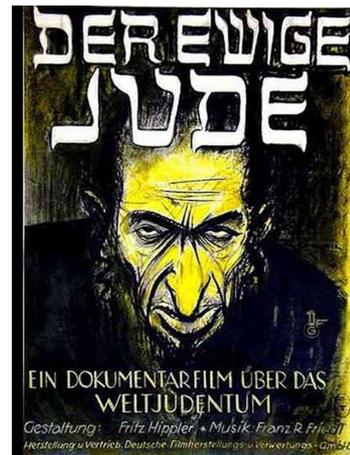
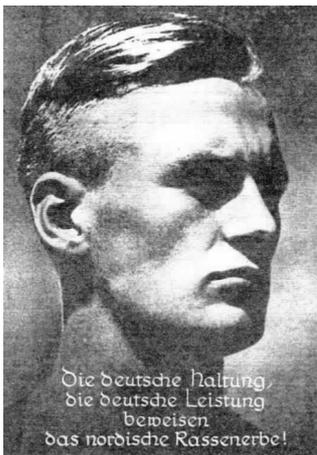




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The Matrix of Racism

Hate as Imagined Geography



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About this paper.

This is the examination paper for the course Religion and Racism ("*Religion och rasism*", 15 hp), held at Uppsala university, Sweden, spring 2016. My deepest gratitude goes to prof. Mattias Gardell, teaching this class.

Stockholm, 2016,

Henrik Arnstad

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Introduction.

The concept of *racism* has been a subject of scientific debate, since before the word itself was introduced in the early 20th century, when it typically focused upon the concept of mankind being divided into hierarchical biological sub-species. Since then, racism studies have shown that this political phenomenon has transformed itself many times during thousands of years of human history.

Recent scholars often focus upon different representations of racism, thus speaking of several *racisms* (in plural) rather than on one coherent single racist discourse. For example, prof. Francisco Bethencourt names his book about racism *Racisms*.¹ An influential researcher in this field is prof. Ali Rattansi. He underlines that “it is necessary to speak not just of a single racism, but always about racisms in the plural.”² Rattansi’s point is that racism towards different groups in society is so fundamentally different (“cultural racism”, “neo-racism” and “the racism of cultural difference”), that it is better to use the concept of *racialization*:

The concept of racialization moves research and political argument away from the unproductive debates about whether any particular individuals, propositions, claims, and doctrines are simply ‘racist’ or ‘non-racist’. Instead, the field is opened up to more useful analyses of the different mixes of biological and cultural connotations of difference, superiority and inferiority that emerge in public and private statements, conversations, jokes, and so forth.³

Rattansi’s argument to stop using the concept of “racism” is understandable, but a bit odd. Why would science stop using a concept, just because studying it is complicated? Is there a way to solve this problem? Thinking of *racism* as an ideology,

¹ Francisco Bethencourt, *Racisms : from the Crusades to the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 2015).

² Ali Rattansi, *Racism: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2007), p. 106.

³ *Ibid*, p. 107.

focused upon *bio-political*⁴ *social power*,⁵ one can imagine that it is not unlike other ideologies, such as socialism, liberalism and conservatism. For example, socialism has taken many forms during history, making it possible for scholars to talk about *socialisms* in diverse plural (for example Lenin's *bolshevism*, European *social-democracy*, Chinese *communism* under Mao Zedong, and so on) without questioning the fact, that it is also possible to study *socialism* in singular.⁶ The different political manifestations (or sub-ideologies) of an ideology, does not contradict the existence the ideology, as such. In the case of this paper, racism is considered an *ideology*, being constructed in the framework of a certain *discourse*, which upholds a certain bio-politic.

One recent model for ideological analysis is suggested by the political scientist Michael Freeden.⁷ Freeden's analytical model defines an ideology in terms of *a core cluster of interrelated and ineliminable political concepts*.⁸ I would argue, that it is possible, to study the concept of racism, according to Freeden's theoretical suggestions, without losing sight of the different permutations of the manifestations of this particular ideological entity. I will try to do so, by discussion racism as a coherent entity, forming a two-dimensional matrix, organized as racism's imagined world geography – an imagined world map – into which different forms of racism can be placed, according to analysis. I am suggesting this matrix purely as a theoretical suggestion, without having done empirical tests, on how to use in in specific scientific studies. I have not gathered enough material, to do a full investigation, in order to verify or falsify the theory at hand. I am only proposing that this could be done, testing the theoretical matrix.

⁴ The concept of *bio-politics* (that is politics which uses the human body as its subject) is highly connected to Michael Foucault, who discusses this aspect of racism in his lectures *Il faut défendre la société* (Collège de France 1975-1976).

⁵ Bethencourt, p. 6.

⁶ See for example Eric Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World: Tales of Marx and Marxism* (London, 2011).

⁷ See for example Micael Freeden, *Ideology* (Oxford, 2003).

⁸ Lena Berggren, "Intellectual Fascism: Per Engdahl and the Formation of 'New-Swedish Socialism'", *Fascism* (Volume 3, Issue 2, pages 69-92, 2014).

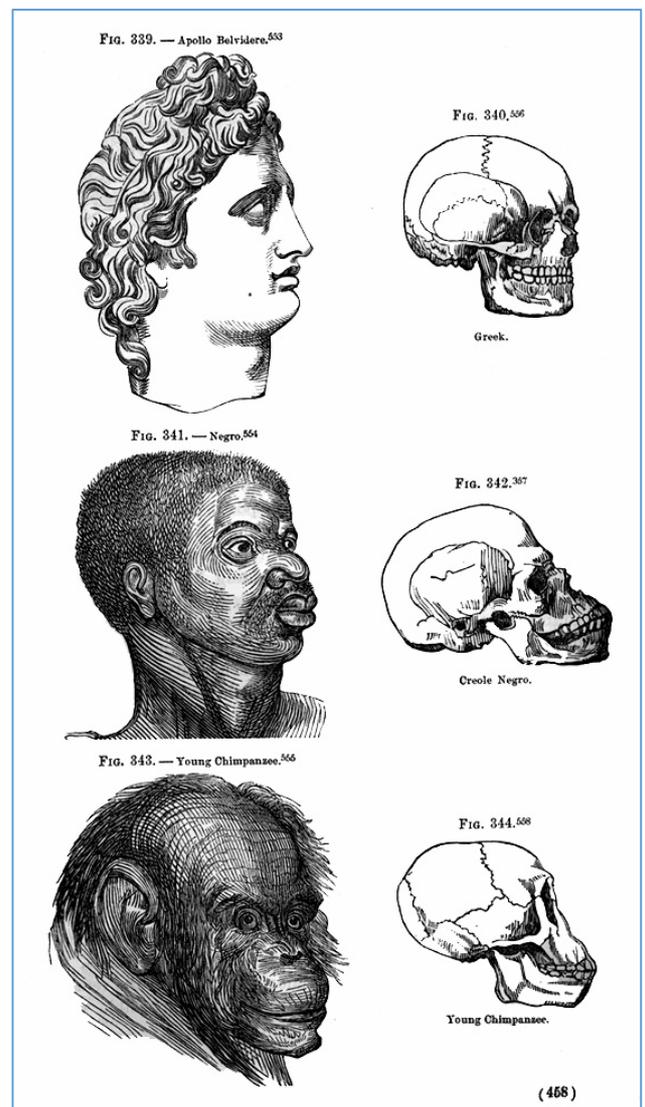
1. The Bio-Political Geography of Racism.

A racist political policy can be constructed via several notions of *difference* (biology, religion, culture, skin-color, etc.), imagining bio-politically that the difference at hand is in some way inherited in the body of the particular human community, that is to be the target group for attack, in racism's struggle for socio-political power. These constructed differences - which are usually communicating and interacting with other concepts of difference - of the targeted group, constitute the anti-thesis to the desired characteristics, that the racist "we" at hand wants to identify with itself. Thus we can identify racism's dichotomies, which it uses to point out a community as being inferior, hostile or outright dangerous to the essential existence of the racist "we". I am suggesting, that these are two central dichotomic concepts that racism uses:

1. Intelligence - Stupidity.
2. Honesty - Insidiousness.

Dimension 1: Intelligence vs. Stupidity.

Dimension one is primarily connected to colour-racism, that is racism targeting groups via a perception of darkness of skin. Racism's notion is, that the darker the skin, the more unintelligent the human being is. At the far end of this spectrum, racism finds "the African", who is conceived to be only partly human - a mixture between apes and Homo Sapiens - thus being inferior in intelligence, compared to the constructed whiteness of racism's "we". Representations of this racism is numerous, since it was at the core of European colonialist discourse (manifested in the notion of "the White



man's burden", for example). The important aspect of this concept is that it is not binary (white/black) but gradual. Between white and black, there is a scale of colour, ranging from white to black, marking less and less intelligence. From a Eurocentric point of view, whiteness diminishes gradually, the further "south" one travels, as the skin of the people gets less and less "white" and more and more "dark". A "white" person from the North is perceived more intelligent, resourceful and entrepreneurial than southern people, who becomes more and more "dark" the further you go. Please note that the geographical concepts of "north" and "south" are imagined and constructed socially, and does not always constitute true geographical circumstances. For instance, the "white" population of New Zealand are "northerners", in contrast to the "black" native population (the *Maori*).



Example of positions on the north-south axis of racism's geographical matrix. The Irish and Iberians are perceived to be situated between the "white" (Anglo-Teutonic) and the "Negro". Harper's Weekly, 1899.

Dimension 2: Honesty vs. Insidiousness.

Dimension two is more complex than dimension one, since racism is often connected to the concept of skin colour. Dimension two – as such – is the basic and prime concept concerning anti-Semitism, for example. Racism's notion is that, the "west" is represented by characteristics of *honesty* (trustworthiness, honour, masculinity, etc.). Its dichotomy is the "east", representing *insidiousness* (dishonesty, conspiracies, shrewdness, femininity. etc.). Historian Lena Berggren writes about anti-Jewish stereotypes::

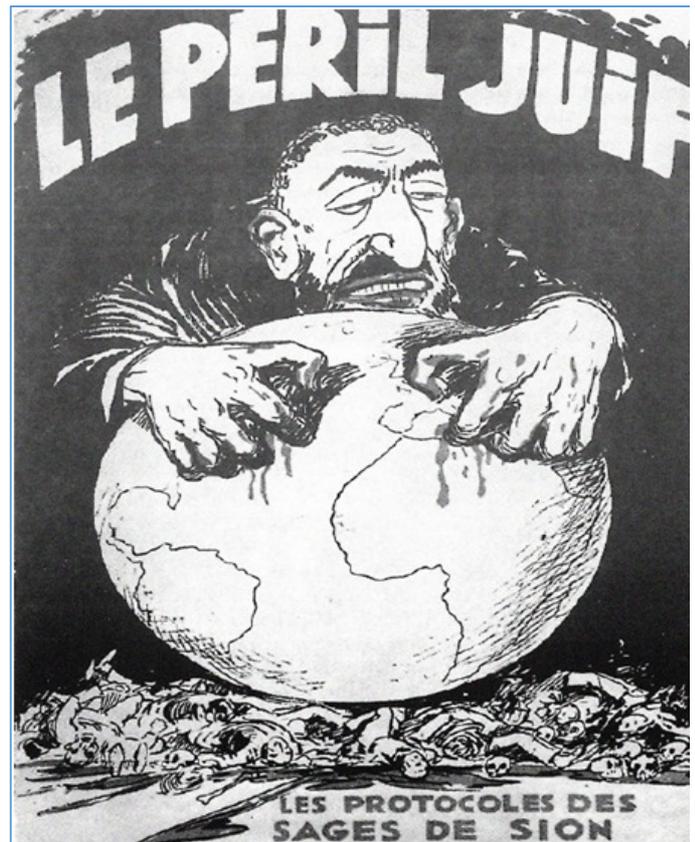
The Jews has initiated a secret conspiracy to achieve world domination, to enslave, or indeed to exterminate, Christianity. This myth of a conspiracy is to a high degree the central element in anti-Semitism, from medieval times up to the present day.⁹

Regarding anti-Semitism, this specific racism does not automatically mean, that it considers the western “we”-group as superior towards “the east”. Sometimes, quite the contrary. In the movie *Conspiracy*, which is the adaptation of the 1942 Nazi *Wannsee*-protocol to the silver screen, dr. Wilhelm Stuckart (the lawyer responsible for the *Nürnberg*-laws in 1935) has the following line:

What the party [NSDAP] rants on about is how inferior the Jews are, some sub-species, and I keep saying how wrong that is! They are sublimely clever. And they are intelligent as well.¹⁰

Thus, the “easterner” is not necessarily considered stupid. On the contrary, the easterner could – which is very scary to racism – be even more intelligent than the “westerner”. As in the case of north-south (intelligence versus stupidity), there is a gradual scale between *honesty* (the west) and *insidiousness* (the east). The further “east” you go, the less trustworthy people are.

Again, this racist world map has only a limited correspondence in the true geography of the globe (Jews are for example considered more “eastern” than Pacific Asians). But that does not make it less real in the mind of



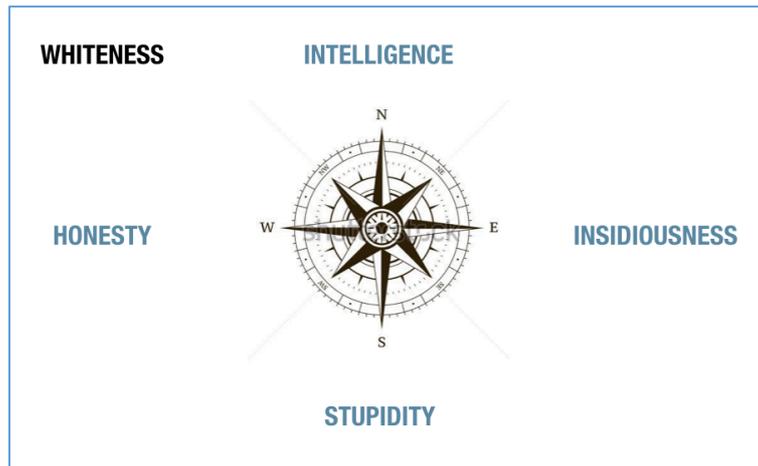
⁹ Lena Berggren, *Blodets renhet: en historisk studie av svensk antisemitism* (Malmö, 2014), p. 27.

¹⁰ *Conspiracy* (movie, 2001). In my opinion, one of the best movies about the Holocaust ever made.

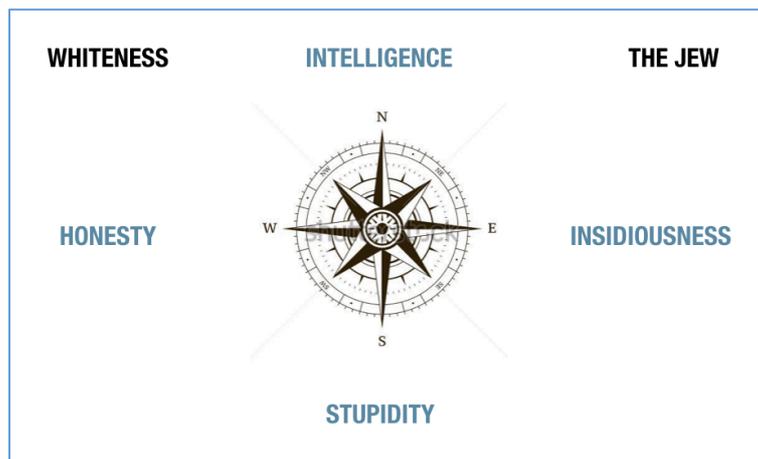
racism. On the contrary, the notion of the dishonest and conspiring “easterner” has been the foundation of the most genocidal crimes mankind has ever been responsible for. This west-east notion of racism is possible to imagine a threat to the very survival of “whiteness”, which legitimizes extreme violence, when transferred into biopolitical state policies. The phobia of the life-threatening eastern conspiracy is very real, in the mind of racism.

2. Constructing the Matrix.

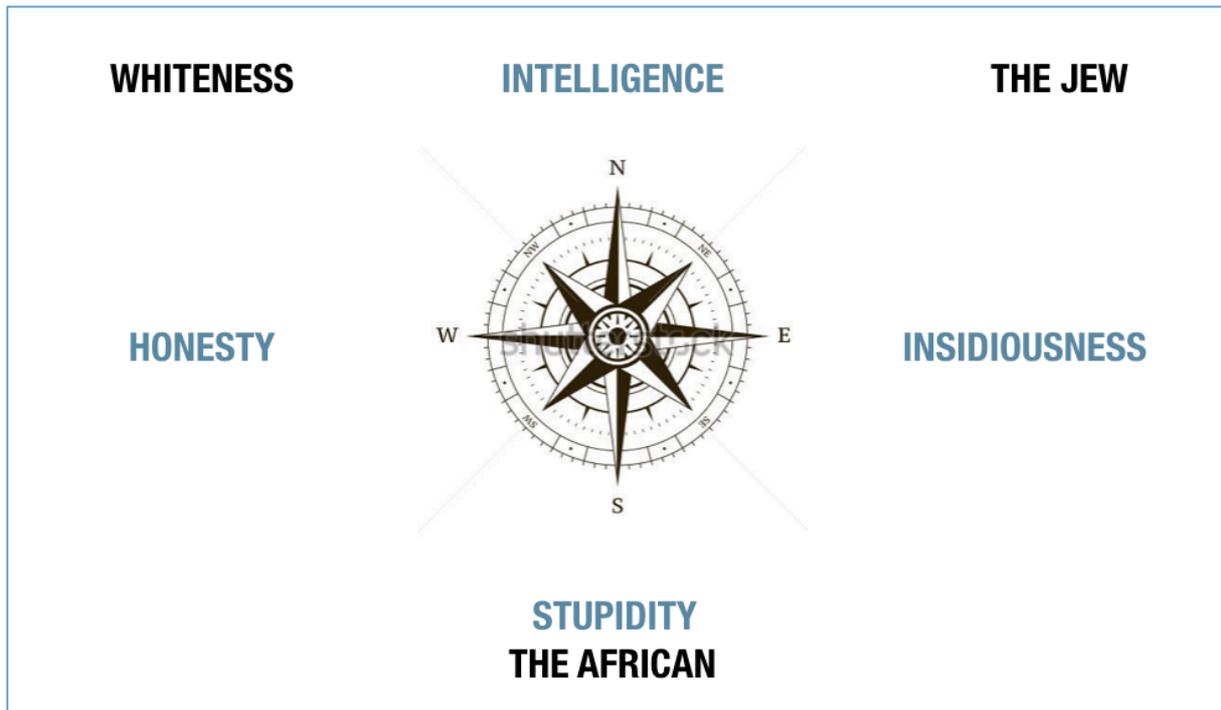
Now, putting the above notions of north, south, west and east, it is possible to begin to construct the theoretical ideological matrix of racism. To begin with, we can place “whiteness” in the far north-west *safe from racism*-quadrant, thus:



Adding “the Jew” to the matrix, it looks like this:



Adding “the African”, we get this:

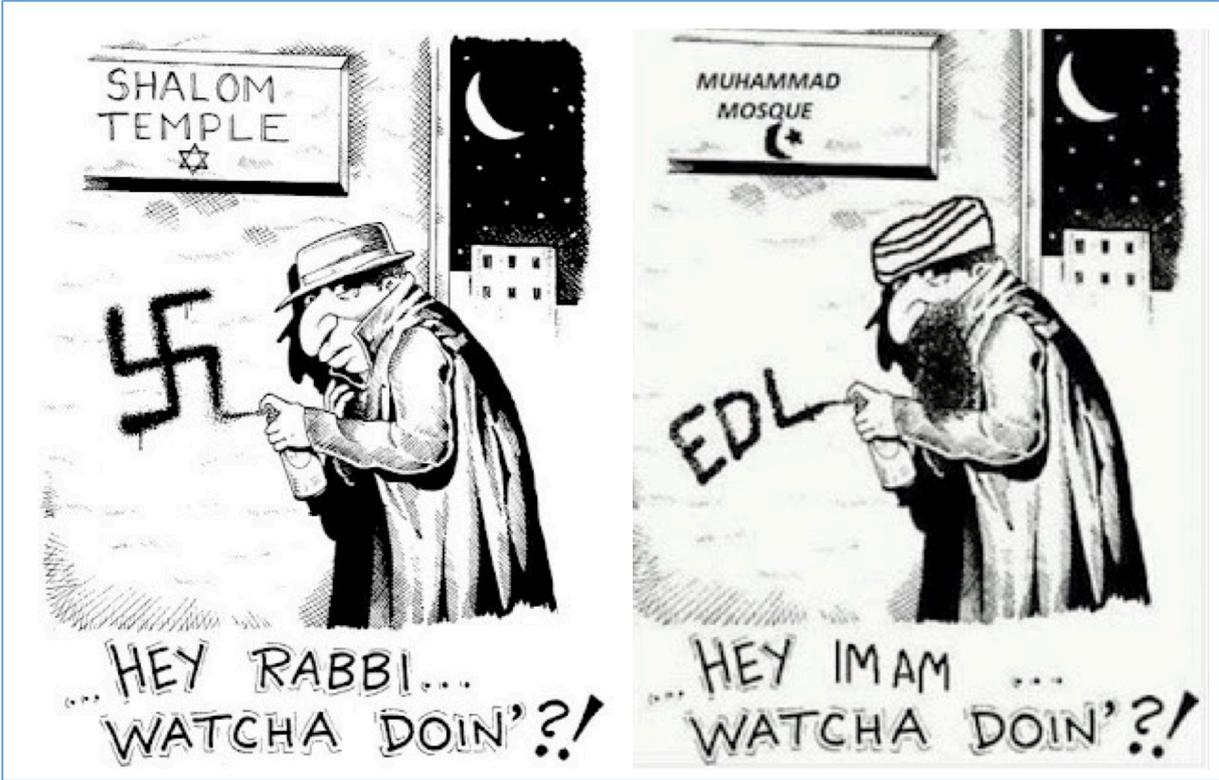


Thus having established the ideological matrix of racism itself, as a theoretical conceptual image, we can test it with a specific form of racism, which is not as straight forward, as racism towards Jews and Africans. One suitable example is the complicated present-day racism towards the “Muslim” (*islamophobia*). This racism is – like anti-Semitism – obsessed with the insidiousness of the Muslim, being an agent of a world conspiracy. One of many voices of this is the islamophobic intellectual Bat Ye’or, who writes about the imminent downfall of “the west” (Europe):

The Caliphate is already alive and growing within Europe, in the extinction of the basic freedoms, control over thought, opinions and culture, subverting democratic laws by Sharia, fatwas, self-censorship and fear-inseparable companions of dhimmitude. The universal Caliphate, for which Europe provided a stepping-stone at the UN, stands before us.¹¹

¹¹ Bat Ye’or, *Europe, Globalization, and the Coming of the Universal Caliphate* (Madison, 2011).

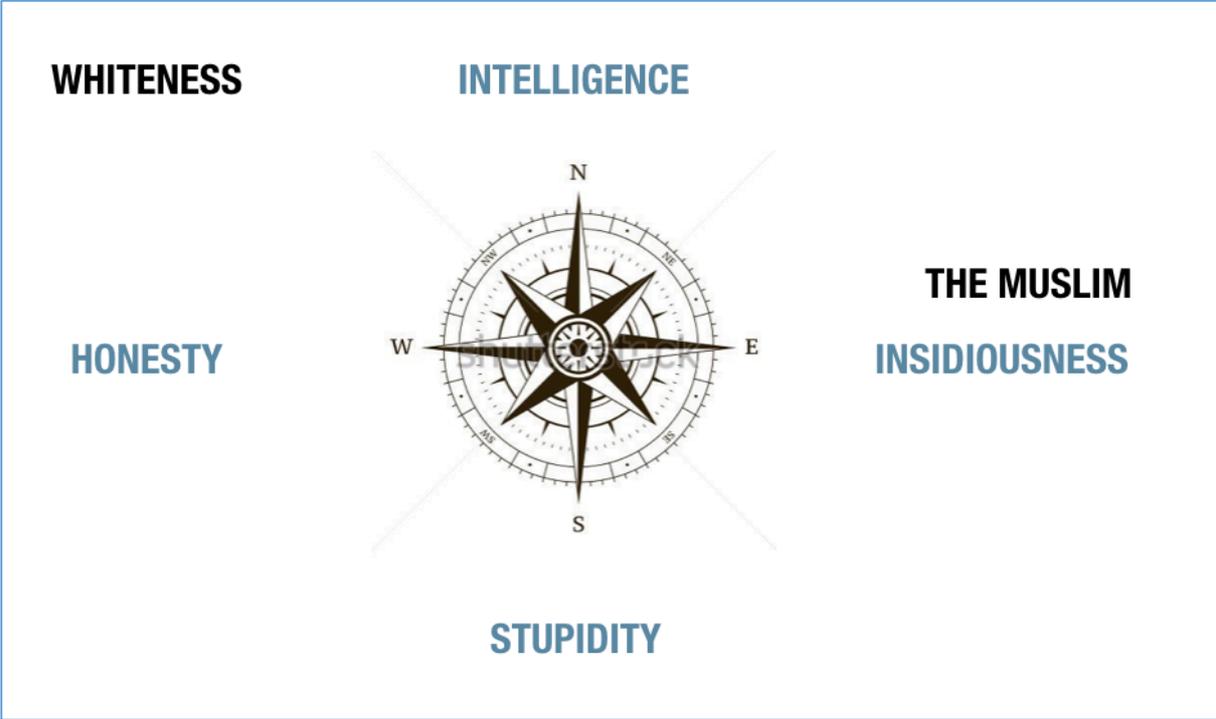
Thus, we can put “Muslims” on the far eastern side of our matrix, above. But how about the north-south-scale? It is often claimed that islamophobic racism is similar to anti-Semitic racism, but is it identical? Let’s take a look at two versions of a racist cartoon:



The original cartoon on the left (the “rabbi”) is from the 1980’s while the re-make on the right (the “imam”) is from the 00’s.¹² They are almost the same (please note the abnormally huge nose of the “easterner”), except for a few interesting details. Most obvious is that the Jewish synagogue has been turned into an Islamic mosque, and the swastika has been turned into “EDL” (meaning the islamophobic *English Defence League*). So far, the racisms are exactly the same. But, taking a closer look, we see that the orientalised turban of the Muslim (a symbol of backwardness) has replaced the Jew’s modern, westernized hat. Thus making the Jew shrewder in disguising himself

¹² I have not been able to determine the source of these cartoons, since they exist in abundance on various racist websites on the Internet.

as “a westerner” (“white”). Also, the Jew has shaved carefully, while the Muslim has a huge and ragged beard, symbolizing lack of control of the body and – again – backwardness. The “Jew” is more intelligent, plotting his conspiracy towards world domination, compared to the more unintelligent “Muslim”. Thus we can put “the Muslim” into the matrix, like so:



As show above, racism perceives “the Muslim” to be just as un-trustworthy as “the Jew”, but differs in intelligence, being “darker” and, as such, pushed to the south in this bio-political matrix. One aspect of this perceived and relative unintelligence of the “Muslim”, is the racist theory, that the “Muslims” actually is being imported into “the West”, by more intelligent people, such as liberal “political correct” traitors (for example social democrats) or even Jews (see screenshot from Twitter).



3. Movement in the Matrix.

An important aspect of understanding the ideological concept of racism via the geographical matrix, is that the specified target groups do not have fixed positions. "Racism is relational and changes over time", writes Bethencourt.¹³ Using the matrix specified above, targeted groups can move in it, over time. One can say, that the image of the "other" is political discourse, while the movement of the "other" is political ideology. Sometimes targeted groups even become "white", moving towards the north-west (such as Scandinavians and Irish in the USA). Studying this process of movement, one can focus upon the historical relationship between the racist "we" towards Jews and Muslims, from medieval times towards present day.¹⁴

The crusades, starting in 1096 and continuing through the medieval period, stands out as an important event in the history of racism. Bethencourt writes:

The Crusades thus represented a major turning point for Christendom, not only because they gave ideological expression to an enormous process of expansion and conquest, but also because they unleashed new forms of religious persecution and new concepts of ethnic hierarchy.¹⁵

More specifically, the Crusades politically itemised European self-identity ("whiteness") via it's relation – that being bio-political violence – towards two specific groups, Jews and Muslims ("*Saracens*"). The common trait between these two groups was, that they were not Christian, thus being heretics and heathens. According to the racist ideology of the Crusades, killing these heathens was not considered murder, thus a sin, but an act in accordance with the idea of pilgrimage. Jews and Muslims alike was considered a threat to Christianity, thus placing them on the eastern side of the matrix specified above.

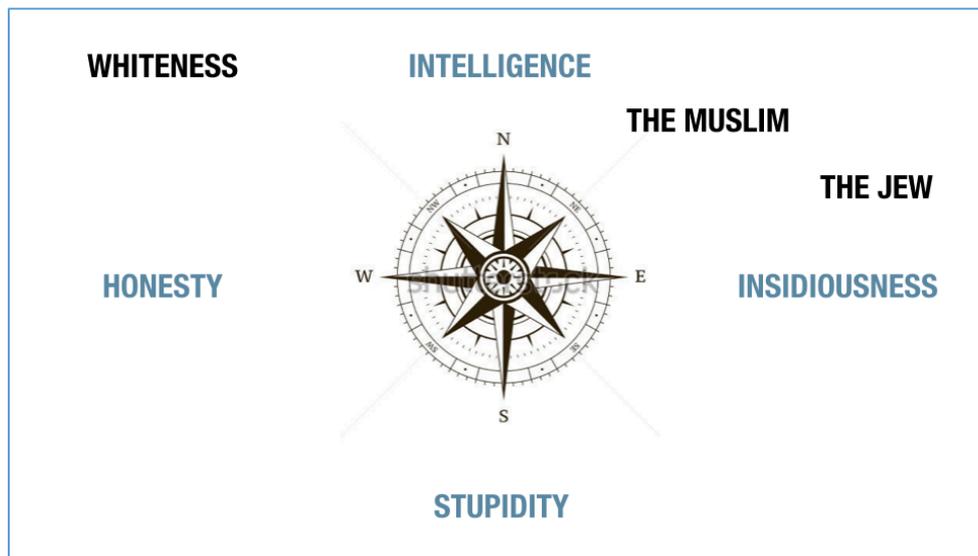
¹³ Bethencourt, p. 1.

¹⁴ It would be interesting to investigate "the Oriental" in this context as well, including Pacific Asians and Roma.

¹⁵ Bethencourt, p. 20.

There was however a difference between Jews and Muslims. Jews were an integrated part of the European *interior*, living in pre-roman, roman and thereafter Christian Europe since ancient times. As such they were considered inferior, being the targets of reoccurring persecutions, humiliation and violence (*pogroms*). The Muslims on the other hand was considered a hostile part of the *exterior*, bordering Europe and therefore – considering that Europe was defined by being *The (catholic) Christian World* – Islam was a potent adversary. Jews and Muslims alike were targets of very similar racist propaganda, being de-humanized in imagery and so forth (portrayed as devils, demons or vicious and dirty animals, such as pigs and dogs). But the Muslims, unlike the Jews, had armies. The Islamic empires stretched far across the lands and would continue to challenge Europe well into the 17th century. In medieval times, Muslim culture was superior to that of the barbaric invaders from Europe. And educated Europeans knew this.

Transferring this to the geographical matrix of racism, specified above, Muslims were in medieval times to the north of Jews. Muslims were considered intelligent, entrepreneurial, ingenious, crafty and had an impressive advantage in being able to organize themselves into huge empire-states with advanced administration, science and political skill. Muslims had crushed the rivalling Persian empire, degraded the remaining Roman empire (*Byzantium*) and captured the centre of the Earth; the holy city of Jerusalem. One could also say, that Muslims were not as far “east” as the Jews, placing them on the geographical matrix of racism. Being potent warriors, Muslims were considered more masculine than the unarmed and defenceless Jews. Europeans also discovered during the Crusades that they could make agreements with Muslim rulers, agreements that were honoured by the *Saracens*, thus making them less un-trustworthy than the Jew. This makes it possible to present this medieval representation of European racist discourse towards Jews and Muslims:



Medieval racist interpretations of Jews and Muslims.

The big change in this racist world view comes with modernity. Around 1800, racism's placement of "the Jew" and "the Muslim" on the geographical matrix are starting to move, the Muslim travelling south (having a tendency towards the east, but not as much as one might think), and the Jew travelling north. Two parallel European processes are at hand in this movement, one external and one internal: European colonialism (in this case primarily manifested in the discourse of *orientalism*) and the developing modernity in European societies.

In 1798, Napoleonic France invaded and occupied the ottoman imperial province of Egypt, thus marking the beginning of the western colonial conquest of the Muslim world, which were to be completed during the First world war, after which Europe completely controlled all of *Dar al-Islam*.¹⁶



¹⁶ See for example Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Berkeley, 2014).

The interesting notion about Napoleon's attack upon Egypt, was the idea that the European's were there to teach the Arabs, how a true Arab and Muslim should be like. The European racist point of view was, that the Arabs had changed – or rather degenerated – from a state of lost glory, military might and high culture, to a present state of cultural, political and spiritual misery. Napoleon was *a new Muhammad*, a western saviour who would teach the Muslims to once again be true Muslims. Or in the words of the poet Victor Hugo:

Le peuple redoutait ses armes inouïes ;
Sublime, il apparut aux tribus éblouies
Comme un Mahomet d'Occident.¹⁷

*His terrible weapons scare every tribe,
He seems totally sublime, to the people as he advances,
Like a Mohammad from the West.*¹⁸

Thus, during the 19th and 20th century, the Muslim (often being synonymous with “the Arab”) rapidly moved *south*, towards “stupidity”, in racism's perception of the geographical matrix. Racism connected concepts of *degeneration*, *backwardness* and *superstition* (as opposed to modernity's *secularization*) to the orientalised “Muslim”. The move to the east (becoming less trustworthy) was however limited, meaning

that the Muslim still wasn't to be trusted – in accordance to medieval racism's notions – but it didn't get worse. Sometimes, quite the contrary. The backward Arab was often considered having *a true and noble heart*, in

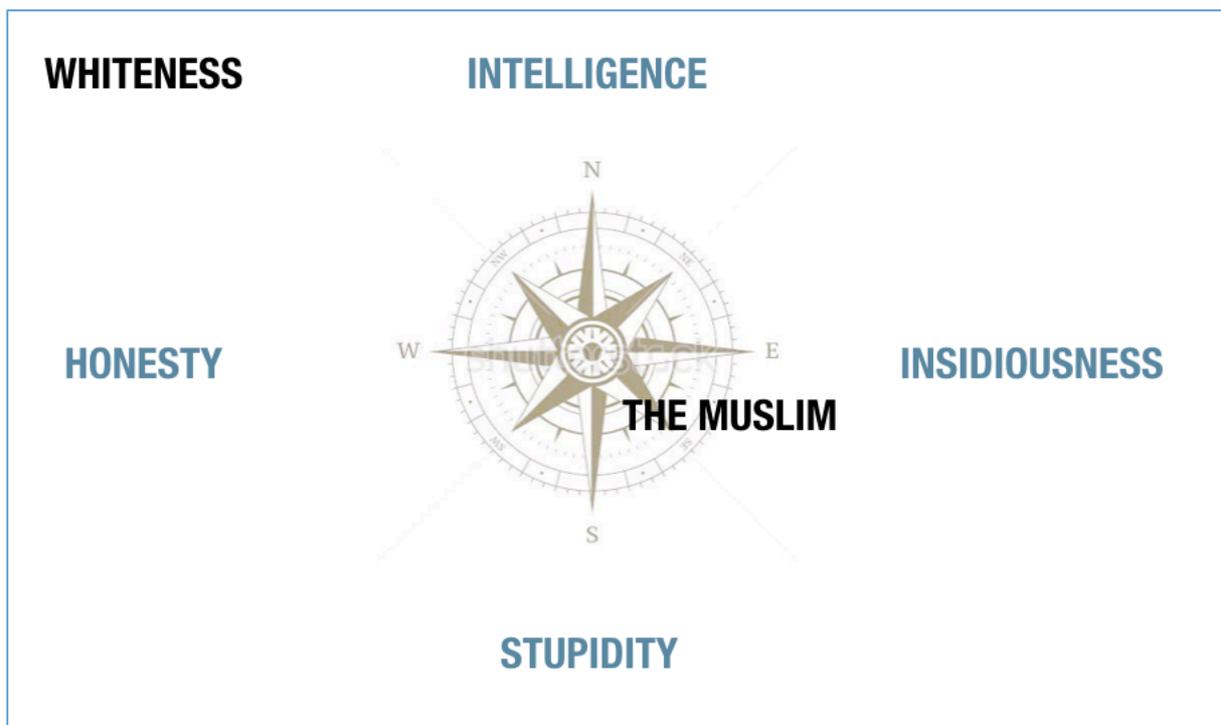


“Mister Omar” from Swedish Children's books, written 1948-1973. Omar is surely backwards (note the Fez and the flying carpet), but he is also trustworthy, loyal and courageous.

¹⁷ Victor Hugo, *Lui* (1829).

¹⁸ I apologize for my clumsy translation of Hugo's poem.

popular culture. This is for example visible in the movie *Lawrence of Arabia*,¹⁹ as well as in other cultural representations.²⁰ At the same time, the evil *not-to-be-trusted* crooked-nose Arab was still visible all alongside *the noble hearted* Arab, and often pitched against each other in popular culture, as friends and foes of the white European or American main character – *hero* – of the stories in novels, comic books, cinema or songs. Thus placing “the Muslim” like so into the matrix, during the 19th and early 20th century:



Placing of “the Muslim” (“the Arab”) in racism’s geographical matrix, during the 19th and early 20th Century.

This all changed after the end of the Cold War, in the 1990’s and early 00’s. The hostile attention of “white” western identity turned, from the vanished Soviet Union and threat of international communism, to “the Muslim”, especially after the 9/11-attacks in 2001. This process moved – quite rapidly – “the Muslim” to the extreme east, at the same time pushing this entity a bit North (see geographical matrix on

¹⁹ *Lawrence of Arabia* (movie, 1962).

²⁰ For example, the afghan “Muslim” in the Bond-movie *The Living Daylights* (1987) or the Swedish children book-character “mr. Omar”, from the stories about the private detective *Ture Sventon*, by Åke Holmberg.

page 12). Thus closing the gap between “the Muslim” and modernity’s racism placing of “the Jew”.

The concept of modernity is very complex, problematic and highly debated among scholars. There is no room here to account for the scientific debate, but in short one can say that the notion of an intensified process of modernity starting in Europe around 1800 concerns such areas and developments as industrialization, urbanization, secularism, capitalism, liberalism, mass politics (including democracy) and the development of critical thinking.²¹ All around the world, there were similar developments, but they were usually interrupted by European colonialism, therefore making Europe the perceived centre of a notion, that everything – socially, politically and culturally – was changing. Fast. This was not appreciated by everybody. On the contrary, especially traditional elites (nobility, military dignitaries and royalty) reflected with great anxiety upon what was happening, creating *conservatism* as a political ideology to combat new ideas. In the racist spectrum of this new 19th century ideology, conservatives blamed *the Jews*.



Anti-Semitic cartoon about the “Jew Press”, from Nazi paper *Der Stürmer* (Germany).

The Jews were perceived as beneficiaries of modernity, especially capitalism and liberalism (and later socialism). At the same time, the religious aspect of anti-Semitic racism (“the Jews murdered Jesus”) was downplayed, and the “scientific” analyses of the Jew as a biological “race” was more and more underlined. Even the Catholic church turned more and more to modern political anti-Semitism, re-defining Jews

²¹ See for example Stuart Hall, Bram Gieben (ed.), *Formations of Modernity* (Cambridge, 2007), David Held, “The Development of the Modern State”, Stuart Hall, Bram Gieben (ed.), *Formations of Modernity* (Cambridge, 2007), and many more.

into a “race” connected to certain social and political ideas, such as freedom of religion, parliamentarism and secularism.²² The European Left, on the other hand, blamed the Jews for “Jew Capitalism”.

In this process, anti-Semitism pushed “the Jew” north in the geographical matrix of racism, making the targeted group more *intelligent*, and thereby more dangerous. The unarmed and pathetic Jew of earlier pre-modern days were replaced with the terrifying modern conspiring Jew, involved in a clandestine combat with “whiteness” about world domination. And for modern anti-Semitism, it seemed like “the Jew” was winning! Jew-press, Jew-banks, Jew-industrialists, Jew-Bolsheviks and so on. The Jews were seen as a new elite. Thus placing them in a new spot in racism’s world view (see geographical matrix on page 12).

One could further study movements in racism perceived as a matrix of a bio-political geography, for example the case of the Pacific Asians. But movements also have its exceptions. Primarily concerning “the White”, being firmly fixed in the extreme north-west. But also “the African”, who seems to be stuck in the extreme south, at least since the 17th Century. Racism is a political ideology of constant negotiation, like all other political ideologies. But some things seem to stay the same, over long periods of time.



U.S. President Barack Obama depicted as an ape in an American newspaper cartoon (2009).

²² Aristotle Kallis, "Fascism and the Jews: From the Internationalisation of Fascism to a 'Fascist Antisemitism'", *Fascism and the Jews: Italy and Britain* (London, 2010), p.. 27.

4. Racism and the Geography of the Lord of the Rings.



First published 1954-1955, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* has since sold about 150 million copies, thus making it one of the best-selling books in human history. The three feature film adaptations have together grossed over a thousand million USD, at the box offices (not counting DVD-sales and so on). Thus, Tolkien's work remains one of the strongest cultural influences on modern globalized society.

As the popularity of Tolkien's fantasy-universe has grown, so has the debate on whether it is racist or fascist. I have myself analysed Tolkien's Middle Earth ideologically, coming to the conclusion that its political discourse is much more authoritarian conservatism than fascism.²³ In practice, the conservative and deeply religious (catholic) Tolkien appreciated the conservative Spanish general Franco (being a representative of traditional elites) much more than the fascist Adolf Hitler.

²³ Henrik Arnstad, *Älskade fascism: de svartbruna rörelsernas ideologi och historia* (Stockholm, 2013).

In fact, professor Mattias Gardell of Uppsala university claims, that the entire *Lord of the Rings*-trilogy, can be read as a story about the Spanish *Reconquista*.²⁴

The very first words that are spoken in the movie trilogy are: “The world has changed”.²⁵ This remains the theme of the entire narrative, this is what the books and movies are all about: Fear of change. Change perceived as something utterly bad. Tolkien’s work is critique – almost hate – against modernity, perceived as a process of *degeneration*. The world of Middle-earth is a place based upon the foundation of ancient *magic*. And that magic is diminishing. The magic people themselves – the elves – are disappearing, along with the wizards. This magical relationship to existence is manifested through a profound love of agrarian life and a metaphysical cult of nature (forests, fields and water). There is a strong and magical bond between the agrarian and idolized people, called hobbits, and earth itself, perceived as an anti-thesis of modernity and its manifestation *industrialization*. The degeneration of the world is communicated in many ways, most obviously in the notion that the pure human blood of *Númenor* (“the kingdom of the Dúnedain”) is being weakened. In the words of the elf king Elrond, in the movie: “The race of Men is failing. The blood of Númenor is all but spent, its pride and dignity forgotten.”²⁶ Thus, there is a strong connection between critique of modernity and the notion of *race biology* and *race hygiene*. Mixing of races is frowned upon, for example when the evil wizard Saruman produces half-orcs, *Uruk-hai*, by mixing men (“goblin-men”) with orcs. Parallel to this, Saruman is also the personification of the evil of *industrialization*. His sidekick in his endeavours is the insidious traitor Grima Wormtongue.

Noting some similarities with real world racist stereotypes, the men of the kingdom of **Gondor** and the horse people of **Rohan** can be perceived as *Germanic*. They are proud warriors, resourceful, honourable, masculine and trustworthy. Equally great warriors are the **dwarfs**, though they are slower in mind and impaired by greed,

²⁴ Mattias Gardell, seminar at Uppsala university (may 22nd, 2016).

²⁵ *The Fellowship of the Ring* (movie, 2001).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

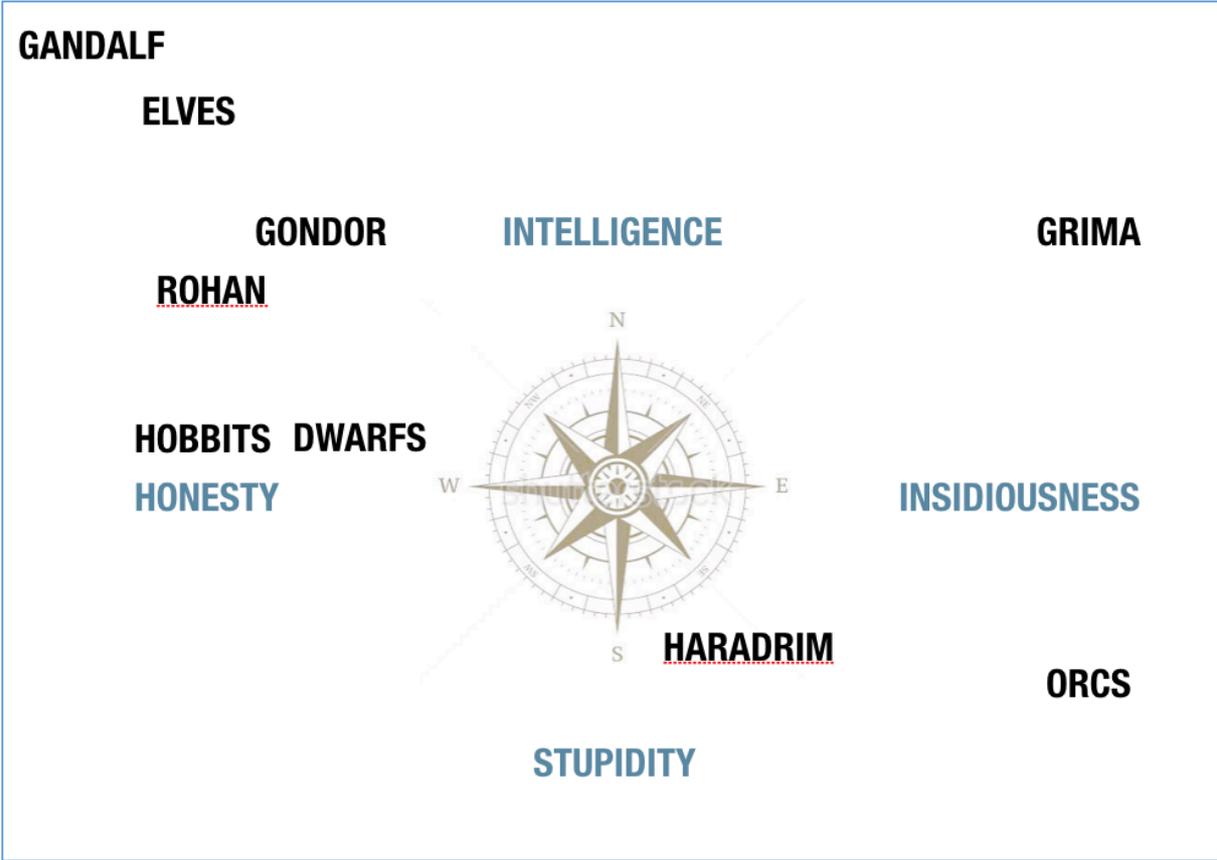
having a passion for mining precious metals. The peasant people called **hobbits** are significantly less martial and a bit slow when it comes to intelligence, but extremely trustworthy and also – as noted above – a bio-political celebration to agrarian life. The **elves** are more a manifestation of magic than a “real” people. They are the symbol of sacralisation of life itself. Their wisdom is off the scale, so is their honour and beauty. Interestingly enough, though being magnificent warriors, the elves are also feminine – a trait connected to them being magically “above” the turmoil of everyday normal life. The wizard **Gandalf** is highly interesting. Being a *Maia*, a kind of demi-god, he is the only open manifest of religion²⁷ in Tolkien’s universe (the wizards divine mission on earth being to guide elves and men by gaining trust and spreading knowledge).

Among the bad guys of the story, lead by the evil **Sauron** in eastern Mordor, who may have some imaginary connection to Lenin or Stalin. The minions of Sauron are first and foremost the **orcs**. These are quite stupid, although being in possession of language and some sort of culture. Above all they are pure evil. Tolkien described them as “degraded and repulsive versions of the least lovely Mongol-types”.²⁸ There is no forgiveness given to orcs, ever. They are to be killed on sight. More interesting are the dark-skinned, such as the southern **Haradrim**. These are proud and masculine warriors, who seem to have been un-wittingly lured into the service of evil, thus being less intelligent than the men of Gondor and Rohan, but far better in terms of honour than orcs. The evil wizard Saruman’s sidekick **Grima Wormtongue** is one of the most interesting bad guys, luring himself into seducing the noble and Nordic-type king of Rohan – Théoden – and thereby executing his secret conspiracy, infiltrating the noble Nordic tribesmen in order to destroy them. Grima is feminine among the super-masculine rohirrim. He is insidious, highly intelligent and extremely dishonest.

²⁷ This strange fact about the deeply religious Tolkien’s work can be related to that of his long time friend C.S. Lewis, and the obviously Christian tales of *Narnia*.

²⁸ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (1981), letter 210.

Using the above characteristics, we can plot them into the matrix of racism’s bio-political geography. Using Tolkien’s Middle Earth in doing so, has an obvious advantage, as it underlines the imagined quality of using this kind of theoretical “map”. Thus:



Thus, we find that even in Tolkien’s imaginary universe, the norther people represents intelligence while “the southern people” manifests stupidity. At the same time, the honest people live in the west, while the dark Lord of insidiousness resides in the east (Mordor).

At last, a couple of notes of interest. First of all, the character Grima Wormstongue seems a representation of modernity’s anti-Semitic image of “the Jew”. Gondor and Rohan are equally representations of “whiteness”. Most interesting of all, I would argue Gandalf is a representation of something close to the romanticised image of the *Roma*. He is a wanderer, a nomad, has no home. Free as a bird, his everyday

occupation (when not fighting huge wars against evil) is entertaining village folks using fireworks. And he moves on. This corresponds with the racist stereotype of Roma people, as seen in popular culture and art.

Final thoughts.

I would argue that this theoretical model – racism perceived as a matrix of an imagined bio-political geography – puts together different notions of *racisms in plural* into one coherent matrix, trying to show how *racism in singular* could be understood. I have only drawn the outlines of this model, in this paper, but I believe that you can quite easily use this model, regarding racism towards Latin Americans, Pacific Asians, southern Europeans, Slavic people, different indigenous populations, and so on. The model is quite easy to understand for students, I dare say, having tested it on several occasions, teaching about racism. But, there are also obvious drawbacks. First of all, the model is Eurocentric. It does not work well, studying for example the Latin American notion of “the cosmic race”.²⁹ Second of all, it does not differ between racism based upon notion of biology, culture, religion, and so on. I would argue that the latter is of less significance than scholarly debate would suggest. The racist notion of certain groups being unable to change over generations is the same, even though racism lately prefer the term “culture” or “religion” over “biological race”. Racism also seems very able to mix these different ideas quite freely, without worrying about logical problems or scientific facts. New developments in DNA-research also suggest, that racism can pervert these findings, into new food for thought and politics. Hitler would have been delighted.

²⁹ Marilyn Grace Miller, *Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race: The Cult of Mestizaje in Latin America* (Austin, 2004).

Sources

As this paper is based upon the reading of a University class, many sources are used for knowledge without being quoted directly in the text above. The entire reading list is found here:

<http://www.uu.se/en/admissions/master/selma/kursplan/?kpid=32431&lasar=15%2F16&typ=1>

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