



*A Study of Femaleness and Maleness in the Construction  
of Schizophrenia: An Australian Case*

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## Abstract

The initial aim of this research was to offer a cultural analysis of the construction of schizophrenia as it occurs in Australia. During fieldwork, the major part of which was carried out at the Schizophrenia Fellowship of South Australia Inc.' drop-in centre, it became clear that conceptualisations of gender are an important factor in the cultural constitution of schizophrenia. This awareness has led to a thesis which examines the conceptualisations of gender in Australia as they both embedded and reproduced within understandings of schizophrenia.

The examination of understandings of schizophrenia, as they are presented by professionals and the national press as well as at the Fellowship, has revealed aspects of femaleness and maleness which are interwoven throughout many aspects of life in Australia. Two facets of Australian egalitarianism that have bearing on the constitution of both schizophrenia and gender are blame and responsibility. In elucidating the ethnographic material these two elements became important as they linked the *schizophrenic* into Australian life generally as well as providing focii for the differential construction of femaleness and maleness in Australian society.

Besides exploring cultural understandings of gender as they exist in the construction of schizophrenia I argue the notions of femaleness and maleness which are examined in the light of the construction of schizophrenia are reproduced generally in everyday life.

The following thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of diploma in any University and, to my best knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

I consent to the following thesis being made available for photocopy and loan if it is accepted for the award of the degree.

✓ Kerry M. Zubrinich

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