



**Negotiating Ethnicity, Sexuality and Gender:
The Personal Identities of Lesbians
From Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds.**

This dissertation is presented as part requirement for the Master of Arts(Women's Studies) Degree, Women's Studies Department, Schulz Building, University of Adelaide.

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DECLARATION

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

I consent to this dissertation being made available for photocopying and loan if applicable if accepted for the award of the degree.

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, the intersections of ethnicity, sexuality and gender in the experience of lesbian women from non-English-speaking backgrounds are investigated through use of literary, theoretical and empirical materials. There is a particular emphasis on women from Italian-Australian background.

The roles of social ascription, community acknowledgement and personal agency in the personal identity formation of lesbians from non-English-speaking backgrounds are assessed. The applicability of models of 'cultural conflict' and 'cultural complementarity or choice' are also evaluated when discussing these women's positions within their ethnic families and communities, within the wider Australian society, and within the predominantly Anglo-feminist lesbian movement.

The diversity of experience and situation that exists breaks many of the stereotypes and presumptions made about lesbians, and indeed about all women from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

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