

A Review of Hogan, Jackie. *Gender, Race and National Identity: Nations of Flesh and Blood*. New York: Routledge, 2009. 254 pages.

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Hogan's research is premised on the idea that nations are imagined communities, and she hypothesizes that the collective imagery of a nation inevitably reflects prevailing social disparities and hierarchies of power. To Hogan, the construction of national identity is a fluid process. The roots of some narratives can be traced back through the centuries, while at the same time these narratives, old as they may seem, continue to be resurrected, redefined, and reified in space. This fluid process occurs at many levels, by different people. Hogan demonstrates that discourses of national identity reinforce rigid notions of gender and race which solidify in physical space. These narratives assign certain roles to the masculine and feminine, with the former typically emulating characteristics such as industriousness, military strength, and economic power, and the latter representing the creativity, gentleness, and nature of the country. Similarly, Hogan shows that national discourses reflect racist and prejudiced views of Others. In accordance with Orientalism, national narratives often rationalize military missions through demonization of external Others as either dangerous, uncivil, and/or unenlightened. Similarly, internal Others are often either festivalized for tourism, or seen as sources of social problems. Hogan's book brilliantly summarizes these narratives across four countries: Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, and the United States. She showed how major moments in the respective countries' history were extracted and formed into a narrative that still carries weight today.

Hogan shows how the archetypes of national identity are created and recreated through key historical events. The contemporary Australian national identity began forming with the arrival of the Europeans in 1788. Major events such as the 2000 Olympic Games were significant factors in the shaping the character of the nation. The second half of Hogan's book discusses the reformation of national identities in material examples: Olympic ceremonies,

television advertisements, post-9/11 editorials, journalism, tourist brochures, and exhibitions of national museums.

All the Olympic Opening Ceremonies that Hogan analyses were complex and richly layered spectacles of technological advancement championing mastery over nature, cultural diversity, peace and triumph. All celebrated diversity and modernity. Yet, all consistently endorsed the same winners and losers. To Hogan, the winners were: a) those with capital interests; b) those who ranked high on the hierarchy of social class in terms of gender, skin colour, cultural background, or religious affiliation; and/or, c) the hosting nation state (113). The Olympic ceremonies were sites where national narratives were constructed, retelling stories about the hosting nation that reflected and reaffirmed inequalities and hierarchies within and beyond its boundaries.

If there was one objection to the book, it would be over Hogan's use of the word 'race' particularly in light of her proposition that discourse makes space. Although Hogan's objective of locating and deconstructing systems of racism is clear, she frequently uses terms to describe her subject such as 'ethnoracial' (11) 'racially diverse' (13) or, 'racially [...] homogeneous' (14, 40). That is, 'race' became a category of inquiry. Yet, if 'race' is a biosystematic subdivision of sub-species that divides organisms according to phenotypical or behavioural traits, then one must ask if this is an appropriate category in relation to humans. Its use also leads to unfortunate misunderstandings in the text. It was not clear, for example, if the Australian Immigration Restriction Act literally stipulated advantages to 'whites-only' (22) or if this was Hogan's interpretation. A language is needed that can discuss racism, prejudice, and discrimination, that moves beyond the categories that racism uses. To be clear, this is not to say that prejudice and discrimination along the lines of skin colour do not occur. As Hogan clearly demonstrates, this is indeed a massive problem.

On the whole, Hogan has written a fascinating book that processes a massive amount of data, and delivers an important analysis on how, why, and for whom national identities are formed. The depth of her analysis can hardly be overstated. This book is valuable to anyone interested on the topic of nationalism in general. It would be, for example, a fascinating research project to apply to Hogan's methods to other countries. Looking at the creation of national narratives and their respective categories, through

examples such as hosting the Olympics, is also a profound insight into the centralized and vertical structures that surface and interlock along the web of our urbanized planet. Here Hogan offers a striking glimpse into the formation and continual re-establishment of vertical structures and their structuring categories that fix their subjects with inflexible labels, such as female, male, or foreign. The exclusionary character of this process is striking. Researchers would do well to give it further attention.

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