presses and a labour of love at the very end of an overworked humanities’ academic’s annual workload, a workload which seems to get bigger and bigger even as our student enrolments get smaller and smaller. Who has time for reading Shakespeare or lingering over Remembrance of Things Past? Students arrive on campus, juggling two jobs, sometimes families, engaging in the requisite attendance requirements to pass subjects then plunge back into real life to finance their learning. No-one, it seems, has time for face-to-face engagement anymore.

Australia’s literary journals have also been forced to reconsider audiences, content and purpose. Australia’s first literary journals — *Southerly*, *Meanjin*, *Overland*, *Westerly*, *Australian Literary Studies*, and *LiNQ* experienced a spectacular algal bloom. But the lifecycle of these journals, like the economy they shadow, is in a different phase. To speak of another cycle—condensation, precipitation, evaporation—ours in very much in the latter. To speak of Karen Kissane’s *Worst of Days*, winner of the 2011 Colin Roderick Award and featured in this issue, in this context is to rob the horrendous Victorian bushfires of their profound significance. But literary journals on this continent are also terribly subject to the weather. And we, like others before us, and literary journals in particular, have joined the global clamour online seeking to engage those 2.0 generationers and the Gen Ys and Gen Xs.

We thought it timely to ask for academic papers, poems, short stories, and book reviews that loosely addressed this year’s annual theme of *LiNQ*, Generations. We were, as usual, impressed with the quality of writing and academic reflection that we received. But we’re all about making ourselves over in this issue, too. We have now more comprehensively embraced all of the humanities, rather than simply literature, as *Literature in North Queensland* once did exclusively, a major benefit from cyberspace. And in case, you didn’t know, our website is www.linq.org.au. Pay us a visit. We’re all in this together, we figure. Best to stick together rather than freeze each other out in a chilly academic and cultural climate.

The stories and articles in this issue tackle the theme of generation from a multitude of perspectives: from ageing; to identity and the generational view of the migrant who ponders ‘belonging’. From looking back down the ages to a childhood long past to the flightiness of youth. And, always, the ever changing dynamics of time passing. We hope you enjoy this multiplied layering of our take on Generations. We are all products of our past and our future. We thank you, our readers and sponsors, that *LiNQ* still has a present.

From your Co-eds: Dr Victoria Kuttainen & Dr Lindsay Simpson
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