FOUNDING EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Famously, Louisa Geoghegan, who arrived in Victoria in the 1860s, considered Australia to be an 'out of the world place'. But she persevered and coped with these distant and difficult characteristics. Others found it much more difficult and this induced them to feel, in a sense, not only 'out of the world', but be reduced to a condition where they were, in the view of some observers, 'out of their minds' and consequently needing to be placed 'out of society'. In many respects, the themes of this book are about constructions of these various forms of pushing outward, in geographical and meteorological terms, in respect of white colonial society's expectations of 'normal' behaviour, and with regard to concepts of respectability and appropriate conformity. But Catharine Coleborne explores all these issues within a much more sophisticated web of concepts of gender, class, race and ethnicity in specific settler colonial settings, comparing Victoria in Australia with the northern part of the North Island of New Zealand where both similar and contrasting white settlements were established, with some differences in economic conditions, but with many comparable developments in urban growth together with social and cultural transformations.

It is often said that the British Empire was essentially about hierarchies, layerings of class, of functions and roles, of occupations, of gender, of ethnicity and of race. But as well as thinking in terms of pyramidal structures, we should perhaps also think in terms of circles of power and social influence. Settlements established new circles, centred on rapidly growing urban spaces, on rural settlement, and mining communities, circles of authority that were carefully protected and policed, with indigenous peoples often pushed towards the edges in their confinement to specific areas, and with the outcasts of white society marginalised in other ways, notably into institutions where, as far as possible, they could be 'out of sight'. Just as indigenous peoples were spatially marginalised in order to reduce their capacity to resist, so problematic whites were institutionally marginalised in order to reduce their moral threat to what were seen as the central meanings and ambitions of colonial society.

Such colonial societies of settlement were, as Coleborne points out, essentially about aspects of mobility, the mobility of settlers to new lands, the dramatic shifts in the economic fortunes and productive capacities (in agriculture, mining, urban growth, and infrastructural developments) of the new societies, the movement also of ideas and institutions, as well as the setting up of pressures towards mobility

on the part of indigenous people having to cope with revolutionary change. Such colonies invariably saw the global extension of the white bourgeois norms which emerged in the early nineteenth century and came centre stage by its second half. Colonial bourgeoisies set out to reproduce the central aspects of the social conditions, the cultural contexts, the educational and religious values, and their own constructions of the moral norms which they considered crucial to a well-ordered and secure society. All of these were to be underpinned by the institutions which upheld this complex of culturally specific ideals. These institutions included Christian churches, schools, benevolent societies, sporting bodies, libraries, museums, and art galleries as promoters of moral and intellectual well-being, together with hospitals and asylums for the maintenance of physical and mental health. Settlement colonies were particularly crucial here. As wholly new and burgeoning societies, they presented both great opportunities for the extension of bourgeois values and considerable threats to their survival. They were also to create zones of transformation and hybridity in the extension of such values. Colonial societies were to prove different in all sorts of ways, in helping to form new concepts of masculinity and femininity, fresh identities, and hybridities in terms of ideas about class, ethnicity and race.

Mental health institutions were key locations in the formation and defining of such new concepts. Colonial society soon had its own notions of what were considered to be appropriate forms of masculinity and femininity, of the articulation of ethnicity in terms of religion, 'whiteness', class and cultural difference, of coping with non-British ethnicities, both immigrant and indigenous. It is true, as Coleborne demonstrates, that asylums saw the collapse of distinctions of class and even race since all social classes, if to varying degrees, were prone to what was conceived to be mental illness, while asylums in Victoria and New Zealand could embrace Chinese, as well as other non-British groups, and Maori inmates. Nevertheless, the medical and mental health discourses of these institutions strove for what were seen as new scientific advances through the observation of patients in unique settings, as well as framing them in terms of these very bourgeois norms. Since colonial societies were new, it was hoped that they would present fresh opportunities for the advancement of ideals framed elsewhere, but it also made them vulnerable to anxieties about factors that would potentially destabilise them. This led doctors and others who worked in the mental health sector to survey aspects of difference, in class, ethnicity, heredity, social conditions, and personality to attempt to frame analyses of mental health issues in terms of mobile immigrants and then in respect of the formation of colonial-born societies. Using a considerable range of primary sources as well as building on an exten-

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sive number of works already published in the field, Coleborne has produced a strikingly original and sophisticated book that will advance these significant studies in migrant, settler and indigenous mental health issues.

John M. MacKenzie