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THE RACE-RELIGION CONSTELLATION

A European Contribution to the Critical Philosophy of Race

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Abstract

This article traces the hidden race-religion constellation in Europe. The term "race-religion constellation" refers to the connection or co-constitution of the categories of race and "religion." Specifically, the term "race-religion constellation" is used to refer to the practice of classifying people into races according to categories we now associate with the term "religion." This calls for a consideration of European history and forms of racism in Europe, such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. This article aims to provide an alternative non-secularized or biological account of the origins of the socially constructed category of race in Europe. The alternative story begins in the sixteenth century, when the category of "religion" as a means for classifying peoples was both constructed and politicized. In tracing this alternative story, this article seeks to outline a framework for a critical philosophy of race focused on a European religion line that intersects with Du Bois's color line.

Keywords: race, religion, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Europe

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Racism is an institutionalized system with a wide-range of exclusionary practices that constantly changes forms and adapts itself (Bernasconi 2012; Bonilla-Silva 1997). As such, it is essential to philosophically investigate possible new forms or adaptations. Perhaps the most urgent task in the field of critical philosophy of race is to make visible what is being hidden. By focusing on what Du Bois defined as the color line, critical race theory has also created a new field, critical whiteness studies, which seeks to make whiteness visible (Aanerud et al. 1997; Klinenberg and Wray 2001; S. Ahmed 2004; Nayak 2007; Applebaum 2016). In this article I seek to reveal the hidden race-religion constellation, which Du Bois twice referred to but which seems to have been overlooked by both critical race theorists and critical philosophers of race (Du Bois 2000). In general terms, I use the term "race-religion constellation" to refer to the connection or co-constitution of the categories of race and "religion." More specifically, I use the term "race-religion constellation" to refer to the practice of classifying people into races according to categories we now associate with the term "religion." This calls for a consideration of European history and more specifically the topic of political theology. I contend that the latter serves as the horizon of past forms of racism in Europe, such as anti-Semitism and anti-Zyganism (to be explored in future research), as well as present forms of racism, such as Islamophobia. This is an overlooked constellation that could find its counterpart in critical secular studies which seek to make the hidden formations of "religion" or political theology visible (Asad 2003; Bracke 2011; Berlinerblau 2014; Mahmood 2015; Amir-Moazami 2016). This article is a first step in making visible the hidden race-religion constellation in Europe.

While many scholars, including Hannah Arendt to whom I turn when describing the economic and political process of racialization, draw a rather sharp distinction between religious anti-Judaism and racial "biological" anti-Semitism, this distinction relies on a separation between early-modern religious Europe and modern secular Enlightened Europe that is highly problematic. This secularization thesis, challenged by scholars such as Mahmood, Asad, and Taylor (Mahmood 2015; Asad 1993; Taylor 2007) has allowed for the race-religion constellation to be conveniently suppressed. This article aims to provide an alternative non-secularized or biological account of the origins of the socially constructed category of race in Europe. The assumption behind this claim is that races are socially constructed categories that continue to be instituted in very real (and often violent) forms in our daily realities. These forms of racism, as is the case with Islamophobia today,

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are the real political problem we must address. Nonetheless, as Zygmunt Bauman claims, it is essential to recognize that they stem from "the apprehension or anxiety caused by those who do not fall easily into established categories" (1998, 144). Furthermore, I define the process by which some of these socially constructed categories are transformed into tools of hierarchy, exclusion, and privilege as racialization. Not all categories are racialized at any given time and place, which is why the particular factors of economics, politics, and geography are very relevant.[1] This also implies we should not make the mistake of assuming all forms of racism are timeless and universal: every racial category is particular and contingent.[2]

The alternative story begins in the sixteenth century when the category of "religion," as a means for classifying peoples, was both constructed and politicized. I then trace the shift these categories take through the realm of philology to that of biology. While there were many biological projects of classification from the seventeenth century onward (Hannaford 1996) it was the biological categories taken over from philology that were eventually racialized—this is why it is this philological account that must not be overlooked. It is in the period of the early twentieth century that we see the conjunction of these biological categories, the rise of nationalism, an economic crisis, and the process of racialization that leads to the biological racism of Nazi anti-Semitism. For this latter step, given my focus on Europe, I turn to the writings of Arendt, who investigates the economic, political, and social context in which "race-talk" (race categories) transformed into racism against Jews. In tracing this alternative story of the origins of race-categories in Europe, this article takes the first step to create an intellectual and political space in which it will be possible to understand the rather muddled contemporary debates about the religion-based racism in Europe (primarily but not exclusively) as well as the means by which they are mobilized and politicized in contemporary practices of racism. In the final section, I consider the concerning issue of alarming rates of Islamophobia in Europe today. It is my contention that the refusal to characterize Islamophobia as a form of racism is cultivated by the masking of what I term "the race-religion constellation."

From *Vera Religio* to Religious Categories

In this first part, I aim to provide an account of the means by which "religion" served as the basis for categorizing peoples in Europe from approximately the sixteenth century onward. However, it is first necessary

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to pause and consider the term "religion" itself, which is far from neutral—either theologically or politically.[3] It was common practice, among both writers of late Antiquity and the modern period, to associate the terms *religio* and *religare*. *Religare* means "to gather together," "to create bonds between," or "to place a shared obligation upon" (Ward 2003, 2). Similarly, the term *religio* was often used as a synonym for people, group, tribe, etc. For this reason the terms, which are both translated as "religion," were commonly associated with the creation and preservation of a community. Cicero adds a new twist to the notion of *religio* that he derives from interpreting *religere* as *re-legere,* which means to reread or to look over again. This twist helps forge the link between community and shared scriptures.

This theological aspect is also present when the term *religio* is preceded by the term *vera*. *Vera religio*—true religion—has its theological roots in Augustine who wrote *De vera religione* in 390 CE, in which he argues that only the truth of God can lead one to freedom. This theological position is politically instituted, via the power of the Church, in the *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* doctrine of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which declares that "there is one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation" (Espin and Nickoloff 2007, 439). In other words, only those who practice the true religion will be saved, all others are damned. This distinction between saved and damned was also materially instituted by means of Canon 68, which required that Jews and Saracens (a thirteenth-century synonym for Muslims) differentiate themselves in public from Christians by means of their attire.[4]

The conflicts over true religion were fought on several fronts, the first of which was in terms of language. From the sixteenth century onward with the invention of the printing press, it was possible for every literate person to personally access the "truth" of salvation, the salvation that was the underlying "power" at the heart of the true religion debates. By limiting access to the truth that was only available in Latin, the Church, by way of the priest, maintained control over its community. The rise of the vernacular was a direct challenge to Catholic hierarchy and the centralization of power. These challenges spread throughout Europe from Erasmus in the sixteenth century in the Lowlands and Lefevre in France (between whom there was great tension) to Luther in Germany and Calvin in Switzerland as well as across the waters to England. This struggle for linguistic justice with regard to access to "the truth of salvation," while preceding the religious wars of the seventeenth century,

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cannot be disconnected from them or the fifteenth-century Inquisition (*limpieze de sangre)* and conquest of the Americas.

Let us now consider what happens to the political-theological concept of *vera religio* in the seventeenth century, as Europe supposedly moves out of the "Dark Ages" toward a more Enlightened and scientific worldview. The Latin term *religio* is at the center of a political conflict during the Protestant Reformation. Prior to this period, the term *vera religio* ("true religion") was synonymous with the Church and Christianity. All Christians (the majority of people living in Europe) have *vera religio* and all non-Christians (the minority) do not, and as such will not be saved.[5] This changed in the early seventeenth century when "true religion" became the center of a more symmetrical (in terms of numbers and power) struggle between the Catholic Church and "Protestant" Reformers (Ward 2003). Both groups claimed to possess the one and only "true religion" and as such the term was politicized. This political struggle lines the pages of the writings of thinkers from this period, such as Grotius and Hobbes and most controversially by Spinoza in the *Theologico-Political Treatise* (Topolski 2014, 2015), all of whom sought to understand this political-theological conflict.

The crux of this intellectual debate that equally manifested itself in physical violence across Europe was which form of Christianity was true to Christ and would lead to salvation: the Catholic work-based[6] hierarchically institutionalized Church, or the Lutheran faith-based bottom-up challenges (now associated with different Protestant denominations). A solution to the political and physical violence was found by means of the Peace at Westphalia signed in 1648 and first conceived of in Ausburg in 1555 (e.g., *cuius regio, eius religio*). Protestant and Catholic rulers agreed to cease violence against each other, thereby bringing an end to the religious wars of the previous centuries (e.g., the Protestant Reformation and the Counter-Reformation). This political peace, which created sovereign states with distinct theological-political constellations, enabled many of the non-Catholic denominations of Christianity to be accepted, at least in theory, as forms of true religion. Worth considering is how it also resulted in the first wave of "religious" refugees in Europe, the Huguenots, those who unfortunately had been born in a territory that did not tolerate their practices and who were thus forced to seek refuge in another territory.[7]

Things, however, were not so simple for those groups in Europe that were definitely not in possession of either acceptable form of true religion, in other words for non-Christians "peoples" such as Jews and

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"Mohammedans."[8] The view that non-Christians were human beings to be considered as subjects in any sense "equal" to Christians was itself highly contested. Non-Christians were most often viewed as heathens and barbarians, uncivilized and lesser beings. This slowly began to change in the seventeenth century in certain societies, often due to the influence of exceptional Jews or Mohammedans, and yet in Europe among theologians, whose political influence was still strong, neither of these non-Christian peoples was seen as practicing a "religion" (i.e., one on par with Christianity). The term "religion" was thus largely reserved for denominations of Christianity until the eighteenth century. This view of non-Christians also applied to those outside of Europe in the seventeenth century with whom Europeans "interacted" within the context of colonialism, missionary work, or trade (which included the Atlantic slave trade that was framed as a commercial project). One early link between "biological" phenotype and these "religious" categories was the Hamite justification for slavery. Canaan's descendants are cursed because their father, Ham, sees his inebriated father, Noah, naked. Their curse, which is to be the "lowest of slaves" (Gen 9:25), was linked to the phenotype of darker skin as a sign of inferiority to the sons of Japheth (with whom Europeans identified).

The organization system at the end of the seventeenth century was based on what we now refer to as "religious" categories, differentiated between four kinds of "peoples": Christians,[9] Jews, Mohammedans, and the rest (heretics, pagans, heathens, idolaters, polytheists) (Asad 1993; Masuzawa 2005; Smith 1963). From the time of the scientific revolution onward, an increasing interest and attempts to inventory, organize, and classify the world including the plants and peoples that lived in it. These biological endeavors flourished during the Enlightenment. Many intellectuals were actively involved in these projects of categorization as they sought to understand human beings' role and meaning in the grand scheme of creation. This desire was also a product of the historical period that preceded the eighteenth century. The attempt to bring order, and meaning to experience, was a response to the decentering and destabilizing centuries of discovering new lands and new peoples (fifteenth to sixteenth century) and the violence and destruction of the religious wars (sixteenth to seventeenth century). A new means to organize and classify the inhabitants of the world without denying Europe its central role was needed—both geographically and hegemonically. By the eighteenth century, this scheme had extended such that the term "religion" was being used not only to refer to

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Jews and Muslims, but also to "world religions," that is, Buddhism and Hinduism. The latter expansion of the category of "religion" was not motivated by the discovery of new religions in the Far East, which happened earlier, but was a final attempt by theologians and the Church to maintain their knowledge-power nexus at a time when their authority was repeatedly and publicly challenged. As such, the implicit hierarchy between true religion, Christianity, and other religions remained, with the former being privileged. In this vein, the social construction of "religious" categories served to further affirm the universalism and supremacy of Christianity and of European civilization.

The Philological Detour

By the end of the eighteenth century, with the rise of a revolutionary anticlerical spirit, theology and Christianity itself were subject to mounting social critique. These "religious" categories and the necessity of Christianity itself were being questioned. By the time of the French Revolution—the beginning of the long nineteenth century, which ended with the outbreak of World War I—Christianity's place of power was challenged, most visibly in northern Europe. In academic terms, this challenge led to the loss of authority of theology and the rise of the "new science" of philology—a field that was very much formed by the general scientific developments of the nineteenth century (and primarily the notions of progress and evolution associated with Darwinism) and also played a fundamental role in the founding mythologies of many new states (Marchand 2010). The long nineteenth century was also known as the golden age of philology, as the field developed rapidly due to the work of many French and German scholars (e.g., Herder, Humbolt, Renan, etc.). The "religious" categories, which had long served to bring order and meaning to the world (from a European perspective), were replaced by a philological classification system. While contested, both among philologists and other academics, this new system ordered people as Semitic (Hamito-Semitic), Aryan (Indo-European), or Turanian. In essence, the scientific justification provided was twofold (at the time this seemed much more scientific than the justification provided by theologians). First, the Semitic languages were based on fixed consonantal roots with varying vowels, second, these languages, and the people who spoke them, relied very heavily on guttural sounds.

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The common view among philologists was that the latter was a sign of linguistic immaturity and intellectual inferiority (Olender and Goldhammer 2008; Hannaford 1996, 241–55). Given the political context of the early nineteenth century, the importance of these categories extended, with great speed, beyond the confines of academia. As national communities throughout Europe sought to differentiate and unify themselves, shared cultural bonds, in which language played a critical role, became of primary importance. Philology played an essential role in "scientifically" justifying these new nations:

> Summarily put, it was philological scholarship that generated a new type of distinction among peoples and nations in terms of language groups; the most immediately critical in this context was the distinction between Indo-European (or Aryan) and Semitic language groups. (Masuzawa 2005, 149)

This categorical shift is the first of many, which depicts itself as moving away from "religion" toward science and secularism, an act of translation that naturalizes the hierarchical distinction of religious classifications. It is the first step in the masking of the race-religion constellation. Although they claimed to be scientific and free from theological influence, these new philological categories incorporated the previous "religious" hierarchy. Perhaps the best-known example are two nineteenth-century terms used by philologists, "Semitic" and "Aryan," which later provided the racial categories used by the Nazis. While the Nazis replaced philological justifications with pseudo-biological ones, the philological terms are the bridge between the "religious" and biological categories.

Representative of this rather muddled late-nineteenth-century fusion of theology, philology, and nationalism, both racial and civic models, is the career of Ernest Renan (1823–1892). He began his studies in theology, switched to philology—which he took to be the queen of the sciences (Turner 2014)—and then went on to pursue a career in politics during which he wrote a highly influential pamphlet, "What Is a Nation?" (1882) on the relationship between nations and race. Two of his earlier writings, *General History of Semitic Languages* (1847) and *The Life of Jesus* (1863)—both highly popular—illustrate the shift from "religious" to philological categories and also provide an early "scientific" account for the inferiority of the "Semitic" people.

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It was thus the discipline of philology that first provided Europe with the category of the Semite, which included both Jews and Arabs, a category that began to gain popularity around the 1840s (Kalmar 2013; Kalmar and Penslar 2005). Both the category and its appellation were fashioned by the previously dominant "religious" categories. First used in 1781 by a German Orientalist, August Schlözer, the term "Semite" comes from *Shemite* in relation to the three languages spoken by Shem's sons (Noah's grandsons): Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew (Bigalke 2012). Furthermore, Schlözer relied on a popular classification of the world's peoples based on which of Noah's children they descended from. Ham was associated with Africa (and other mostly southern warm climates), as Ham means hot. Japheth was associated with Aryanism (which included parts of Asia) and European civilization, as the name means to expand (or enlarge)—an idea used to justify missionary activities and colonialism. Shem, the third son, was the father of the Semites and settled in what would today be the Middle East.

Both the terms "Semite" and "Oriental"[10] were used from the mid-nineteenth century onward as categories to classify peoples and specifically non-Christians, and thus implicitly non-native European peoples, which included Jews who had been living in Europe for centuries (Said 1979) and Arabs or Muslims. The categories created to study languages soon served to classify and prioritize human peoples by incorporating the hierarchy and privilege taken from the religious categories (and often justified by referring to a foundational biblical myth). More significantly, this was done with a clear pro-white European Christian bias—a clear intersection of Du Bois's color line and the "religious" line I trace in this article (Du Bois 2000). It is also during this period that the term "race," with its current connotation (very broadly as some form of ethnic group), begins to be used in connection with these philological categories (Hannaford 1996). While the term itself existed prior to this period, as part of a classification system used by pseudo-biologists—primarily phrenologists and physiognomy—it now became part of popular discourse as is evident from a variety of literary sources, newspapers, magazines, academic books etc. (West 2001). Prior to this the term "race" has a diverse etymology ranging from the current of a river in Middle English, to the continuity of a familial lineage in Italian or species and root in Latin. The same is true of the other term associated with race at this time—"Aryan":

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> Although initially a term referring to a certain cluster of languages, "Aryan" increasingly was taken to mean an ethnic or, purportedly, racial grouping of peoples. . . . It is singularly ironic that by the time the name "Aryan" had taken on the virulently racist connotation familiar to us today, the noble Persians and Indians of yore were all but expunged from its meaning, as the term came to signify a certain idea of European identity, that is, the "whiteness" that excluded, above all, the Jews, who in turn were deemed—though not for the first time-oriental. (Masuzawa 2005, 152)

By the end of the nineteenth century, the content of the philological categories of Semite and Aryan began to change. While the categories remained, the philological explanation was no longer sufficient. While the disciplines of anthropology and biology provided new contents, the terms themselves were racialized. One of the notable changes that occurred when the terms/categories were racialized was a disconnection from Arabs and thus indirectly the connection to the seventeenth-century "religious" category of Mohammedans (now known as Muslims).[11] Thus while the term "Semite" originally included Arabs, anti-Semitic racism specifically targeted European Jewry. The later were not only much more present in European nation-states, the constellation of Jews as nation, race, and religion is also much thicker and more present in the European Christian social imaginary.

It is this racialization, from the philological category of Semite to the biological form of racism known as anti-Semitism, that I will trace in the following section. This racialization process must be understood in its particular geographical, economic, and political context, which most clearly illustrates the hidden race-religion constellation in Europe. "Anti-Semitism," coined in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr, relies on the above philological distinctions while also infusing it with the new biologically based terminology of "race" and in so doing camouflaging the link to Judaism as a religion. In this manner, the racialization of the category of the Semite is a second step in the concealing of the race-religion constellation. As the theologically infused hierarchical categories (linked to the true religion conflicts that sought to privilege Christians over and above non-Christian peoples) were incorporated into the purportedly objective science of philology (Olender and Goldhammer 2008) this concealed "religious" constellation was indirectly racialized. What I mean by the use of the term

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"indirectly" is to emphasize the obscuring logic used to differentiate between Judaism, a religion, and the notion of a Semitic race. It is my contention that a similar catch-22 logic (where the distinctions between Arab, Middle East, and Muslim is only made when it is to the political/power privilege of the speaker) is at work today in the discourse of multiculturalism, integrations, etc. In both cases, it is only by revealing Europe's masked race-religion constellation that one can better understand the particular manifestations of past and present racism.

Racialization: From "Race-Talk" to Racism

In the preceding sections, I have traced the dynamic social construction of the seventeenth-century "religious" categories that were racialized in the late nineteenth century. Racialization can be defined as a process "whereby a mode of categorisation was developed, applied tentatively in European historical writing, and then, more confidently to the populations of the world" (Banton 1978, 18–19). Because racialization focuses on a particular historical process of transformation, each case must be examined with regard to its specific context. With regard to the racialization of European Jewry, in the form of anti-Semitism, I turn to Hannah Arendt's article "Race-Thinking Before Racism" (Arendt 1944). Even with its historical inaccuracies and without making excuses for Arendt's failure to consider other forms of racism in her analysis, her 1948 study of anti-Semitism is essential to understanding the process of racialization because of her analysis of the specific historical and temporal context, the history of Christian anti-Judaism in Europe, as well as the broader issues of economics, ideology, and politics.

Race-thinking provided the distinctions used to classify different groups of people, who by the late nineteenth century were referred to as the "Semitic" race. The use of this term, and its constructed binary opposite, "Aryan," was evident from the race-talk used in the public sphere. Arendt's analysis establishes that race-talk and race-thinking preceded racism at least by approximately a century. While the term *antisemitismus* is coined in 1871 by Wilhelm Mahr, the term "racism" (*Rassismus* in German) was coined in the 1930s to refer to Nazi anti-Semitism. In other words, the process of racialization took approximately a century (c. 1830–1930). However, what is most essential is Arendt's political interpretation for the process of

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racialization in relation to the crumbling of the nation-state. This analysis is highly original, as it is not when nations are self-confident but when they are crumbling, as the trans-national EU institution is today, that a racialized other is sought to create the illusion of a united us/we.[12]

While the analysis is controversial, she establishes the connection between anti-Semitism and the state by focusing on the nineteenth-century changes that came about in the relationship between the state and certain "privileged" Jews who were seen by the majoritarian non-Jewish population to be representative of all Jews (Guesnet 2005, 2007; Bartal 1990; Topolski 2017). This primarily economic relationship lasted for several centuries until the nations-states were so large that no single Jew, or trans-national Jewish community (e.g., the Rothchilds), could support the state economy. What is essential to recognize is that these privileges were limited to a small minority of Jews, often the most assimilated or secular, and did not extend to the rest of the Jewish community. Nonetheless, in the eyes of the majority population, the actions of this limited number of highly visible Jews led to the perception that "the Jews" were the financial arm of the state. By the mid-nineteenth century, this economic relationship slowly began to crumble as imperialism offered a new and seemingly unlimited source of capital. Many Europeans recognized the riches that colonial excursions offered and took over what had previously been a Jewish financial niche. Arendt concludes that it was only when no longer of instrumental use to the state that this "privileged" group of wealthy and highly educated Jews realized how powerless they were. This painful awareness was also alarming as the Jews were still identified with the state, which was in crisis. Thus while this identification might not have been problematic in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the religious categories were not yet racialized, there was growing discontent with the nation-state across Europe developing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Had it not been for the extreme discontent of the general populace directed toward the state, a discontent that eroded the nationalism of the nineteenth century, the rampant anti-Semitic rhetoric—used by parties and persons from both the left and right—might have fallen on deaf ears. In other words, anti-Semitism—in its racialized form—was born from a popular political aversion to the state. The claim Arendt makes is that Jews, and specifically resentment against their perceived wealth, were used by the political class (the elites), who drew from the philological categories of the Semite as other, to explain the failure of the nation-state.[13]

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While I believe that Arendt's political analysis of the process of racialization is quite accurate, she failed to acknowledge that the category of the Semite was a philological one and not a biological one. This error is a common one. It is the neglect of the philological detour that enables the masking of the race-religion constellation. While there is no doubt that it was to biology, among other disciplines, that anti-Semites turned in the late nineteenth century to support their claims, the foundation of their racism is rooted in religious categories. It is easy to overlook this foundation, as in the end the Nazis' ideology was a scavenger ideology (Mosse 1978). The Nazis borrowed heavily from theological anti-Judaism, philological categories such as that of Aryanism, as well as medical developments such as eugenics. Upon this nineteenth-century basis, this racial ideology was further "supported" by scientific evidence from the domains of biology and pseudo-biology, the latter often fabricated by the misinterpreted or misapplication of scientific theories to society (e.g., social Darwinism). In addition, the authority granted to biological racism was also part of a much broader shift away from the authority of the humanities and toward the sciences, also evident in terms of the birth of psychology, genetics, and evolutionary theory in the early twentieth century (all of which were later used to justify racism both in Europe and abroad). Nonetheless, this scavenger ideology implicitly relied upon categories and "religious" hierarchies that have structured European society for a very long time although they were not made explicit,[14] or politicized, until the seventeenth century when they were first challenged.

By revealing the often forgotten philological connection between sixteenth-century religious categories and nineteenth-century pseudo-biological racism, we have a clearer picture of the process of racialization and its link to discourse. This connection should also lead us to consider how the domain of philology may have other unknown connections to racism.[15] In the following section, I will explore this possibility in terms of the shift from religious categories, to that of the Semite, which in its origins included Arabs, and contemporary forms of Islamophobia. What remains to be explored, then, is how this race-religion constellation might be the hidden structure for other forms of racism, such as Islamophobia, but also possibly for "color-based" racism with which it often intersects in the latter case (in which case it may be a precursor to biological justification of racial discrimination).

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The Post-Shoah Masking of the Race-Religion Constellation

In the aftermath of the Shoah, there has been an earnest commitment to combatting racism by way of education, legislation, and politics. Nevertheless, seventy-five years later, racism remains a daily reality in Europe, badly hidden under the assumption that Europe is post-racial. Contemporary racial discrimination manifests itself in a variety of practices, often structurally instituted, ranging from implicit bias (which has a large impact on measurable inequality in the fields of education, housing, and employment) to immigration and refugee policies. Not only has Europe not been able to eradicate racism, in both old and new forms, many of the efforts to combat racism have indirectly led to the masking of the race-religion constellation that I contend makes fighting racism even more difficult. There are a variety of actors, ranging from academics, politicians, and former victims (refusing to be further victimized) who contend that racism is no longer a problem in Europe. The latter often substantiate their claims by making racism synonymous with the racial views and practices of the Nazis, and then declaring that this is a matter of the past. What is essential is to avoid reducing racism to its biological manifestation or reducing the category of race to a biological one. It is this epistemological error that masks the race-religion constellation that I claim underpins many European (and other) forms of racism. The biological racism of anti-Semitism is only one particular form of racism; racism has many more—past and present—forms and adaptations. (Heschel 2015).

A similar reduction of race to a biological category is evident among bureaucrats. For example UNESCO's declarations in the 1950s that the term "race" was to be eliminated from its policy—its substitute was to be either "culture" (Hazard 2011) or "ethnicity," which raises problems today when one wishes to separate the debate on multiculturalism from the problem of racism. The latter policy decision was based on the fact that racism, in its biological or essentialist variation, was proven to be a false belief: "The UNESCO statements were fundamentally directed only at scientific racism, such as a belief in an essential hierarchy of biologically defined races rooted in biology or a belief that race mixing led to physical degeneracy and mental disharmony" (Bernasconi 2010, 13). These arguments were further reinforced by growing debates about racism taking place across the Atlantic, which put forward a very different notion of race that was color-based (Bernasconi 2014).

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Another factor that has led to the view that racism is no longer a problem in Europe is the silencing of race-talk, that is, strategies and practices devoted to avoiding the term "race" (Lentin 2008; Goldberg 2006; Chin et al. 2009). There are at least two different motivations for this silencing. The first has arisen at the explicit bequest of Jews, especially of those who had survived the Shoah and had experienced firsthand the persecution of racialization, and who longed to be "deracialized": "Having been racialized with genocidal results, post-Holocaust Jews have been striving to escape their own racialization" (On and Tessman 2001, 7). The deracialization sought by European Jewry, scattered across the globe after the Shoah, was rationalized based on the claim that Jews were a religious community and not a race (which is also how they became to be considered as "white" in the United States). In this vein, alternative classifications and nomenclatures, such as ethnicity, have been advanced that do not have the same emotional and political weight as the term "race." The second motivation arises from a widespread European and Christian desire to escape the shame of its genocidal and racial past, which may also have led to the accelerated rate at which "secularization," a further means to mask the race-religion constellation, took place after World War II (Judt 1992).

Lastly, scholars of racism have also participated in the masking of this race-religion constellation. Banton, for example, has claimed that "nothing is gained by defining anti-Semitism as a form of racism" (Banton 1992). While his motives are by no means the same as those of scholars who deny that racism exists (by defining it in terms of biological racism), as his goal is to reduce the emotional burden of its "victims," he nonetheless implicitly denies the importance of "religious" categories for both past and present forms of racism. This is all the more surprising as he acknowledges how Eurocentric these terms are as they reflect "particular events in the history of Europe and of European expansion into Africa and the Americas" (Banton 1992), and in this vein is very aware of the link between internal European anti-Semitism and external European colonial racism.

The Race-Religion Constellation and Islamophobia

I would now like to briefly consider how the masking of the race-religion constellation prevents the acknowledgment of Islamophobia as a contemporary form of racism. While many question whether Islamophobia is a

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form of racism, as well as whether the term "Islamophobia" itself is fitting, there can be no doubt that Muslims living in Europe, regardless of their religious practice, are the victims of both implicit and explicit exclusionary practices (European Agency for Fundamental rights (FRA) 2015). By tracing anti-Semitism, which is the process by which a "religious" category was racialized (by way of an often overlooked philological detour), the race-religion constellation is more visible. It is my contention that these Christian-centered "religious" categories, closely connected to European history and political theology, are still being mobilized and politicized, notwithstanding Europe's current identification as politically secular. In other words, the "religious" categories and hierarchy between Christians and non-Christians, which was masked and translated into the divisive binary Semite-Aryan, has not disappeared; rather, as with all forms of racism, it has simply changed forms and adapted and now intersects Du Bois's color line in the form of Islamophobia. As such it should come as no surprise that anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have both similarities and differences (N. Ahmed 2004; Bunzl 2007; Meer 2012; Schenker and Ziad 2006). While the philological category of Semite does not correspond neatly to the "religious" category of Muslim, the race-religion constellation makes clear that what is at the roots of this distinction is the privileging of Christianity (or in today's discourse secularism) over the religion of Muslims. The category is still present although the process of racialization is significantly different. The process of racialization that led to anti-Semitism focused primarily on European Jewry and not on Arabs (the other Semites). Furthermore, until the twenty-first-century, Jews were seen as Europe's internal religious other and Muslims (who were often incorrectly assumed to be Arab) as Europe's external political other (Anidjar 2012, 2007, 2003), this reality has changed with the waves of post–World War II immigration. In this vein, we must study Islamophobia as a separate process of racialization. My contention is that if we recognize that one of the categories that underpin it have the same source as those that led to anti-Semitism, we may be better able to understand Islamophobia. While this will not be possible within the confines of this article, I would like to—by way of conclusion—highlight a few possible points of consideration.

As mentioned previously, there is a catch-22 logic at play with regard to the obscuring and/or differentiating between Muslims and Arabs. While these categories were blurred prior to the nineteenth century, often under the catch-all term of Orientals (Said 1979, 1985), a similar blurring occurs

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in terms of the contemporary discourse of cultures. On the other hand, the distinction is also—when convenient—highlighted to deny charges of racism. Exemplary of this response are Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders, who rarely miss an opportunity to claim that they are not racists precisely because their critique of Muslims has nothing to do with race—for them it's about religious or cultural differences that are unassimilable (and thus naturalized, as biological race was for Jews by way of anti-Semitism). A common argument voiced in response to claims about the rise of Islamophobia is a denial that it is a form of racism (Meer and Modood 2009). The "argument" used to support their non-racist claim is that Europe has learned the lessons of the Shoah and as such has rejected the category of race. Not only does this politically savvy response further mask the shifting categories that underpin distinct forms of racism, it also further reinforces the notion that race is a biological category which has been recognized as scientifically unsubstantiatable. This, however, overlooks the role and meaning of many other socially constructed categories, each of which has the potential to be racialized and institutionalized as a form of racism. By reducing the category of race to its biological social construct as associated with the Nazis, which has been recognized as scientifically unsustainable, this reduction of racism masks other racialized categories, of which culture is the most recent but by no means new (Bernasconi 2010; Lentin and Titley 2011). The latter in particular has made it much more difficult to identify new forms and adaptations of racism as well as to combat the rising Islamophobia. As such "we should guard against the characterization of racism as a form of 'inherentism' or 'biological determination,' which leaves little space to conceive the ways in which cultural racism draws on physical appearance as one marker, among others, but is not solely premised on conceptions of biology in a way that ignores religion, culture and so forth" (Meer and Modood 2009, 344).

Furthermore, populist leaders who blame Muslims for all of Europe's woes likewise deny that they are being religiously intolerant by citing European Jewry as a model of integration and publicly proclaiming their absolute support for the state of Israel. Not only does this ignore the tragic reality of the Shoah, which has rendered it possible to accommodate a (now) tiny minority, it is also a political game that further masks the race-religion constellation and prevents two discriminated minorities from seeing each other as potential allies in the struggle against racial discrimination in Europe (Topolski 2017). This denial has made it much more difficult for Muslims to

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find justice by means of anti-racist laws and policies. By denying the reality of the race-religion constellation, it is more difficult to identify, connect, and contest discriminatory practices ranging from legislation regarding the head scarf, halal, koshering practices, etc. In this vein, the deracialization that Jews demanded in the name of justice seems to lead to further injustice for Muslims in Europe who cannot use history and the fact that in Europe race and religion intersect to support their demand for justice.

Another popular means of dismissing discrimination against Muslims, one used frequently by populist leaders, is that it "is a culture not a race." This claim is often supported by the fact that Europeans have learned from the Shoah that race does not exist, a logic that Jews promote as well in order to support the process of their deracialization. In this sense, the post-Shoah rejection of race as a category and the related masking of the race-religion constellation makes it more difficult to recognize the reality of Islamophobia. The criticism of Muslims in Europe is, accordingly, a cultural critique; it is the failure to integrate by accepting the values of the Enlightenment—such as secularism. In other words, there is a rhetorical shift away from Islam a religion to Islam a "culture" that is not compatible with Europe or its "Judeo-Christian" heritage, a highly problematic "religious" construct that when deconstructed reveals the importance of the race-religion constellation in politics today (Topolski 2016). There is no doubt that this silencing was greatly "assisted" by UNESCO's 1950 translation of the loaded term "race" into the now problematic term "culture" (and "multiculturalism"). Culture was to be the new means of classifying people, "separating human groups socially, politically and economically" (Lentin 2008, 490), the role previously played by race and by religion prior to that. Whether one classifies using the discourse of ethnicity, cultures, religions, or, most recently, identity, such classification schemes when infused with hierarchy and supremacy, as they almost always are, are both problematic and potentially dangerous.

Conclusion

This article is a first step in the exploration of what I contend is an often overlooked aspect of the concept of race in Europe, viz, its intersection with "religious" categories. In addition to color-based and colonial-based forms of racism, European racism has its historical roots in a hierarchical binary

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between Christian and non-Christian religions. This reality has from the eighteenth century until post-Shoah Europe been masked, both intentionally and not, and has served to justify the exclusion of more recent groups that perhaps "do not fall easily into Europe's established categories." Having shed light on the genealogy of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, two European "religious"-based forms of racism, starting from their classification as "religions" in the aftermaths of the Protestant Reformation and ending on a rather discouraging note, one that sadly implies that Europe (among other places) has not learned the lessons of the Shoah, I draw this piece to a conclusion. By retracing the racialization of "religious" categories, this investigation of the relationship between religion and race, and the importance of further examining the philological detour highlighted here, can serve as springboard for a better understanding of past and present forms and adaptations of racism. In addition, it hopes to open the door for future scholarship on a European-philosophy of race, scholarship that must be further brought into dialogue with both scholars whose focus lies more on color-based racism and post-colonial scholars focusing on colonial-based racism.

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NOTES

1. For those categories that are racialized, following Foucault it is possible the reason for their racialization is because of their ability, when politicized, not only to categorize but more importantly to divide and separate people, to create an us/them, and thus to support a form of biopolitics.
2. While Trump's rhetoric suggests that Islamophobia is a trans-Atlantic problem, we should not too quickly assume that Islamophobia means or manifests itself in analogous ways in the United States and the EU.
3. It is on this basis that Asad supports a claim similar to Masuzawa's and emphasizes the 'need for some understanding of how "religion" has come to be formed as a

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concept and practice in the modern West. For while religion is integral to modern Western history, there are dangers in employing it as a normalizing concept when translating Islamic traditions' (Asad 1993, 1).

4. For this reason, some historians claim that the categories that are fundamental in the seventeenth century have their origins in a distinction that was already present in the thirteenth century (Moore 2007).
5. It was, however. not always clear who was a Christian, for example what dogma was necessary to believe in order to be in possession of true religion, e.g., the Cathars.
6. Work here refers to good deeds, most often publically visible, such as rituals and is not to be confused with the Protestant work ethic outlined by Weber.
7. Implicit in this political-theological construction is a form of naturalism as it tries to link political borders to birth into a community and shared beliefs. Implicitly, difference, or otherness, must be excluded from the political community.
8. Many distinct words were used to describe these non-Christian groups such as peoples, tribes, groups, etc. For example, in 1614 Edward Brerewood referred to Jews and Mohammedans as "species."
9. While internal distinctions were made between Christians living in a particular place (e.g. Catholics, Lutherans, Orthodox etc.) this was secondary to the most important dividing line between Christians and non-Christians.
10. Prior to 1780, Jews and Arabs/Mohammedans (or Hebrew and Arabic speakers) were often referred to as "Oriental," a term that was still popular in the nineteenth century.
11. This disconnection is significant when we return to the twenty-first century, where the groups defined as Muslims and Arabs are both merged and disentangled, often depending on the political leanings and context of the speaker/audience.
12. While this claim goes beyond the scope of this article and thus cannot be properly supported, it is worth considering the parallel to today with regard to Muslims in Europe. In the wake of the Charlie Hebdo Affair, it is clear that the acts of a few extremists are perceived by the vast majority of non-Muslim Europeans as representative of all Muslims. For a further exploration of this topic, see Kundnani, *The Muslims Are Coming!*
13. This conclusion begs the question whether there is an analogous relationship between Muslims in Europe today, and specifically the rise of Islamophobia as a political tool, and Europe's current identity and economic crisis. Further research needs to be done to investigate Europe's post–World War II "ethnicized economies," which served "to meet labour needs and supply their national populations with acceptable level of consumer goods" (Chin et al. 2009, 25).
14. This has its roots in the fifteenth century Inquisition, when the idea of purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*) was associated with a notion of race as tied to non-Catholic groups and specifically to Muslims and Jews (Martinez, Torres, and Nirenberg 2012; Anidjar 2014; Kiernan 2009).
15. A historical case to be explored based on this hypothesis is that of the discrimination against the Irish based on their usage of language.

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