



The Racial Politics of Australian Multiculturalism

White Nation, Against Paranoid Nationalism & Later Writings

Ghassan Hage

Ghassan Hage is professor of anthropology and social theory at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is internationally renowned for his research on migration, on the intersection of racism, nationalism and colonialism, and for his development of critical anthropological theory. Along with the works republished in this volume, Hage's sole-authored books include: *Alter-Politics: Critical Anthropology and the Radical Imagination* (2015), *Is Racism an Environmental Threat?* (2017) and *The Diasporic Condition: Ethnographic Explorations of the Lebanese in the World* (2021).

"The writings of Ghassan Hage are at the forefront of anti-racism and anti-colonial thinking, both within Australia and internationally. Ghassan is a generous and inclusive scholar. He is also a trusted friend. Reading his work has provided me with the invaluable tools I need to fight for the human rights and social justice of all people."

Tony Birch, author of *The White Girl*

"What a gift for all of us, and especially for new generations of scholars and activists, to have this collection of Ghassan Hage's writings on race, Whiteness, multiculturalism and nationalism. In his unique voice, and with characteristic wit and wisdom, Hage offers both a new way of accounting for race, its affective grammars, its holds and habits, and a much-needed reminder that to sustain commitment to the work of critique is to offer an expansive vision of justice and of humanity that gives us more room to move and to oscillate."

Sara Ahmed, Independent Feminist Scholar and author of *Complaint!*

"Transformative and transcendent. Hage's writings are for everywhere and every time, for every person who has the courage to understand their place in the world, and to change the way they live in it."

Sara Saleh, author of *Songs for the Dead and the Living*

"One of the most important writers of our time, Hage's fierce intellect is a clarifying force fixed on the mechanics of power and injustice. Necessary, instructive, and brilliant, this is a must-read."

Omar Sakr, author of *Son of Sin*

“Why do our shapeshifting ‘culture wars’ never seem to end? How did Australia come to adopt such a brutal policy of incarcerating refugees? Why do Indigenous claims on the one hand and a religious mode of being Muslim in the West on the other disturb not only White nationalists but the multicultural state, and what does this have to do with global conditions and conflicts? Reflecting on Australian multiculturalism as a reality grounded in grassroots struggles and always in the making, this profoundly original and compassionate book about the social distribution of hope explores these questions with intellectual verve and a wicked humour that cuts to the heart of our racial politics in more ways than one.”

Meaghan Morris, University of Sydney, Australia

“It would be hard to overstate the impact reading *White Nation* and *Against Paranoid Nationalism* had on me as a young scholar engaged in multicultural education and anti-racist activism. Published as the right-wing assault on multiculturalism gathered pace in Australia and elsewhere, these books taught me the importance of understanding reactionary spectacle in and through nationalism’s deeper affinities and affects. Reading them again now provides us with the kind of intellectual invention, political resolve and critical hope we need facing into yet another period of nationalist clamour and reaction.”

Gavan Titley, Maynooth University, Ireland

“Written before the current surge of xenophobic nationalism and open flirtation with fascism, Ghassan Hage’s modern classic *White Nation* famously explores the contradictions of ostensibly multiculturalist, immigrant-friendly Australia. This omnibus edition, including the excellent *Against Paranoid Nationalism* and a handful of bonus tracks, makes the hidden transcripts of structural racism visible, legible and amenable to criticism and activism. These analyses of racism and settler colonialism have passed the test of time and space with flying colours. Hage’s analysis provides the present age with a toolbox enabling us to understand, expose and combat exclusionary nationalism and structural racism. This is engaged social science at its very best, and it may never have been more acutely needed. Prescient and precise.”

Thomas Hylland Eriksen, University of Oslo, Norway



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extend that respect to all Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander peoples today. We
honour more than sixty thousand years
of storytelling, art and culture.**



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Ghassan Hage

Foreword

Jumana Bayeh, Paula Abood, Sarah Ayoub
& Randa Abdel-Fattah

Sydney, November 2022

When Ghassan Hage's seminal work *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* was published in 1998, it quickly became a defining text on the racial politics of Australian multiculturalism. The title was inspired by the notorious White Australia Policy, which only officially ended in 1973. Hage's *White Nation*, however, was not a historical work narrating a set of policies and practices relegated to the archive of Australia's past. Hage argued that the racial fantasies of the White nation remained deeply in place, structuring and shaping the core expressions and practices of Australian society, culture, politics and the law.

White Nation arrived two years after the 1996 election of an avowedly White nationalist Prime Minister, and three years before that same Prime Minister campaigned, in 2001, to be re-elected by appealing to a paranoid White majority. *Against Paranoid Nationalism* was published only two years after that 2001 race election, with the reflective subtitle *Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society*. Hage's work could not have been more prescient. In both texts, Hage synthesised his thinking on racial politics, drawing on the depth of his field work and the breadth of transdisciplinary theory, parsing political events and cultural modes of being in the White settler colony.

Twenty-five years after *White Nation* appeared, fantasies of White nationhood persist, and are asserted and enacted in the most violent of ways. First and

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foremost, as critically conscious daughters and granddaughters of Lebanese, Palestinian and Egyptian immigrant and refugee settlers living on unceded stolen lands, we recognise the ongoing systemic violence of White supremacy against First Nations communities and Country. Our collective presence on Country as settlers informs how we think about the hierarchies of race and racial politics, and what that means in practice as subjects in the White settler colony.

There are many examples we could enumerate from the last twenty-five years that draw attention to the embeddedness of racist expression and paranoid White nationalism. Episodes like the race riot in the summer of 2005, when a horde of White Australians descended on Cronulla in Sydney to rid the beach of ‘Lebs’ and ‘Wogs’, are part of the continuum of racist violence against minoritised migrant settlers, the Lebanese — indeed anybody deemed ‘of Middle Eastern appearance’ — being the target on this occasion. Multiple non-White migrant and refugee settler communities have histories of enduring, resisting and confronting White supremacist violence, including people seeking asylum both on and offshore.

In 2022, we learned of yet another Prime Minister’s fervour for race politics, with the vilification of his political rival, Michael Towke. Towke was discredited as a ‘dodgy Leb’ after he won preselection in the seat of Cook in 2007. Cook — so apt a name for this stoush to occur — is home to Cronulla, and ironically, Towke had managed to secure the numbers to represent Cook by a wide margin, despite the hostility enacted against the Lebanese in that shire only three years before. In Australia, members of a political party vote to select who will represent their party in a particular district. In this instance, Michael Towke and Scott Morrison sought preselection to represent the Liberal National Party in the electoral district or seat of Cook in 2007. Towke won eighty-two votes and Morrison eight. It is alleged by Towke, and others, that a smear campaign followed with Morrison claiming Towke was a Muslim (he is Catholic), a shady or ‘dodgy’ character, and would cost the party the seat because of his Lebanese background. The press ran various stories questioning Towke’s legitimacy to stand for preselection, claiming he had engaged in branch stacking and embellished his credentials. He was ultimately disendorsed by the party. Morrison won preselection in another round of voting and in 2018 became leader of the Liberal Party and Australia’s Prime Minister. It is worth noting that the allegations in the press against Towke were

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eventually found to be false and a newspaper was ordered to pay an undisclosed amount to settle a defamation suit.

While we could reduce this particular campaign to smear local candidate Towke as driven by political competitiveness, we know better. What also determined this response was a kind of ‘multicultural panic’, that is racist anxiety over the political mobility of non-White or non-European Australians in the context of power. Animated by a discourse of Anglo decline, fantasies of White supremacy cannot accommodate — in fact will not tolerate — this kind of multicultural mobility where the Other gets to shape their own modes of existence.

Hage argued that a key theme of Australian multiculturalism is that those running the extractive settler colony determine whose lives are enriched, and which groups of people are relegated to the function of enriching. Using the example of cultural festivals in *White Nation*, Hage elucidated the transaction: while it is possible in Australia for ethnic communities to maintain their culture via the singing and dancing subject, those communities have been sold a lemon because this transaction does nothing to rupture the dominance or violence inherent to the White nation.

Rather, White cosmo-multiculturalism, to employ Hage’s term, subsumes Otherness into its model through a regime of allowing the Other to showcase their cultural difference precisely for the consumption of the White Australian and those assimilated into this constituted identity. Indeed, the celebration of Otherness we are describing here is usually pursued and enjoyed by groups of people whose politics are liberal and progressive, in contrast to the rioters at Cronulla. But such a celebration is no less encased in an unequal distribution of power — while the White Australian can learn about the Other and even feel virtuous because they see themselves as cosmopolitan citizens embracing multiculturalism, they are always, in the White Nation fantasy model, the viewer and consumer of Otherness; the ones being enriched by the Other whose role and mission is to improve and enrich their lives.

This critical observation from Hage in *White Nation* is extended in *Against Paranoid Nationalism*, and necessarily troubles the central claim that multiculturalism flattens hierarchies of race and ethnicity. Hage argued otherwise. Multiculturalism as policy and practice is not counter to systems of race and racism, but rather is a continuation and an enabler of those systems.

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Paranoid nationalism is about containing minority communities so that they cannot escape the confines the multicultural state has forced on them.

It is not lost on us that an Arab migrant settler to Australia exposed not just the false promise of multiculturalism as an antidote to racism but also the structuring violence of the White Nation fantasy. In an act of decolonial praxis, Hage inverted the enriched/enricher relationship by enriching Australian scholarship with his takedown of cosmo-multiculturalism, exposing the discursive violence of White supremacy in the settler colony.

When Dr Michael Mohammed Ahmad, the founding director of the critical literacy movement Sweatshop, approached the four of us to be part of a reference group for the publication of this volume, we all immediately agreed. Professor Hage's writings, especially those reproduced here, have shaped our creative, scholarly, activist and community practice, enriching our collective understanding of what it means to live as diasporic Arab-Australians in the limited confines of a White nation. As subjects who produce art, literature and scholarship, we have all used Hage's ideas to critically engage with and agitate against paranoid White nationalism.

One of the final essays in this volume focuses on the 2019 Christchurch massacre, when a White Australian male opened his automatic weapon inside two mosques in New Zealand, murdering fifty-one people who had come to pray. This account reinforces what we know from our ongoing work and care across communities: that nothing has changed regarding the malignancy of racism and racist violence that Professor Hage diagnosed over two decades ago in *White Nation* and *Against Paranoid Nationalism*.

With his distinctive narrative analysis and engaging prose, Professor Hage's work is widely cited in his own field of anthropology, but also in history, sociology, cultural studies, literature, and across many other disciplines. His scholarship resonates beyond Australia, especially for researchers working in other violent settler colonial contexts, as well as in non-Anglophone domains, with his work being translated into Japanese. This scholarly and international reach speaks to Professor Hage's public gift and legacy.

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There is another legacy that is more intimate, but no less significant. When Professor Hage completed his PhD and became an academic in the 1990s, he was one of a very small group of Arab migrants working in Australian higher education, and thus one of the first who we saw represent Arabs and Lebanese in the Australian academy. This kind of critical self-representation was crucial for nurturing a community of thinkers and activists, especially those of us working consciously on stolen land. Professor Hage's presence and generosity has nourished diasporic Arab researchers, artists, community organisers and community members. Most importantly, Professor Hage's theorising over the last twenty-five years has influenced the modes in which we can speak back to and subvert the racial hierarchies of the White settler colony.

General Preface

This collection makes available in one book most of my writings on multiculturalism, nationalism and racism in Australia. It includes my two books *White Nation* and *Against Paranoid Nationalism*. Tessa Morris-Suzuki has been kind enough to allow me to use her introduction to the Japanese translation of *White Nation* as a general introduction to the whole collection. I strongly urge people to read this text as I think it works well at introducing new and younger readers of *White Nation* and *Against Paranoid Nationalism* to the context in which the two books appeared; a case of the past being another country. I trust the works that make up the collection will be useful, at least to the many people who have been requesting that I make them available, especially for teaching purposes, since they've run out of print and that Pluto Press, Australia, the original publisher, has ceased publishing.

As far as the chapters in Part Three are concerned: Chapter 1 appeared in Catharine Lumby and Elspeth Probyn (eds.), *Remote Control: New Media, New Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne & Cambridge 2004. Chapter 2 appeared in Tony Bennett and John Frow (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Sage, London 2008. Chapter 3 appeared as a postscript to Greg Noble (ed.), *Lines in the Sand*, Institute of Criminology, Sydney 2009. Chapter 4, a conversation with Dimitris Papadopoulos, appeared as a Special Issue of *The International Journal for Critical Psychology: Psychology and the Political*, December 2004. Chapter 5 is a keynote address presented to the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council's National Conference, Launceston, 26 November 2011. Chapter 6 brings together a series of interventions on the politics of Whiteness in the shadow of the Christchurch massacre that have appeared online in *The Guardian*.

Ghassan Hage

Sydney, June 2022

Ghassan Hage's *White Nation* and its Australian Context*

Tessa Morris-Suzuki

The Rise of Multiculturalism

Ghassan Hage's book *White Nation* was first published in Australia in 1998, at a crucial point in the history of Australian multiculturalism. From the creation of the Australian nation in 1901 to the early 1970s, the nature of Australian society had been moulded by the racially discriminatory White Australia Policy, which for decades virtually prevented all non-European immigration, and even in some cases kept out 'dark skinned' Southern Europeans. During the 1960s, however, there was a gradual relaxation of restrictions, and in 1973 the Labor government of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam made the decisive break with the White Australia Policy, introducing a new immigration law, under which race and nationality were no longer to be treated as criteria for entry to Australia. As a result, by the mid-1970s, about 1.5 million of Australia's population of fifteen million regularly used languages other than English, and by the mid-1980s about forty per cent of migrants arriving in Australia each year came from various parts of Asia.¹

It was the government of Whitlam's successor, the Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, however, which introduced the term 'multiculturalism' (imported from Canada) into the rhetoric of Australian politics. The Fraser government set up an Australian Ethnic Affairs Council whose 1977 report, *Australia as a Multicultural Society*, helped to create the parameters for two

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decades or more of debate around the multicultural ideal. The enthusiasm with which 'multiculturalism' was adopted by politicians, the media, academics and others is partly explained by the flexibility of the term itself: it could be (and is) made to mean many things in many different times and places.

In terms of practical policy-making, the Australian multiculturalism of the late 1970s and early 1980s had (as James Jupp has noted) 'limited and pragmatic objectives', including 'ensuring the easy transition of immigrants into Australian society; limiting and reducing prejudice; developing access and equity in the provision of public services; encouraging non-English-speaking Australians to maintain their languages and cultures.'² Government departments were encouraged to produce material in a variety of different languages; migrant resource centres and telephone interpreting services were created to support recently arrived immigrants; the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) was created, offering radio and television programs which aimed to reflect and serve Australia's cultural diversity; and in 1986 a National Languages Policy was developed, with a stress both on promoting English-language competence and maintaining other community languages (such as Italian, Greek and Chinese) in schools.³

Multicultural policies in this sense involved a recognition of the growing diversity of Australian society, and an acknowledgement of the positive value of aspects of that diversity. But at the same time they also contributed to a certain form of 'assimilation': they aimed to help non-English-speaking migrants to become, as quickly as possible, well-adjusted 'productive' members of society. Besides (as Ghassan Hage points out), support systems for migrants were in fact provided at least as much through the grassroots efforts of their own communities as through 'top down' multicultural policy.

In a wider sense, meanwhile, 'multiculturalism' also referred to a new perception of Australian society popularised through a host of government reports, academic studies and media representations. This perception was perhaps best summed by the Fraser government's policy statement of August 1975, which offered a vision of 'the preservation and development of a culturally diversified but socially cohesive Australian society free of racial tensions and offering security, well being and equality of opportunity to all those living here'.⁴ At a time when Australia's ties to Britain were weakening, and issues of national identity and relations with Asia were topics of intense debate, this image (though

not embraced by everyone) had a broad popular appeal. Indeed, as Hage vividly shows, it could readily be converted into rather self-congratulatory narratives of nationhood, well illustrated by the children's story *The Stew that Grew* (discussed in chapter 4 of *White Nation*).

Neo-Nationalism and the Limits of Multiculturalism

Throughout the 1980s, multiculturalism and a relatively open immigration policy were accepted features of the policy platforms of all the main Australian political parties. By the second half of the 1990s, however, the rhetoric of multiculturalism was facing growing criticism from two radically different directions. On the one hand, there was a backlash against multicultural policies and imagery from an assortment of political forces. The most famous symbol of these forces of reaction was the maverick nationalist politician Pauline Hanson, who was elected to Parliament from the Queensland constituency of Oxley in 1996. Hanson, who had no previous political experience, offered a classic populist agenda combining economic nationalism with alarmist statements about an assortment of ethnic 'others', most notably 'Aborigines' and 'Asian' immigrants. Her anti-immigration, anti-multicultural policies struck a receptive nerve amongst sections of the electorate disquieted by globalisation, neo-liberal economic policies and rapid social change. The One Nation Party, which Hanson founded, succeeded in winning a number of seats in state elections, before being torn apart by internal rivalries and accusations of financial corruption. Ultimately, therefore, a reversal of policy was brought about, not by the rise of Hanson but rather by the advent of the government led by right-wing Liberal politician John Howard, who was to pursue an approach to immigration very similar to that proposed by Hanson, while clothing his policy in more cautious and internationally acceptable language.

On the other hand, meanwhile, multiculturalism was also being criticised by those who argued that its effects were not far reaching enough, and that its vision of a 'culturally diversified but socially cohesive' Australia masked continuing problems of ethnocentrism and social injustice. From this point of view, four problems in particular were highlighted. First, some critics pointed out that the 'cultural' focus of multiculturalism tended to silence and obscure the ongoing issue of race and racism. As one commentator wrote, Australia's

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‘contemporary official multicultural rhetoric, which was introduced in the 1970s, *avoids* race-talk in the arguably misguided belief that speaking about race would automatically lead to racism.’⁵ This issue is one which Ghassan Hage tackles head on, deliberately focusing on the racial concept of ‘Whiteness’ and using the consciously confronting term ‘Third World-looking people’ as a replacement for the usual bland (and ‘culture-oriented’) euphemisms such as ‘people of non-English-speaking background’ (commonly reduced in Australian English to the abbreviation NESB).

Second, there was an uneasy relationship between multiculturalism and the rights of Aboriginal Australians. The rhetoric of multiculturalism promoted the image of Australia as ‘a country of immigrants’, and presented all ‘ethnic groups’ as participating equally in the shaping of Australia’s future. Aboriginal Australians, however, pointed out that their ancestors had lived in Australia for at least 40,000 years, and many argued that, as the country’s Indigenous inhabitants, they had particular rights distinct from those of other minorities. The complex issues of discrimination against Aboriginal Australians, indeed, raise a dimension of the concept of ‘Whiteness’ which Hage does not address in detail in *White Nation*.

Third, multicultural society tended to be popularly depicted as a colourful mosaic of different cultures: an image which readily allowed ‘culture’ to be understood in static, reductionist and stereotypical ways. As Ghassan Hage points out, this image was vividly represented in a variety of multicultural festivals, which typically involved displays of ethnic food and folk culture by ‘minority’ groups in exotic traditional dress — thus serving to reinforce the distinction between ‘minorities’ and the White Anglo ‘majority’, who (it was implied) formed the normal, non-exotic mainstream and had no fancy traditional costume.

Finally, as Hage argued with particular power and eloquence, well-intentioned images of the nation’s multicultural future were often based on an underlying view of the world that had much in common with the world-view of White Australian xenophobia. Central to this view was a self-image of ‘us’ — White Anglo-Australians — as the ‘owners’ of the nation: people whose ‘governmental belonging’ gave them the right to determine its future. In the past (according to this narrative of nationhood) ‘we’ had unfortunately adopted a narrow and racist attitude to migration and national identity, but now ‘we’ had seen the light and were creating a society in which a wide range of cultures would be tolerated and welcomed. In *White Nation*,

Hage emphasises that this view is both nationalistic and ethnocentric: it continues to treat White Anglo-Australians as the rulers of the nation, and to see recognisable minorities ('Third World-looking people') as marginalised 'others' whose presence is conditional on the 'tolerance' of the majority.

Listening to the Hidden Language of Race

Hage's writings have been profoundly influential in Australia, not only because of their graphic exposure of the hypocrisies implicit in much multicultural rhetoric, but also because of the distinctive approach which Hage brings to the understanding of racism and nationalism. Though he draws on the work of a range of social theorists, most notably the late Pierre Bourdieu, Hage has also developed an innovative approach to empirical research into problems of racism and prejudice. Hage himself describes the art of listening as 'absolutely crucial' to his work.⁶ His very close attention to language, and his sensitive observation of human actions and expressions, enables him to shed new light on the way in which practices of exclusion operate in everyday life. He never shies away from the complexities and ambiguities of human experience, recognising that those who express overtly racist sentiments often occupy marginal positions within a social hierarchy which is still profoundly influenced by images of 'Whiteness'. Conversely, as Hage emphasises, those in positions of power often sustain and reinforce the hierarchy, while carefully avoiding the use of overtly 'racist' language.

Hage's strategy of 'listening' is particularly valuable because of the subtlety and elusiveness of exclusionary practices. Simplistic definitions of 'racism', or efforts to pin discrimination to the use of specific words or actions, almost always fail because human language and behaviour is so complex, so subtle, so much determined by context and human relationships. By listening to people speak at length, and exploring the inner logic of what they say, Hage is able to probe the inner meanings that lie behind the surface of words. As he has observed, 'terms like migrant or NESB, for instance, appear as if they are descriptive and ordinary but they hide really nasty and unconscious things when some people use them ... the racist imagery is dying to burst out of the terms, but the terms are used like lids to make sure it doesn't happen.'⁷ In *White Nation* he uses this strategy in particular to show how forms of exclusion based on race overlap and intersect with forms of exclusion based on nationalist images of control of territory. His approach to exploring the hidden and subconscious dimension of

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the practices of exclusion has become especially valuable in the context of the political changes which have taken place in Australia in recent years.

At the time when *White Nation* was first published, the recently elected Howard government was just starting its counter-assault against the policies of multiculturalism. From 1997 onwards, immigration policies were revised, making it more difficult for recent immigrants to bring their families to Australia. Funding for translating and interpreting services and assistance to community groups were cut, and restrictions were introduced making it harder for new immigrants to receive welfare. Policy towards refugees also became increasingly draconian: asylum seekers were incarcerated in detention centres whose conditions have been widely condemned by international human rights groups. It should be noted that this policy was sold to the public using precisely the rhetoric of 'governmental belonging' so vividly highlighted by Hage in *White Nation*. The Howard government's most effective and best-remembered slogan at the 2001 general election was 'We decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come'.⁸

Against this background, Hage has very effectively used his skills of listening and observation to probe the underlying ideology of the current government. In his collection of essays *Against Paranoid Nationalism*, Hage offers a searingly sardonic critique of the repeated indignant denials by Australia's political leaders that their immigration and migration policies are motivated by racism. Prime Minister Howard, he notes, 'has publicly declared himself "offended" on many occasions; he even went as far as being "outraged" once when faced with the term "racism". More offended by it than by the sight of the dehumanising concentration camps he has used to cage Third World-looking asylum seekers. In fact, in Australia today those offended by the term "racist" almost outnumber those offended by racists'.⁹

Howard's ideology, Hage suggests, is a form of fundamentalism, centered on the belief that there is an unchanging and essentially benign set of distinctively Australian national values. Anyone who criticises aspects of Australia's past or present (for example, by highlighting the history of the White Australia Policy or discrimination towards 'Aborigines') is likely to be accused by Howard and his political colleagues of being 'hell bent on undermining the essential Goodness of Australia and the pride of its people'.¹⁰ In words which might well be adapted to describe certain strands of nationalist rhetoric in contemporary

Ghassan Hage's *White Nation*

Japan, Hage describes the structure of Howard's logic as follows: 'We recognise that we Australians have done good things and bad things. But the bad things we have done are conjunctural; we need not forget that we are essentially Good. Detecting the Good essence becomes an exercise in emphasising the Good deeds of Australians and silencing those who want to emphasise the Bad deeds.' Howard's fundamentalism, he suggests, 'encourages a discourse of confirmation rather than reflexive critical discourse. This has developed into a pathological inability to listen to any voice other than one's own.'¹¹

White Nation concludes with an essentially optimistic view of a future in which neither xenophobia nor condescending 'tolerance' will ultimately be able to contain the forces of the 'multicultural Real'. In the end, Hage argues, change will come about not because those who see themselves as owners of the nation have kindly chosen to open the doors to 'others', but because the fantasy of White Anglo control will be unable to withstand the reality of the huge diversity of 'Third World-looking people' going about their lives, and shaping society, without asking the permission or 'tolerance' of any self-defined elite.

In the early twenty-first century, the vision surely remains; but the journey towards that future is proving rockier and more exhausting than many would have predicted.

The circumstances surrounding debates about multiculturalism in Japan are very different from the Australian conditions which provide the background to *White Nation*. Yet Ghassan Hage's analysis of nationalism and the rhetoric of race contains much relevance to those (both within and outside the boundaries of Japan) who are concerned with practices of exclusion and discrimination in Japanese society. Above all, Hage's skills of 'listening' — his careful attention to the language and habits of thought through which exclusion and ethnocentrism are reproduced — open up new possibilities for analysis and understanding of nationalism and racism in many parts of the world. Developing these skills is all the more important as we become aware of how long the journey is from self-referential majority discourses of 'xenophobia versus tolerance' to the triumph of the 'multicultural Real'.

*This text was written as an introduction to the 2003 Japanese translation of *White Nation*. As Ghassan points out in the General Preface, though it was written as an introduction for readers from another place, it works well for readers from another time.

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sweatshop.

The Racial Politics of Australian Multiculturalism brings together some of the most important and sought-after works by one of Australia's leading anthropologists and cultural critics: Ghassan Hage.

This groundbreaking collection features the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Hage's seminal publication, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, and the twentieth anniversary edition of Hage's follow-up publication, *Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society*. Along with a compendium of Hage's later writings, *The Racial Politics of Australian Multiculturalism* is essential reading for anyone who seeks to understand the complexities of modern-day race politics on the unceded lands of a settler colonial society.

Foreword by

Jumana Bayeh, Paula Abood,
Sarah Ayoub & Randa Abdel-Fattah

Introduction by

Tessa Morris-Suzuki



Ghassan Hage is Professor of Anthropology and Social Theory at the University of Melbourne. He is the author of many books, including *Is Racism an Environmental Threat?* (2017) and *The Diasporic Condition* (2021).

“At the forefront of anti-racism and anti-colonial thinking.”

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“Hage offers a new way of accounting for race, its affective grammars, its holds and habits.”

Sara Ahmed

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