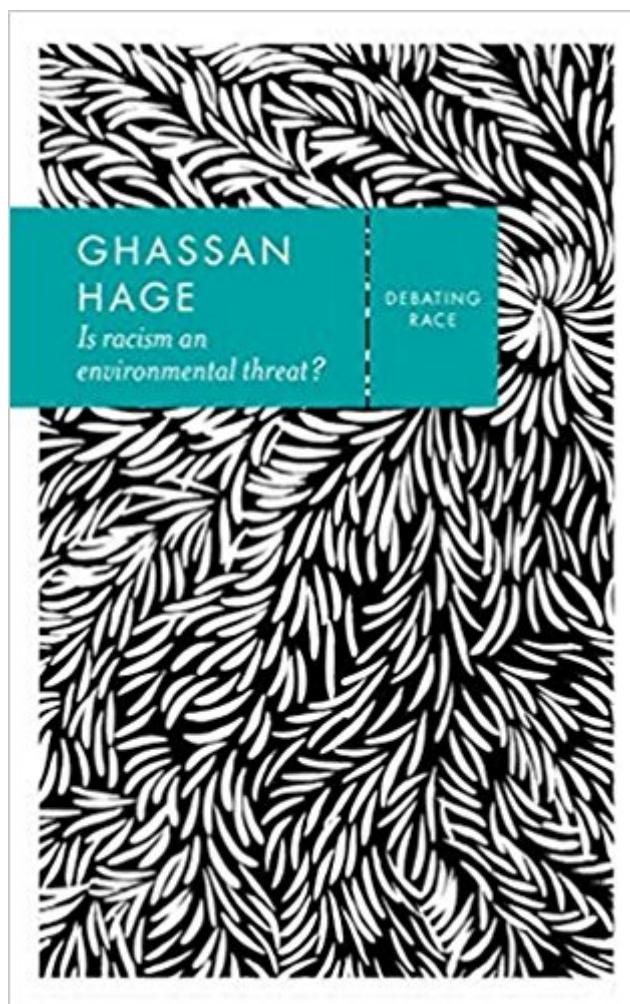


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Is Racism An Environmental Threat? (Debating Race)



Synopsis

The ecological crisis is the most overwhelming to have ever faced humanity and its consequences permeate every domain of life. This trenchant book examines its relation to Islamophobia as the dominant form of racism today, showing how both share roots in domination, colonialism, and the logics of capitalism. Ghassan Hage proposes that both racism and humanity's destructive relationship with the environment emanate from the same mode of inhabiting the world: an occupying force imposes its own interest as law, subordinating others for the extraction of value, eradicating or exterminating what gets in the way. In connecting these two issues, Hage gives voice to the claim taking shape in many activist spaces that anti-racist and ecological struggles are intrinsically related. In both, the aim is to move beyond what makes us see otherness, whether human or nonhuman, as something that exists solely to be managed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"In his usual grippingly lucid prose, Ghassan Hage gives us here an insightful critique of the intrinsic connection between racism and speciesism in their most 'ungovernable' contemporary expressions, namely, Islamophobia and the planetary ecological catastrophe. He thereby exposes the politico-metaphysical foundations of Western colonialism alongside with the colonialist and the foundations of Western metaphysics, particularly in its capitalist expression with its relentless need of so-called primitive accumulation. By

showing, with the help of anthropological classics such as Mauss and LÃƒÂ©vy-Bruhl, that our own anthropotechnics of 'generalized domestication' (one of the most innovative concepts of this book) is by no means the only human way of ecologizing — of making ourselves at home in the world. Hage offers us a nuanced, subtle analysis of the metonymic and metaphorical wolves that haunt the obsessive 'mono-realist' project of capitalism, whose glaring failure is now forcing us to pay increased attention to the counter-hegemonic modes of existence (re)emerging through the widening cracks in the ecocidal and racist-colonial nomos of Modernity."

•Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, The National Museum of Brazil

Ghassan Hage is Future Generation Professor of Anthropology and Social Theory at the University of Melbourne

I found this close to unreadable. It's not just that there are an ample supply of long jargon/conceit-heavy sentences, though there certainly are. Nor is it just that the central argument is at once obscure and tendentious, though I believe it is. The decision to treat Islamophobia as racism, and indeed the central case of racism and (thus) the illuminator of racism is....well...putting it politely, something that needs a good deal of explanation and defense. It doesn't receive it. There is so much hand-waving, and so much that the author takes to be obvious that....isn't. The author (also) remarks that a central aim of the book is to argue that "the racial crisis manifested by Islamophobia and the ecological crisis not only happen to have an effect on each other ; they are in effect one and the same crisis, a crisis in the dominant mode of inhabiting the world that both racial and ecological domination reproduces." I can't imagine a cogent and persuasive argument for that claim. Certainly, this book does not provide one. I have read other books in the Debating Race series that I thought were excellent, elegant, and clear. Is Science Racist? by Marks is one that merits special attention. This contribution by Hage is a big disappointment.

Interesting and important contemporary work. It's a compilation of essays which you can easily access but the questions derive from theoretical readings on capitalism, colonial studies, affects, etc. It addresses the Anthropocene discussion as well as the problem of social justice that's grounded on anthropological differences. The book shows how productive thinking is possible against non-thinking in the face of environmental threats.

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