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Abstract

This thesis explores the moral and sexual anxieties produced by the transportation of male convicts to the penal colonies of Australia. My aims are twofold. First, this study argues that male sexuality lay at the heart of penal and colonial political discourse. The moral anxieties this both reflected and produced directly informed the penal administration of the convict population. This was implicit in the ways that convict bodies were ordered, surveilled, disciplined and accommodated. In this analysis the sexual and behavioural management of male prisoners is considered to be a fundamental dynamic within contemporary perceptions of criminal reformation. Second, this thesis examines the ways that these moral concerns permeated the wider colonial society. Free British settlers took their cultural cargo with them to the colonies. In the context of the penal colonies, they also had to negotiate the specific cultural and social implications of transportation. The moral concerns of colonial society were often played out around the politics of imperial transportation. This is examined through a consideration of the cultural meanings of colonial discourse and the many tensions that lay beneath it. During the slow transition from penal colony to respectable free society, colonists utilised and manipulated their moral and cultural anxieties in a number of political ways. This thesis argues that the moral and sexual anxieties of colonial society were both real and imagined. They informed a variety of discourses that linked the colonial periphery with the metropolitan centre in a relationship that was reciprocal but also antagonistic.

Abbreviations

AOT	Archives Office of Tasmania
BPP	British Parliamentary Papers
CSO	Colonial Secretary's Office, Tasmania
GO	Governor's Office, Tasmania
HRA	Historical Records of Australia
JRAHS	Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society
ML	Mitchell Library
THRA, P & P	Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Papers and Proceedings
UMA	University of Melbourne Archives