

The Mestizos of Kisar: An insular racial laboratory in the Malay Archipelago

Hans Pols and Warwick Anderson

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Mestizos of Kisar, a dry, almost barren island in the Dutch East Indies off the coast of East Timor, were a model for the study of race mixing or human hybridity. Discovered in the late nineteenth century, these ‘anomalous blondes’ of Dutch and Kisarese ancestry became subjects of intense scrutiny by physical anthropologists. As a German specialist in tropical medicine in search of a convenient empire after 1918, Ernst Rodenwaldt favourably evaluated the physique and mentality of the isolated, fair Mestizos in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Back in Germany in the 1930s, as professor of hygiene at Heidelberg, his views on race hardened to accord with Nazi doctrine. Yet after the war, Rodenwaldt successfully cited his earlier appreciation of mixed-race peoples in the eastern Malay Archipelago as grounds for rehabilitation. Once a celebrated case study in human hybridity, the Mestizos of Kisar were erased from anthropological discussion in the 1950s, when race mixing ceased to be a biological issue and became instead a sociological interest. Still, Rodenwaldt’s work continues to exert some limited influence in the eastern parts of the archipelago and among the Kisarese diaspora, indicating the penetrance and resilience of colonial racialisation projects.

‘For the last four or five months,’ wrote J. Macmillan Brown, the eccentric Scottish-born literary scholar, based in New Zealand, ‘I have been tracking the Caucasian in the hair, features, and physique of the peoples of the Dutch East.’¹ In 1912, Brown sailed to ‘Kissa’, a droughty and bare island off the coast of East Timor, where he found ‘Europeanism that has not yet melted into the dark ocean’. The dry, unattractive atoll ‘swarmed’ with ‘little blue-eyed girls with golden curls’ and ‘tawny haired white men [who] speak and act like natives’. It was a weird and

Hans Pols is Associate Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Sydney: hans.pols@sydney.edu.au. Warwick Anderson is Janet Dora Hine Professor of History at the University of Sydney: wanderson@usyd.edu.au. We are grateful for the discussion of this article at the 2014 EuroSEAS meeting in Lisbon, at a panel organised by Ricardo Roque and Warwick Anderson. Irfan Kortschak, Veronika Lipphardt, Dirk Moses, Ricardo Roque, and Christine Winter offered comments on an earlier version of this article. Antje Kühnast did most of the German translations; Hans Pols is responsible for the Dutch. We are grateful to Edwin Lerrick for hospitality in Kupang. This research was supported by Australian Research Council Grants FL110100243, DP0881067, and DP1096013.

1 J. Macmillan Brown, *The Dutch East: Sketches and pictures* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1914), p. 209.

anomalous racial enclave. 'Here is a laboratory experiment right at the door of tropical Australia,' declared Brown.² Some ten years later, John S.C. Elkington, a champion of white settlement in tropical Australia, also visited Kisar, entranced by the 'romantic tale' that Brown had woven around it. 'It was a curious experience,' Elkington wrote, 'to see at the landing place these flaxen-haired, fair-skinned, blue-eyed folk, speaking only Malay.' The Australian director of tropical hygiene agreed that Kisar represented 'an actual, if unpremeditated, experiment on a fairly extensive scale in white settlement in the tropics'.³ When Ernst Rodenwaldt, a German physical anthropologist and specialist in tropical medicine, visited the Kisarese community in Koepang (Kupang), West Timor, a few months later, he was struck by the uncanny whiteness of many of them. 'A strange sensation, this encounter,' he recalled. 'On the street I met a tall, slim old man [Cornelis Caffin] with white hair, a white beard, a white moustache, and an aquiline nose. There was no trait in his facial appearance that reminded me of a native. But when I addressed this European, he did not understand me. He could not speak Dutch or any other European language.'⁴ For Rodenwaldt, too, Kisar came to resemble a racial laboratory, though one more pertinent to the study of the status and stability of mixed-race groups than the eulogising of white racial persistence in the tropics. For him, Kisar became an island of genealogical clarity, 'far removed from the racial chaos [*dem Rassenchaos fern*]' that he thought prevailed elsewhere in the Dutch East Indies.⁵

While Brown and Elkington had read the experiment on Kisar as commentary on the White Australia policy, in terms of white settler nationalism, Rodenwaldt was sensitive to rising Dutch colonial concerns about race mixing in the archipelago. In the 1920s, the descendants of European and Indonesian unions, known as Indo-Europeans or Indos, probably numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Perhaps as many as one-third of the Europeans who married in the Dutch East Indies were choosing local spouses, especially in the eastern part of the archipelago.⁶ The children of these mixed marriages inherited the legal status of the father — even if there had been no formal marriage, the father might adopt his offspring and render them European.⁷ (Indeed, people classed as 'foreign Oriental' and 'Native' could apply

2 Brown, *The Dutch East*, pp. 212, 218.

3 J.S.C. Elkington, 'The "Mestizos" of Kisar, Dutch East Indies', *Medical Journal of Australia* (Jan. 1922): 32–3. On Elkington see Warwick Anderson, *The cultivation of whiteness: Science, health and racial destiny in Australia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

4 Ernst Rodenwaldt, *Ein Tropenarzt erzählt sein Leben* [A tropical physician relates his life] (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1957), p. 241.

5 Ernst Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar* [The Mestizos on Kisar], vol. 1 (Batavia: Kolff, 1927), p. 117. The book was also published in Dutch as *De Mestiezen op Kisar*, 2 vols. (Batavia: Kolff, 1927), but all references in this article are to the German original. Gustav Fischer Verlag published another German edition in 1928 in Jena.

6 Paul W. van der Veur, 'Cultural aspects of the Eurasian community in Indonesian colonial society', *Indonesia* 6 (1968): 38–53. In the early years of Dutch colonisation, European men often married into prominent Indo-European and Indonesian families to enhance their social status: see Jean Gelman Taylor, *The social world of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); and Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *Being 'Dutch' in the Indies: A history of creolisation and empire, 1500–1920*, trans. Wendie Shaffer (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008).

7 Cees Fasseur, 'Corner stone or stumbling block: Racial classification and the late colonial state in Indonesia', in *The late colonial state in Indonesia: Political and economic foundations of the Netherlands East Indies, 1880–1942*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), pp. 31–56. For an

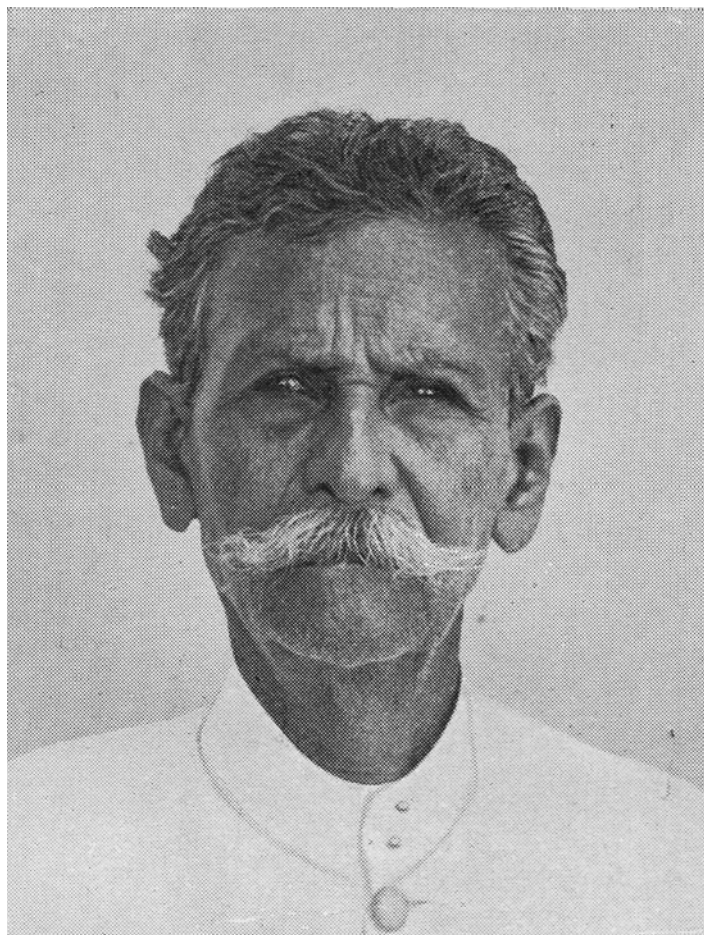


Figure 1. Cornelius Caffin, Koepang, from Ernst Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*, vol. 1 (Batavia: Kolff, 1927), facing p. 10.

to be accepted as ‘equivalent to European’ in legal status if they spoke Dutch and lived according to European standards and expectations.) Eurasians with light complexion, an advanced education, and a decent job usually passed as European; whereas those who were darker and poorer might be relegated to the category of Native. Most professed Christian faith, though Indonesian mothers frequently transmitted local customs to their offspring. In urban centres, some spoke an *Indisch* dialect of Dutch, ardently played *krontjong* songs, and laughed with the Stamboel comic

overview of the legal categories in the Dutch East Indies and their complexities and ambiguities see Bart Luttikhuis, ‘Beyond race: Constructions of “Europeanness” in late-colonial legal practice in the Dutch East Indies’, *European Review of History* 20, 4 (2013): 539–58.

theatre.⁸ The social position of these Indo-Europeans was precarious, teetering, so it seemed, on the edge of the native abyss. Many recently arrived Dutch treated them with contempt, showing little respect for their accomplishments and ridiculing their accents. Colonial authorities repeatedly inquired into the social marginalisation and poverty of Indo-European communities.⁹ As anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler observes: 'Skin shade was too ambiguous; bank accounts were mercurial; religious belief and education were crucial but never enough.'¹⁰ Indo-Europeans transgressed and unsettled conventional racial divides and hierarchies, thus constituting a colonial problem. While liminal Indo-Europeans generally favoured and asserted European qualities and accreditation, often attempting to sharpen the boundary between themselves and the 'natives', their position in colonial society remained contested and dubious, a source of considerable anxiety.¹¹

In this article, we follow Rodenwaldt as he set about making the Mestizos of Kisar crucial to the scientific understanding of race mixing in the twentieth century.¹² In two volumes, published in 1927, the anthropologist evaluated the results of the 'crossing' of European men and Kisarese women, assaying the racial composition and worth of these isolated, impoverished people. In effect, Rodenwaldt was stabilising and mobilising a mixed identity, a racial amalgam, first on the island, then projecting it onto the rest of the archipelago and broadcasting it across the world. In his biopolitical framing, the island laboratory could be scaled up to cover every circumstance; it could be made relevant to any condition of racial confusion or ambiguity.

8 Van der Veur, 'Cultural aspects of the Eurasian community in Indonesian colonial society'. For a history of krontjong music see Peter Keppy, 'Keroncong, concours and crooners: Home-grown entertainment in early twentieth-century Batavia', in *Linking destinies: Trade, towns and kin in Asian history*, ed. Peter Boomgaard, Dick Kooiman and Henk Schulte Nordholdt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008), pp. 141–57. For the theatre Stamboel see Matthew Isaac Cohen, *The Komedi Stamboel: Popular theater in colonial Indonesia, 1891–1903* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).

9 Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: Race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), and *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), especially ch. 3. See also Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, *Domesticating the empire: Race, gender, and family life in French and Dutch colonialism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998); Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the colonial state: Essays on gender and modernity in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000); and Susie Protschky, 'Race, class, and gender: Debates over the character of social hierarchies in the Netherlands Indies, circa 1600–1942', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 167, 4 (2011): 543–56. For contemporary sociological analysis, see J.C. Kielstra, 'The "Indo-European" problem in the Dutch East Indies', *Asiatic Review* 25 (1929): 588–95.

10 Ann L. Stoler, 'Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures', *American Ethnologist* 16, 4 (1989): 635.

11 In 1919, the Indo-European Association (Indo-Europeesch Verbond, IEV) was founded to represent their interests in the recently established colonial parliament or Volksraad: generally this association sided with the most reactionary political forces in the Indies. See Ulbe Bosma, *Karel Zaalberg: Journalist en strijder voor de Indo* [Karel Zaalberg: Journalist and advocate for Indo-Europeans] (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997). Even Macmillan Brown noticed that 'there is appearing amongst the European ranks much hostile criticism of the recognition of the half-castes' (*The Dutch East*, p. 203).

12 In contrast, most Dutch anthropologists in the Indies, including J.P. Kleiweg de Zwaan, were concentrating on the most 'primitive' groups: see Fenneke Sysling, 'Geographies of difference: Dutch physical anthropology in the colonies and the Netherlands, c. 1900–1940', *BMGN: Low Countries Historical Review* 128, 1 (2013): 105–26; Fenneke Sysling, *Racial science and human diversity in colonial Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016).

Rodenwaldt's relatively positive assessment of the Mestizos of Kisar gained remarkable currency among physical anthropologists, even as he came to doubt his own findings, opportunistically adapting himself in the 1930s to Nazi race theories. His trajectory as a race theorist is revealing and disturbing.¹³ In becoming enthralled by Nazi racial doctrine, Rodenwaldt, a shrewd professor of hygiene and anthropology at Heidelberg, renounced his earlier optimistic evaluations of race mixing, promoted anti-Semitism, and participated eagerly in German biological warfare.¹⁴ The racial triumphalism of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s would provide, at least on first hearing, a discordant counterpoint to the perceived harmonies of Kisar in the 1920s.

This is, then, a case study in the 'epistemic violence' of colonial racialisation in Island Southeast Asia, a story of the silencing of the colonised and their transformation into rigid, mobile, and thoroughly modern — if ineluctably marginal — identities.¹⁵ Residents of a few villages on Kisar became legible to the world as model human hybrids. They were made to fit, and fill out, a European racial framework, but in so doing, they caused this conventional structure to shift and adjust, to adapt a little to colonial exigencies and local cultural pressures. As Rodenwaldt learned, his Kisarese subjects could not simply be slotted into one category or another; his encounters in the eastern archipelago caused him to rethink, reluctantly, the nature of human difference and mixture, leading to subtle modification or reconditioning of concepts of race. As for the Kisarese, it is hard from this distance to discern their responses to such intrusions or their perceptions and evaluations of the outsiders' assertions of 'true' Mestizo identity. The inhabitants of Kisar seem to have greeted anthropological inquiries with an uneasy combination of curiosity and indifference — but since their historical presence is recorded only in the foreigners' notebooks and journals, it is hard to know what they really thought. All the same, it is clear today that many of their descendants have discovered in Rodenwaldt's books some valuable materials with which they can assemble their own genealogies and modern identities.

Discovering the 'Mestizos'

Early in the 1880s, colonial officials and missionaries began to report on an anomalous blonde community on the island of Kisar, in the far east of the Dutch East Indies. While travelling through the archipelago and along the western coast of New Guinea, the naturalist and anthropologist Adolf Bernhard Meyer heard about the white Kisarese from a Dutch missionary. As a German-Jewish medical graduate, Meyer was intrigued.¹⁶ He learned that about a dozen European soldiers

13 Rodenwaldt, *Tropenarzt erzählt sein Leben*. See also Wolfgang Eckhardt, 'Generalarzt Ernst Rodenwaldt', in *Hitlers militärische Elite*, ed. Gerd R. Ueberschär (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1998), pp. 210–22; and Manuela Kiminus, 'Ernst Rodenwaldt: Leben und Werk' (diss. med., Ruprecht-Karls Universität, Heidelberg, 2001).

14 Frank M. Snowden accuses him of a 'combination of wartime devastation and bioterrorism', in *The conquest of malaria: Italy, 1900–1962* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 196.

15 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the subaltern speak?', in *Marxism and the interpretation of cultures*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271–313.

16 Meyer was following in the wake of Alfred Russel Wallace, whose *Malay Archipelago* (1869) he had translated into German. Meyer later became director of the Natural History and Anthropology Museum at Dresden. See Hilary Howes, "Shrieking savages" and "men of milder customs", *Journal of Pacific*

from the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, VOC) had garrisoned the island more than a century earlier. They came with their wives, probably mostly Dutch, and their descendants tended to intermarry, thus helping to preserve their racial distinction. According to Meyer, this exceptional community, once forgotten, mustered at least 350 people. ‘Among these Mestizos,’ he wrote, ‘one finds, curiously enough, some with blue and brown eyes, light skin, and blond hair. One hears Dutch names’¹⁷ Like his idol the naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, Meyer found local racial patterns fascinating and puzzling. Naturally, he wondered whether this strange group might be degenerating in the tropics.

The Dutch language is completely unknown to them, most of them do not understand Malay either, just like the other inhabitants [of the island]. Except for their mores, customs, and religion, they are the same as the rest of the population of the island; with respect to laziness, ignorance, and alcoholism they surpass them; and yet, they are very proud of their [last] names.¹⁸

Intent on getting to New Guinea, Meyer was unable to visit the aberrant Kisarese, but he alerted other German anthropologists to their existence.

When Macmillan Brown landed on Kisar in 1912, he ‘saw there a pure Dutch colony that has persisted and even kept its blue eyes for two centuries and a half. He believed that in 1665, eight Dutch soldiers and their wives had settled on ‘this lonely islet’. Regrettably, their inbred descendants ‘kept their Protestantism, but largely abandoned their civilisation’.¹⁹ They showed no diminution in fertility, however, and hard work on the barren island had made them ‘virile’. The prolific ‘Lerieck’ family, for example, showed some native blood, yet ‘many had fine European faces and light complexions’. Thus it seemed to the aged scholar that ‘work and a hard life are two of the essential conditions of race-permanence and race progress in the tropics’.²⁰ According to the officious Elkington, nine Dutch soldiers and their wives were deposited on Kisar between 1783 and 1819 — five wives were Dutch while the other four were ‘more or less tinged with coloured blood’.²¹ The colonial authorities abandoned them in the 1820s, and their offspring continued, totally overlooked, to breed among themselves. In 1921, when he visited the island, Elkington found some 200 descendants, who ‘except for the tenacity with which they kept their marriages within their own community and retained their family names, had practically

History 47, 1 (2012): 21–44, and ‘Anglo-German anthropology in the Malay Archipelago, 1869–1910: Adolf Bernhard Meyer, Alfred Russel Wallace and Alfred Cort Haddon’, in *Anglo-German scholarly networks in the long nineteenth century*, ed. Heather Ellis and Ulrike Kirchberger (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 126–46. See also Jeremy Vetter, ‘Wallace’s other line: Human biogeography and field practice in the eastern colonial tropics’, *Journal of the History of Biology* 39, 1 (2006): 85–123. It is likely that, as a pioneering German physical anthropologist in the region, Meyer represented a model for Rodenwaldt: see *Die deutsche Südsee, 1884–1914: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Hermann Joseph Hiery (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2001).

17 A.B. Meyer, ‘Die Mestizen-Colonie auf der Insel Kisser bei Timor im Ostindischen Archipel’, *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen* 28 (1882): 467.

18 Meyer, ‘Mestizen-Colonie’, p. 467.

19 Brown, *The Dutch East*, p. 204.

20 Brown, *The Dutch East*, pp. 219, 220.

21 Elkington, ‘The “Mestizos” of Kisar’, p. 32.

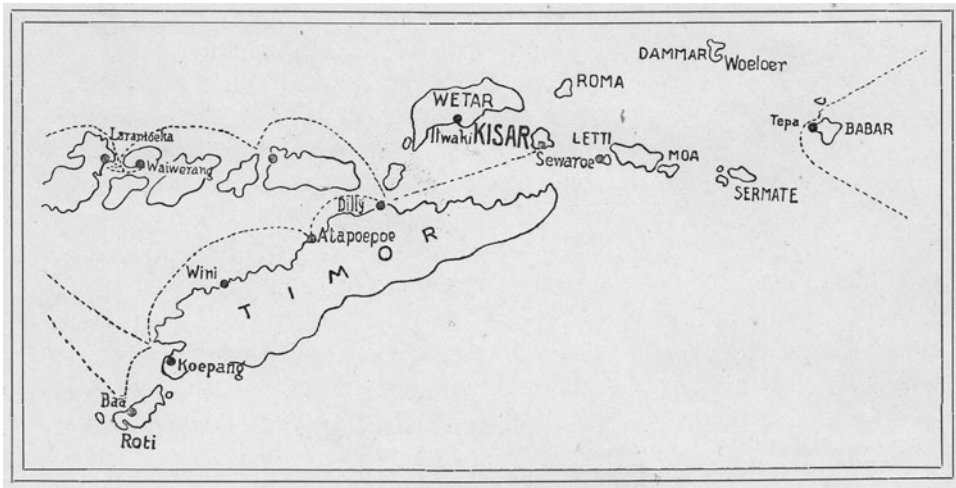


Figure 2. Map of the eastern archipelago, from Ernst Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*, vol. 1 (Batavia: Kolff, 1927), facing p. 16.

lost all marks of European civilisation'. Surrounded by some 7,000 'Negrito' Kisarese, this incongruous group showed no signs of physical degeneration, displaying European features and builds, albeit unusually 'bronzed'.²² The Mestizos appeared fairly intelligent too, though Elkington was not equipped to confirm this observation with the Binet-Simon test and the Porteus Maze. He hoped a properly trained physical anthropologist would soon investigate the intriguing white tribe.

Rodenwaldt arrived on Kisar the following year. The forty-four-year old medical officer, scion of a Prussian military family, was stationed in Surabaya, working as an inspector of the East Indies Civil Health Service, which required him to travel widely in the eastern archipelago. Before the First World War, he had learned tropical medicine at the Hamburg Institute for Tropical and Ship Hygiene, then practised as a German colonial physician in Togo. During the war, he advised the Ottoman Empire, a German ally, on disease control.²³ Since Germany had been deprived of its colonial possessions after the war, the adventurous tropical physician resorted to the Dutch East Indies, as an empire substitute. Known mostly for his expertise in the management of malaria, Rodenwaldt also developed, under the tutelage of leading anthropologist and eugenicist Eugen Fischer, a commitment to the analysis of racial types. Like Fischer, he assumed the physical features and mental capacities of a race were inherited in a simple Mendelian genetic fashion. He particularly admired Fischer's pre-war studies of mixed-race people in German Southwest Africa (Namibia), which came to the ambivalent conclusion that miscegenation, while it elevated Africans, degraded Europeans.²⁴ Having met the alluring white Kisarese in

²² Ibid., p. 33.

²³ Rodenwaldt, *Tropenarzt erzählt sein Leben*. He was briefly stationed at Gallipoli.

²⁴ Eugen Fischer, *Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardierungsproblem beim Menschen: Anthropologische und ethnographische Studien am Rehobother Bastardvolk in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*

Koepang, Rodenwaldt yearned to visit Kisar, to conduct a corresponding inquiry into the *Mischlinge* there. When he disembarked on the island in 1922, he looked deeply into the eyes of the first couple he met, without saying a word. ‘They were not bright blue,’ he related, ‘but they were very light; they were not native eyes [*Eingeborenenaugen*].’²⁵ Conversation was unnecessary: Rodenwaldt believed he could see deep into their racial essence. Along with his wife, the anthropologist stayed on Kisar for two months, performing a wide range of physical measurements in the early afternoon and providing medical care in an improvised clinic later in the evening.²⁶ It would take him a further five long years to figure all the calculations, often working deep into the night — even while sleeping, he claimed — before his two-volume study, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*, appeared in 1927.²⁷ In the first volume, Rodenwaldt drily recounted his version of the history of the Mestizos of Kisar and the results of his investigations. Tables of physical measurements, physiological data, family trees, pictures of almost all individual Kisarese, and endless calculations, took up the even more desiccated second volume.

Relating to Kisar

Rodenwaldt’s historical account of Kisar was more elaborate and reliable than the perfunctory versions told by Brown and Elkington.²⁸ His narration went back to the beginning of Dutch involvement. Established in the early seventeenth century to control the lucrative spice trade in the East Indies, the VOC had focused on the eastern archipelago, especially on the small island of Banda, where nutmeg grew, and the Maluku Islands, the source of pepper and cloves. The Dutch drove out the Portuguese, except from East Timor, and imposed punitive trade agreements on the islanders. When the people of Banda did not adhere to the ‘treaty’, the VOC attempted to kill them all. Kisar, off the coast of East Timor, appealed as a site for a garrison, and for its potential as a slave trading post. In 1665, the VOC erected a fortress on the island, which was largely barren rock, buttressed by 20-metre-high ramparts, with poor anchorage offshore. But at the end of the eighteenth century, the Dutch state took over the bankrupt VOC and concentrated on developing the cultivation system on Java, ignoring the spice trade, which was by then unprofitable. The colonial administration in distant Batavia (Jakarta) lost interest in remote outposts like Kisar. It abandoned the fortress, leaving only the island postmaster as its representative. Every three months a postal boat called in to relieve the monotony.

[The Rehoboth bastards and the problem of bastardisation in human beings: Anthropological and ethnographic studies of the Rehoboth bastard tribe in German Southwest Africa] (Jena: G. Fischer, 1913). Fischer was director of the Anatomical Institute in Freiburg (1918–27), then director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics, Berlin (1927–42). He was elected rector of the Friedrich Wilhelm Universität, Berlin (now Humboldt University) in 1933. After the Second World War, Fischer continued as emeritus professor at Freiburg University.

25 Rodenwaldt, *Tropenarzt erzählt sein Leben*, p. 251.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 251.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 303.

28 This section is based on Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*. See also Ernst Rodenwaldt, ‘De mestiezen van Kisar [The Mestizos of Kisar]’, in *Handelingen van het Vijfde Nederlandsch-Indisch Natuurwetenschappelijk Congres Soerabaja* (Batavia: Kolff, 1927).

The Kisarese continued to engage in small-scale agriculture and desultory exchanges with neighbouring islands.

Halfway through the seventeenth century, a dozen or so European soldiers, having served out their contracts with the VOC, had decided to settle on Kisar, rather than return to Europe. Their decision was not unusual, since they had little to look forward to back in Europe. The recruiting station of the VOC in Harderwijk — known as Europe's sewer — attracted the poor, destitute, and desperate, those for whom exile was appealing. The Kisar isolates derived from the Netherlands, England, France, and the German states: among the common, and later cherished names, were Bakker, Caffin, Lerrick, Joostensz, Peelman, Wouthyzen, and Ruf. According to Rodenwaldt, these outcaste soldiers married local women, and their descendants, proud of their European ancestry, married one another. They tended to shun other Kisarese, and few opportunities arose to marry Europeans. When the VOC opened its ranks to Indo-Europeans after 1775, the Mestizos found a source of ready income — and an additional reason to keep themselves separate from other Kisarese. But this advantage disappeared in the early-nineteenth century when the British briefly secured the East Indies. Nevertheless, the impoverished Mestizos continued to assert their sense of racial superiority and white privilege.

For most of the nineteenth century, the Mestizos of Kisar were forgotten. In 1885, a visitor investigating possibilities for agriculture and trade in the eastern archipelago observed exceptionally white inhabitants scratching around the ruins of the old VOC fortress. Their presence disturbed him. These people did not speak Dutch and engaged in local customs and habits, but they attended church on Sunday, smoked pipes, and sat at the table while eating instead of squatting on the floor. The combination of European features and Christianity with a largely indigenous mode of life was perplexing and jarring. The colonial agent became incensed when he heard that these remnant Europeans possessed the status of mere natives. Even worse, it seemed the local raja, the ruler of Kisar, treated the Mestizos with contempt, forcing them to perform demeaning manual labour. Returning to Batavia, the affronted visitor recommended that the colonial state intervene to rectify this degradation of Europeans — albeit of diluted stock.²⁹ As a result, in the early twentieth century, the Mestizos were permitted to enrol in a European school in Koepang, so they could learn Dutch and receive a basic education, the requirements for coveted European legal status. Their white appearance seemed to demand they acquire, unlike other Kisarese, the cultural and legal trappings that went with being European in the colony. If their genealogies had been less obscure and better registered, then linguistic and educational accomplishments would have been redundant. Now, schooling would serve, in effect, to repatriate and upgrade the community. It also gave many of them a chance to get off Kisar and into infinitely more cosmopolitan West Timor.

Evaluating the Mestizo

For Kisar to function as a Mendelian racial laboratory, Rodenwaldt needed clear and reliable Mestizo genealogies. Unfortunately, the church containing records of

29 G.W.W.C. van Hoëvell, 'Leti eilanden [Leti Islands]', *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde* 33 (1890): 216.

marriages and births had been damaged during a typhoon and burned down early in the twentieth century. The genealogical pride of the Mestizos meant they could give him, through an interpreter, plenty of information, but he distrusted many of their claims. Rodenwaldt believed Adriana Bakker, the wife of the current raja, told the most plausible stories, but even so, he wanted confirmation.³⁰ The anthropologist turned to Paul Constant Bloys van Treslong Prins, the deputy archivist of the colonial administration in Batavia, a bureaucrat with a keen interest in Indo-European genealogy. They found some records of Kisar in the archives, which helped to piece together the bloodlines of the Mestizos.³¹ According to Rodenwaldt, the founders of this group definitely were racially mixed, but their Mestizo descendants became isolates, breeding with one another. Having reconstructed the family trees, Rodenwaldt could calculate the proportions of European and indigenous blood for all the Mestizos, just as Fischer had done in his study of the Rehoboth.³² The value of Rodenwaldt's laboratory consisted in its racial organisation and transparency, distinct from the 'racial chaos' supposedly prevailing elsewhere in the archipelago.³³

In Koepang and on Kisar, Rodenwaldt classified and laboriously measured each Mestizo. He assessed the colour of their skin and eyes, the shape of their nose and ears, and their weight, height and build. The prevalence of red hair impressed him. His anthropometric studies indicated that physical characteristics, such as height and limb length were not inherited independently — if that had been the case then the bodies of the hybrids would have been grotesquely disproportionate and uncoordinated. Their features proved no more variable and discordant than those in 'pure' Europeans or Kisarese. Rodenwaldt also took care to evaluate the cultural and social status of the Mestizos. They seemed to display European qualities of intelligence, initiative, and responsibility; the few of them possessing a good education were able to hold positions in the colonial service and commerce. The persistence of native elements might have rendered them better adapted to the tropical climate, allowing them to behave more vigorously in the moist heat. In the Mestizos, the cultural dialectic of European and Native appeared to have achieved a synthesis. They gave their children both a Christian name and an indigenous one, to appease local spirits.³⁴ The outward forms of Christianity, including church attendance, were maintained but the community embraced local customs concerning courtship, marriage, birth, and child rearing.³⁵ Animism retained an important role in their spirit world. A missionary on

30 Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*.

31 Bloys van Treslong Prins wrote extensively about early Indo-European families and focused on genealogical information. See, for example, P.C. Bloys van Treslong Prins, *Grafschriften op diverse plaatsen op Java en de naburige eilanden* [Inscriptions on tombstones in several places on Java and neighbouring islands] (Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie en Heraldiek, 1916), 3 vols. There were many German family names among Indo-Europeans; they were descendants of German soldiers or other German sojourners to the Indies. In a research project that must have fascinated Rodenwaldt, Bloys van Treslong Prins studied the genealogy of these families. See P.C. Bloys van Treslong Prins, *Die Deutschen in Niederländisch-Indien: Vortrag, gehalten in der Ortsgruppe Batavia am 30. Sept. 1935* [The Germans in the Dutch Indies: Address to the German Association of Batavia] (Tokyo: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, 1937).

32 Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*, vol. 1, pp. 108–10.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

34 On the first names of the Mestizos, see Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*, vol. 1, pp. 91–97.

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 438–9.

Kisar gave Rodenwaldt an account of Mestizo tales of their ancestors, which was 'superior to any other descriptions in providing direct insight into the daily life of Mestizo families'.³⁶ The legends showed the ability of ancestor spirits to cure disease, defy evil, and resist enslavement by hostile tribes. Even so, it was evident to the German that the more European blood an individual could boast, the greater was his propensity to acquire civilised manners and attributes.³⁷ Rodenwaldt praised such accomplishments among the Mestizos, though he wondered whether they merely were disguising a deeper, and now ineradicable, indigenous reality.

Rodenwaldt urged restraint in the interpretation of his findings. Although he believed that the Mestizos of Kisar were not physically degenerate, he failed to convince himself that they were thriving culturally. The community was not an ideal test case. They derived, he lamented, from natives whose culture had disintegrated on contact with whites and, on the other hand, men who represented 'the most pathetic waste from Europe's table'.³⁸ This was an important limitation of his largely physical study, especially as 'almost everything about the alleged adverse effects of race mixing found in the literature refers to the mental domain [*das Seelenleben*]'.³⁹ Thus the verdict was still uncertain. Rodenwaldt hoped that further research in mixed-race communities elsewhere would clarify the matter. The hygienist observed ruefully that while European males were usually eager to have sex with other races, 'how harsh, one-sided and intolerant [were their] judgments of hybrids [*Bastard*] as individuals or as a population'.⁴⁰ There was too much emotional race pride involved in these evaluations and not enough science. He deplored especially the 'devoted and gullible enthusiasts' who trumpeted their Nordic superiority.⁴¹ All the same, he queried 'whether it is possible to extract oneself completely from such sentiments, which reveal the remnants of a fundamental instinct [*Urinstinkt*] that an inner voice compels us to acknowledge'.⁴² At the time, Rodenwaldt managed to overcome instinct and imply there was nothing particularly degenerate about the Mestizos of Kisar. They appeared to be a model community in the archipelago.

Rodenwaldt sought to enunciate the language of science and reason in the hectic debate over the social position of Indo-Europeans, a colonial cacophony that seemed to him dominated by unruly political tempers. In particular he hoped to convince leading Indo-Europeans that biology was on their side — but few showed much interest. The principal exception was J.C. van Schouwenburg, a retired forest manager and former editor of the Indo-European Association's weekly magazine, *Onze Stem* (Our Voice), who found, for a while, Rodenwaldt's research captivating. In 1927, van Schouwenburg, Rodenwaldt, and Bloys van Treslong Prins established the Eugenics Association of the Dutch Indies.⁴³ A year later, the association started

36 *Ibid.*, p. 427. A translation of these tribal legends is given on pp. 450–64.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 415.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 426.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 422.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 415.

41 *Ibid.*, p. viii.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 415.

43 Van Schouwenburg announced the founding of the Eugenics Association of the Dutch Indies in an article in a widely read magazine of public opinion: J.C. van Schouwenburg, 'Hollands taak in Indië: Beschouwd van een eugenetisch standpunt' [Holland's task in the Indies: Viewed from a eugenic

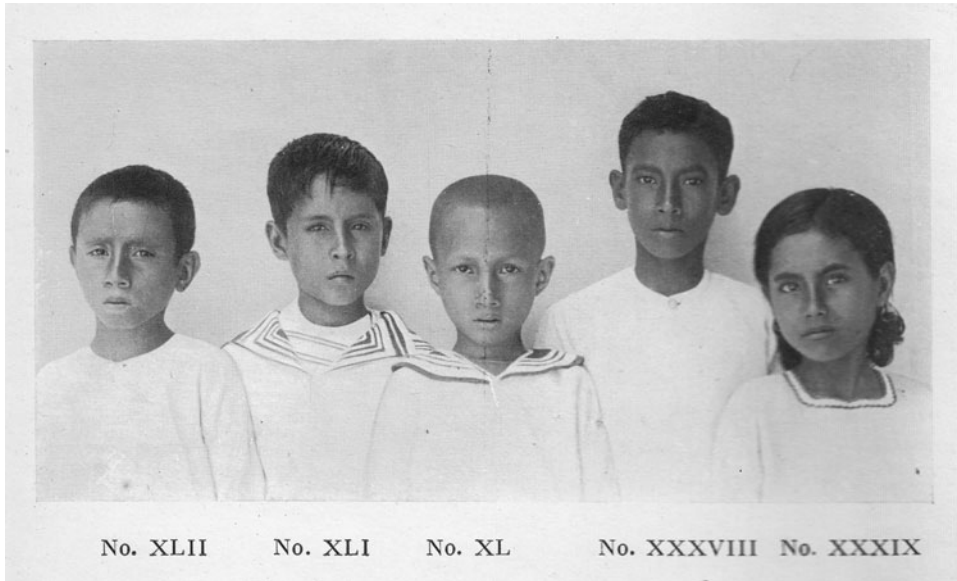


Figure 3. Lerrick children, two with red hair, from Ernst Rodenwaldt, *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*, vol. 2 (Batavia: Kolff, 1927), table 16, image 2.

publishing *Ons Nageslacht* (Our Progeny), a journal largely devoted to Rodenwaldt's studies of human hybridity.⁴⁴ In the opening article, van Schouwenburg praised Rodenwaldt's unbiased and scientific attitude toward racial difference and race mixing, noting that he previously had become used to contrary notions 'from our German brothers, who are partly caught up in ideas of Nordic races and the *Herrenrasse*!'⁴⁵ Publicly, Rodenwaldt went about declaring that Indo-Europeans were especially well adjusted to the tropical climate and did not suffer from constitutional weakness

perspective], *Koloniale Studiën* 11 (1927): 45–56. See Hans Pols, 'Eugenics in the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies', in *The Oxford handbook of the history of eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (London: Routledge, 2010), 347–62.

44 In the first issue, the work of Rodenwaldt was highlighted extensively. See [J.C. van Schouwenburg], 'Ter inleiding van *Ons Nageslacht* bij zijn lezers [Introducing *Our Progeny* to its readers]', *Ons Nageslacht* 1 (1928): 1–6; and J.C. van Schouwenburg, 'Eugenetische beschouwingen van Prof. Dr. Rodenwaldt [Eugenic considerations of Prof. Dr. Rodenwaldt]', *Ons Nageslacht*, 1 (1928): 6–11. See also Ernst Rodenwaldt, 'Eugenetische problemen in Nederlandsch Indië [Eugenic problems in the Dutch Indies]', *Ons Nageslacht*, 2 (1929): 1–8. For another review of Rodenwaldt's inquiries see H.J.T. Bijlmer, 'Natuurlijk kruisingsexperiment op Kisar? Beschouwingen naar aanleiding van Prof. Dr. E. Rodenwaldt's werk *Die Mestizen auf Kisar* [A natural experiment in race mixing? Reflections on the book by Prof. Dr. E. Rodenwaldt *Die Mestizen auf Kisar*]', *Tijdschrift van het Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* 45 (1928): 888–91.

45 Van Schouwenburg, 'Eugenetische beschouwingen Rodenwaldt', p. 10. The Indo-European novelist and journalist Hans van de Wall also later commended Rodenwaldt for 'a complete appreciation, almost without reservations' of Indo-Europeans ('Over het ras der Indos [About the race of Indo-Europeans]', *Onze Stem* 12, 16 Jan. 1931, p. 59). Van de Wall's best-known novel was published under the pseudonym Victor Ido, *De paupers: Roman uit de Indo-Europeesche samenleving* [The paupers: A novel of Indo-European society] (Amersfoort: Valkhof, 1912).

— and further biological research could elucidate these advantages.⁴⁶ Rodenwaldt became eager to investigate the effects of acclimatisation and race mixing on the sexual life of women in the Dutch East Indies. But when the Eugenics Association sent out questionnaires containing detailed questions about sexual issues, an outcry resulted.⁴⁷ After Rodenwaldt was invited to participate in the analysis of the 1930 census, he concluded that the collected information was useless for the purposes of biological research. Confronted with ample inadequate data and the refusal of most Indo-Europeans to listen to his views, Rodenwaldt was becoming increasingly disillusioned and frustrated.

In 1930, in an elaborate and somewhat convoluted article in one of the leading eugenic periodicals, the German *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, Rodenwaldt repeated his conclusions: ‘Thus far, no solid observations have supported the assumption of a constitutional weakness in mixed-race individuals [*Mischlinge*].’⁴⁸ But then he qualified this statement, arguing that the unreliability of family histories and deficiency of records in the Dutch East Indies meant that any scientific research on these matters — even the work he had conducted on Kisar — would be dubious at best. In general, the anthropologist must contend with ‘an inextricable network of crossings of very old and very young bloodlines, with countless back-crossings in both directions’.⁴⁹ Everywhere Rodenwaldt looked he now saw racial chaos. To be sure, many Indo-Europeans could perform the mental labour of Europeans and achieve high positions in colonial administration and the armed forces. But the racial hygienist had become more convinced that there was something seriously amiss in the psychological and behavioural equipment of most of them. Indo-Europeans lived athwart two cultures, conflicted between two different social affiliations. Although some managed to become successful businessmen and leading civil servants who spoke impeccable Dutch, displayed European manners and lifestyle, and appeared almost white, most hybrids embarrassingly revealed their mixed cultural ancestry in appearance, language, and mode of life.⁵⁰ In Rodenwaldt’s opinion, all lower-class Indo-Europeans were mere mimics, copying trivial elements from European culture without fully understanding them: ‘the rootlessness of this hybrid world

46 Ernst Rodenwaldt, ‘Eugenetische problemen in Ned. Indië [Eugenic problems in the Dutch Indies]’, in *Handelingen van het Vijfde Nederlandsch-Indisch Natuurwetenschappelijk Congress, Soerabaja* (Batavia: Kolff, 1928), pp. 316–26.

47 Ernst R.K. Rodenwaldt, ‘Voorloopige mededeelingen omtrent de resultaten der enquête Boerma-Rodenwaldt [Preliminary report of the results of the Boerma-Rodenwaldt Questionnaire Study]’, in *Handelingen van het zesde Nederlandsch-Indisch Natuurwetenschappelijk congress, Bandoeng* (Bandoeng: Nix, 1931), pp. 231–6; ‘Invloed van de tropen op het geslachtsleven van de vrouw: Voorloopige mededeelingen omtrent de resultaten der enquête Boerma-Rodenwaldt [The influence of the tropics on the sexual life of women: Preliminary comments on the results of the Boerma-Rodenwaldt Questionnaire Study]’, *Ons Nageslacht* 4 (1931): 146–64; and ‘Das Geschlechtsleben der Europäischen Frau in der Tropen [The sex life of European women in the tropics]’, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* 26 (1932): 173–94.

48 Ernst Rodenwaldt, ‘Die Indoeuropäer Niederländisch Ostindiens [The Indo-Europeans in the Dutch East Indies]’, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie; einschliesslich Rassen- und Gesellschafts-Hygiene* 24 (1930): 117. Reprinted as ‘Die Indoeuropäer Niederländisch Ostindiens’, *Ons Nageslacht* 3 (1930): 144–60; and ‘De Indo-Europeaan in Ned. Oost-Indië [The Indo-Europeans in the Dutch East Indies]’, *Onze Stem: Orgaan van het Indo-Europeesch Verbond* 12 (10 Apr. 1931): 388–91, 411–12, 437–8, 477–9, 494–6.

49 Rodenwaldt, ‘Die Indoeuropäer in Niederländisch Ostindiens’, p. 113.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[*Mischlingswelt*] thus expresses itself in a tragic way'.⁵¹ He still believed that European prejudice and discrimination, not intrinsic biology, explained the deplorable position of these misfits: 'their birth in a condition of dreadful ambivalence, in a life-deficit, for which only Europe is responsible'.⁵² But his sympathies increasingly lay with the 'healthy' European race instinct that underpinned such distaste.

From mixed futures to Nazi visions

In the early 1930s, Rodenwaldt felt his career was languishing in the tropics. He longed to be reinvigorated through life back in Germany. More and more, as he sweated in Batavia's German Club, colonial hybrids and wandering Jews came to irritate him. Meanwhile, he followed keenly the rising salience of racial thought in German politics, a discourse to which he had much to contribute. In 1932, Rodenwaldt joined the overseas division of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), the Nazi Party, but he quit the following year, after the Reichstag fire, for reasons unknown.⁵³ Rodenwaldt eventually was recalled to Germany in 1934 to take up the chair of public health at the University of Kiel; and within two years he was appointed professor of hygiene in the notoriously pro-Nazi medical school at the University of Heidelberg, where he taught a compulsory course on race hygiene.⁵⁴ The physical anthropologist's thinking on racial difference had hardened during the early 1930s. Although maintaining that race mixing did not inherently lead to physiological and constitutional degeneration, and believing that some mixed individuals could show considerable intelligence and social attainments, Rodenwaldt emphasised the destructive cultural ambivalence of racial hybrids. True German culture could never take root in such conflicted people. Their inability to assimilate into European civilisation and their disaffection and resentment turned them into socially disruptive elements. In the late 1930s, he expatiated on mixed-race defects in several public health manuals and in speculations on how to manage the future German empire.⁵⁵ For Rodenwaldt, miscegenation had come to figure as a major threat to the expansion of Aryan civilisation.

51 Ibid., p. 118.

52 Ibid., p. 120.

53 Eckhardt, 'Generalarzt Ernst Rodenwaldt', p. 212. Rodenwaldt later implied he was worried about causing dissension in the small German community in Batavia.

54 Steven P. Remy, *The Heidelberg myth: The nazification and denazification of a German university* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002). See also Wolfgang U. Eckart, *Medizin und Kolonialimperialismus: Deutschland 1884–1945* [Medicine and colonial imperialism: Germany, 1884–1945] (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997).

55 Heinz Zeiss and Ernst Rodenwaldt, *Einführung in die Hygiene und Seuchenlehre* [Introduction to the study of hygiene and epidemics] (Stuttgart: Enke, 1936). The fifth edition, published in 1943, contained a chapter on National Socialist racial hygiene. Rodenwaldt became a mentor for Zeiss, a proponent of geo-medicine and another leading Nazi race theorist, when they both served as medical advisors to the Ottoman Empire during the First World War: see Susan Gross Solomon, ed., *Doing medicine together: Germany and Russia between the wars* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); and Yücel Yanıkdag, *Healing the nation: Prisoners of war, medicine and nationalism in Turkey, 1914–1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), ch. 6. Both Zeiss and Rodenwaldt followed a similar intellectual trajectory and career path, with their racial views hardening after they returned to Germany in the 1930s. Rodenwaldt also published his views in his manual on tropical hygiene: *Tropenhygiene* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1937). See also Rodenwaldt, 'Allgemeine Rassenbiologie des

Rodenwaldt chose now to extol what he claimed was the instinctual German revulsion against miscegenation. ‘Our *emotional reaction* [Gefühl],’ he wrote, ‘speaks so clearly and imposes itself on us time and again, often against our wishes, when we have to live and work with racial hybrids [*der Mischling*].’⁵⁶ How could one possibly resist this essential discriminating force? Such European fastidiousness, which was natural if unfair, inevitably caused sullenness and enmity among half-castes, giving rise to their ‘lack of mental balance and an aimless search for compensation.’⁵⁷ The mixed race male had become especially scary: ‘He never sleeps, he penetrates into all human relationships by disturbing them and undermines confidence, even within his own family, when his partner is a pure-blood.’⁵⁸ Moreover, these mixed-race individuals often internalised the prejudices the racially pure held against them, leading them to espouse conservative, even reactionary, views. ‘Always and everywhere the crisis-ridden life of the hybrid group has urged, and is urging, an end to their state of mental uncertainty and weakness.’⁵⁹ But the most serious problem, in Rodenwaldt’s expert opinion, was the conflict of cultural forms and assumptions within each mixed-race person. He asserted that ‘the new combinations of personality characteristics are of profound importance’ in assessing the stability of hybrids — further research on their mental turmoil and disharmony, seemingly insurmountable, might provide the ‘essential key to the solution of the hybridization problem [*Mischlingsproblem*].’⁶⁰ But he was pessimistic: the social disruption of race mixing seemed incompatible with empire. ‘Colonies are ruled [*Herrschländer*]. Legitimate is what is white; illegitimate that what belongs to the blood of the dominated people.’ The Dutch foolishly had tried to resolve this durable biological and social problem through shifting legal classifications. But, Rodenwaldt now argued, ‘legal equivalence [*Gleichstellung*] does not change anything about that’.⁶¹

‘Miscegenation is a risk for every human community,’ Rodenwaldt concluded, ‘from the family to the nation state Since no one can estimate its consequences, the mixing of races is irresponsible.’⁶² How far he had come, in a few years, from his praise of the Mestizos of Kisar. How appealing his new views would prove to Nazi patrons. In particular, they appreciated his implicit warning against the intermarriage of Jews and Aryans. But Rodenwaldt’s chief concern through the early 1940s was to position himself as the major biological arbiter of future German colonial policy. He insisted that only married German couples should command the revitalised German empire. If hybrid babies inadvertently were born, then they must be classed as natives, not as mixed-race or European — otherwise one would dwell in racial chaos, as in the degenerate Dutch East Indies. Thus Rodenwaldt confidently

Menschen’ [General racial biology of human beings], in *Handbuch der Erbbiologie des Menschen*, ed. Guenther Just (Berlin: Springer, 1940), pp. 645–78.

56 Ernst Rodenwaldt, ‘Vom Seelenkonflikt des Mischlings [The mental conflicts of mixed-race individuals],’ *Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie* 34 (1934): 367 (original emphasis). This was part of a Festschrift for Eugen Fischer.

57 Rodenwaldt, ‘Seelenkonflikt des Mischlings’, p. 371.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 371.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 372.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 367.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 372.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 374.

heralded a third wave of German colonialism, to be guided by critical biological thinking on race mixing.⁶³

Rodenwaldt flourished at Heidelberg under the Nazis. His tropical experience had given him valuable knowledge of malaria control, which he used, as a surgeon-general of the army, in drawing up plans to flood the Pontine Marshes in northern Italy toward the end of the war. Naturally, this caused the proliferation of the mosquitoes that spread the disease, resulting in tens of thousands of additional deaths. ‘The plan devised by [Erich] Martini and Rodenwaldt,’ Frank M. Snowden observes, ‘was consistent with the punitive tenor of the Wehrmacht occupation strategy.’⁶⁴ In subsequent war trials, Rodenwaldt successfully adduced his colonial sympathy with mixed-race people to assist in his exoneration: he implied that his earlier studies of the Mestizos of Kisar demonstrated a fundamental racial recusancy, the refusal of Nazi doctrine. Like so many others, he insinuated that he had become an opportunistic and insincere Nazi propagandist during the 1930s.⁶⁵ On his release from the internment camp at Windermere, England, and while he remained under investigation, the United States government commissioned him to report on the condition of hygiene, epidemiology, and preventive medicine in postwar Germany.⁶⁶ After his acquittal in 1948 on charges of complicity with the Nazi regime, Rodenwaldt was restored to an academic position at Heidelberg, where he continued to conduct research in geomedicine and disease ecology — and to advise on development programmes. In retirement he took up medical history and wrote a memoir, in which he presented himself as a raffish adventurer.⁶⁷

63 Ernst Rodenwaldt, ‘Die Rückwirkung der Rassenmischung in den Kolonialländern auf Europa [The effect of race mixing in the colonies on Europe]’, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* 32 (1938): 385–96. In 1939, Rodenwaldt made sure to thank ‘the genial man who leads us’ for making racial hygiene the basis for ‘the entire structure of the Volk, the state, and the culture’; see Ernst Rodenwaldt, ‘Rassenhygiene und Kolonialpolitik: Nationalsozialistische Rassenerkenntnis als Grundlage für die Kolonialbetätigung des neuen Europas [Racial hygiene and colonial politics: National Socialist racial science as the foundation for colonial activity in the new Europe]’, *Deutscher Kolonialdienst* 4 (1939): 182. See also Ernst Rodenwaldt, ‘Die Anpassung des Menschen an seiner Rassen fremdes Klima [The adjustment of human beings to a climate that is alien to their race]’, *Klinische Wochenschrift* 17 (1935): 1569–73; ‘Wie bewahrt der Deutsche die Reinheit seines Blutes in Ländern mit farbiger Bevölkerung [How Germans maintain the purity of their blood in countries with a coloured population]’, *Der Ausländerdeutsche* 19 (1936): 623–38; and ‘Rassenbiologische Probleme in Kolonialländern [Problems in racial biology in the colonies]’, *Verhandlungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Rassenforschung* 10 (1940): 1–17.

64 Snowden, *Conquest of malaria*, p. 191. Snowden claims this is the only example of biological warfare in Europe in the twentieth century. Martini, also trained in tropical medicine at Hamburg, was an entomologist and member of the NSDAP from 1933. From 1936 he directed the research department at the German Hygiene Museum, Dresden, and during the war he led the Colonial Medical Institute in Berlin. Afterwards he received numerous honours for his entomological research.

65 According to Remy (*The Heidelberg myth*, p. 73): ‘The argument employed after the war by scientists and historians alike that men like Rodenwaldt advocated sterilisation or sprinkled their writings with facile references to “race” in order to save their careers or “camouflage” their true anti-Nazi sentiments distorts the historical record.’

66 Ernst Rodenwaldt, *Field information agency technical (FIAT) review of German science, hygiene* (Office of the Military Government for Germany, 1948). Racial hygiene was not mentioned.

67 Rodenwaldt, *Tropenarzt erzählt sein Leben*. See also Eckhardt, ‘Generalarzt Ernst Rodenwaldt’, and Kiminus, ‘Ernst Rodenwaldt: Leben und Werk’. Rodenwaldt’s restitution contrasts with the death in Soviet custody in 1948 of his friend and geomedicine collaborator Heinz Zeiss. See Paul Weindling,

Conclusion

Convinced that racial biology should determine the course of nation and empire, Rodenwaldt was typical of the generation of scientists who came to maturity and prominence after the First World War. His career followed what many regard as the typical German intellectual trajectory from eugenics to racial hygiene, and from physical anthropology to *Rassenkunde*.⁶⁸ In the 1930s, his research conformed to the new 'German spirit' in scholarship, centred on *völkisch* nationalism, anti-Semitism, and biological racism.⁶⁹ He had come to believe that racial identity explained one's view of the world. In this he was not alone. The career of Eugen Fischer, Rodenwaldt's role model, traced a similar, if more distinguished, path. Fischer's dedication to racial reductionism grew stronger after the First World War, and his qualified appreciation of race mixing, which had emerged in a colonial setting, soured into contempt back in Germany during the 1920s. Even so, Fischer's relationship with the more fervent Nazi ideologues often was uneasy — and perhaps more troubled than Rodenwaldt's fellow travelling. Until the early 1930s, as director of the Berlin Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics, Fischer frequently expressed reservations concerning National Socialism. Yet, when he was elected rector of Berlin University in 1933, he took care to praise the new government's biological orientation toward social problems. After 1939, he warned of the Jewish threat to Aryan supremacy, and finally joined the NSDAP.⁷⁰ Many other German biologists and physicians charted the same course during this period. They came to see their destiny in racially cleansing the German body politic.

It is tempting at this distance to keep separate the colonial and nationalist personae of Rodenwaldt, but to do so would disguise the continuities in his beliefs and practices across these domains.⁷¹ To be sure, the anthropologist sympathetic to the Mestizos hardens into the distant and prideful votary of German racial purity, the pietist of blood and soil. But an obsession with framing social problems in terms of racial biology, whether soft or hard, persists. Indeed, one might argue that both Fischer and Rodenwaldt tried out their biological determinism in colonial laboratories

'Heinrich Zeiss, hygiene and Holocaust', in *Doctors, politics and society: Historical essays*, ed. Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 174–87.

68 Paul Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Robert Proctor, 'From *Anthropologie* to *Rassenkunde* in the German anthropological tradition', in *Bones, bodies, behavior: Essays on biological anthropology*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), pp. 138–79; Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and antihumanism in imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, ed., *Worldly provincialism: German anthropology in an age of empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at war: World War I and the science of race in Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); and Veronika Lipphardt, 'Isolates and crosses in human population genetics: Or, a contextualization of German race science', *Current Anthropology* 53, S5 (2012): S69–S82.

69 Remy, *The Heidelberg myth*.

70 Paul Weindling, 'Weimar eugenics: The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics in social context', *Annals of Science* 42, 3 (1983): 303–18.

71 See also Annegret Ehmann, 'From colonial racism to Nazi population policy: The role of the so-called Mischlinge', in *The Holocaust and history: The known, the unknown, the disputed, and the reexamined*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham Peck (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 115–33. Ehmann focuses on the formal German empire between 1884 and 1914, and on Fischer's later career.

before applying it more rigorously — and vaingloriously — in Europe. From the colonies they brought back with them the same concerns with heredity, purity, hybridity, family, civility, degeneration, regulation of sex — only now the biological conceptual apparatus became a vehicle for exclusionary rather than inclusionary population policies, for distancing or extermination rather than incorporation. Rodenwaldt's career as a cosmopolitan racial expert thus connected colonial and national projects. It shows us how worldly race science — and even the people of Kisar — could be made to matter in very different polities, to very different ends.⁷²

For at least a decade, the Mestizos of Kisar, having been effaced for more than a century, became a touchstone in worldwide discussions about racial contact and miscegenation.⁷³ How frustrating it must have been for Rodenwaldt, in his National Socialist phase, to be known primarily for his relatively positive evaluation of race mixing in what then seemed a far-off archipelago. At Harvard, physical anthropologist Earnest Hooton taught the students in his race-mixing course about the Mestizos of Kisar. His graduate students working on the topic — including Harry L. Shapiro, Carleton S. Coon, and Joseph B. Birdsell — took copious notes on Rodenwaldt's two volumes. They regarded the Kisar work as a model study of the biology of miscegenation. In the derogatory *Race crossing in Jamaica* (1929), geneticist Charles B. Davenport and anthropologist Morris Steggerda attempted to counter Rodenwaldt's favourable conclusions.⁷⁴ The Anglo-Indian writer Cedric Dover focused on Kisar in his 1937 world survey of mixed-race communities. According to the German anthropologist, Dover wrote, the Mestizos 'appear to be physically and mentally able, and have even contributed prominent officials to Dutch administration in the East Indies'.⁷⁵ The botanist and eugenicist Reginald Ruggles Gates, a vehement opponent of miscegenation, was sceptical. Gates took pains to reinterpret Rodenwaldt's figures, which he thought unreliable, in order to assert that 'no phenomena of hybrid vigour were observed'.⁷⁶ Until the Second World War, most of those wanting to talk scientifically about race mixing felt compelled to address the case of the Mestizos of Kisar.⁷⁷ After the war, when miscegenation no

72 Warwick Anderson, 'Racial conceptions in the Global South', *Isis* 105 (2014): 782–92. Additionally, the career of Heinz Zeiss repeats this trajectory: see Solomon, *Doing medicine together*.

73 Historians of human biology, however, are unaware of the study: see William B. Provine, 'Geneticists and the biology of race crossing', *Science* 182 (1973): 790–96; and Paul Farber, *Mixing races: From scientific racism to modern evolutionary ideas* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

74 Charles B. Davenport and Morris Steggerda, *Race crossing in Jamaica* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1929). They address Rodenwaldt's study as 'perhaps the most extensive [work] on a hybrid population yet published' (p. 458). The leading American eugenicist, Davenport was director of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. See Charles E. Rosenberg, 'Charles Benedict Davenport and the irony of American eugenics', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 15 (1983): 18–23.

75 Cedric Dover, *Half-caste* (London: Martin, Secker & Warburg, 1937), p. 184.

76 R. Ruggles Gates, *Heredity in man* (London: Constable & Co., 1929), p. 353. Professor of botany at King's College, London, Gates later became an admirer of Nazi race doctrines.

77 Perversely and obsessively, Australian experts in tropical hygiene continued to see Kisar as an experiment in the acclimatisation of the white race in the tropics: see R.W. Cilento, *The white man in the tropics, with special reference to Australia and its dependencies* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1925); and A. Grenfell Price, *White settlers in the tropics* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1939). Geographer R.W. Gregory noted that Kisar 'unquestionably affords a remarkable instance of the long survival of Europeans in the tropics, on a small island only 500 miles from the equator, in spite of specially unfavourable conditions'. R.W. Gregory, *The menace of colour* (London: Seeley Service & Co., 1925), p. 213.

longer seemed a valid biological issue, Kisar simply fell off the anthropological map, forgotten again.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, the Mestizos of Kisar continued to disperse, leaving only a few remnant communities on the island. Many settled in Koepang where they could get an education and find jobs. Following Indonesian independence some fled to the Netherlands, especially in the 1950s after the suppression of the short-lived Republic of South Maluku in the eastern archipelago. Whether they remained behind or moved abroad, the Kisarese Mestizos increasingly tended to marry out of the original family groups. They were disappearing as a distinct enclave. During the past twenty years, however, many descendants scattered across the globe have come to embrace the old 'Indies culture', rediscovering food, folklore, and customs from the past.

In 2016, we talked with Edwin Lerrick at his Lavalon hostel and bar, perched on the coast in Kupang, in what used to be Kampong Kisar. Tall and thin, his skin light, Lerrick was lamenting the dispersal and fragmentation of his family. Once they called themselves Mestizo, but now mostly they said 'Indo'. While his parents' generation still spoke some Dutch, they usually preferred Bahasa Kisar. Proud of their family history, they had kept the two volumes of Rodenwaldt's book for reference, until an aunt borrowed them. They appreciated especially the photographs of ancestors and relatives. Traditions might fray, but Edwin Lerrick could point out, with satisfaction, that mixed-race Kisarese often rose to prominence in the region — indeed, his cousin Chris Lerrick had been mayor of Kupang.⁷⁹ A special sense of mixed heritage persisted. We learned that Rano Lerrick set up a website in the Netherlands dedicated to stories and genealogies of Mestizo ancestors, sometimes relying on his grandparents' memories, at other times drawing on Rodenwaldt's meticulous studies.⁸⁰ Journalist Ed Caffin referred to his mixed Kisarese background when he founded a website for third-generation Indos in the Netherlands.⁸¹ As Nonja Peters and Geert Soeller observe, 'Ernst Rodenwaldt's books became a narrative artefact for the Mestiços with which they proudly prove their European origin.'⁸² When they spoke a few years ago with Thomas Belder on Kisar, he assured them: 'The books of Ernst Rodenwaldt are our identity.'⁸³ Recently, Rano Lerrick became a father. 'Yes,' he told us wryly, 'the little one is blonde with blue eyes — Rodenwaldt would smile.'⁸⁴

78 From the late-1930s, race mixing was redefined as a sociological issue, a problem of race relations and prejudice. See Warwick Anderson, 'Racial anthropology and human biology in the island laboratories of the United States', *Current Anthropology* 53, S5 (2012): S95–S107.

79 Edwin Lerrick in conversation with Warwick Anderson, 23 Jan. 2016, Kupang, Indonesia.

80 <http://home.wanadoo.nl/lerrick/history/Dutch.html> (last accessed 7 Dec. 2006).

81 <http://www.indisch3.nl> (last accessed 7 Dec. 2006).

82 Nonja Peters and Geert Snoeller, *Vêrlander: Forgotten children of the VOC/Dutch East India Company* (Amsterdam: Vêrlander, 2016), p. 64.

83 Thomas Belder, quoted in Peters and Snoeller, *Vêrlander*, p. 62.

84 Rano Lerrick to Hans Pols, Facebook messenger, 11 Aug. 2017.