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Ab/using the System: **Drugs, Sport and National Identity**

In contemporary times the drugs-in-sport issue has become increasingly contentious. Sporting bodies, bureaucrats and individuals have been placed under public scrutiny - particularly in Australia. Various sporting organizations and, more significantly, a number of media campaigns have publicly condemned the consumption of drugs as a means of enhancing sporting prowess. These campaigns specifically 'other' the sporting bodies (for example, East German and Chinese athletes) who have been found to use performance enhancing drugs, and displace them outside a moralistic discourse of nationalistic fervor, while simultaneously using them as a justification for such a discourse. This displacement and othering creates an "us" and "them" binary in which the "us" is configured as clean and proper and the "them" as grotesque and improper. The use of these binary oppositions to support and enhance national identity functions to displace the bodies that "abuse" outside mainstream configurations of national and sporting identity. Those, however, that "use" performance enhancing drugs, such as Australian swimmer Samantha Riley are re-appropriated back into the national "clean" paradigm that reconstitutes national identity as whole and complete, unthreatened by the dis-ease represented by the drug-fuelled grotesque 'other' body. Thus "abuse" in some nationalist discourses is recovered as "use."

Using the theories of Jacques Lacan, Mikhail Bakhtin, Mary Douglas and Julia Kristeva, this paper seeks to theorize the ab/use of performance enhancing drugs in sport over time. Furthermore, it links the representations of drug ab/use to various nationalistic paradigms that assert a unified national image, "us", in an effort to displace and 'other,' through fragmentation and psychosocial dis-ease, the "drug-fuelled" bodies of non-Australian "thems."