

Introduction

Imagined laboratories: Colonial and national racialisations in Island Southeast Asia

Warwick Anderson and Ricardo Roque

The nature of human difference in Southeast Asia continues to excite scientific research and speculation, as it has for centuries. Only now scientists are more likely to describe humanity in the region in terms of population genetics than rigid racial typologies. They base their analyses on variations in nucleic acid arrays rather than skin colour, hair texture, morphology, blood groups, and languages. Their themes tend to diversity and shared connections, not the older absolutist styles of taxonomy, category, or breed. Their studies often are oriented toward the deep past, especially the prehistory of human origins and migrations, or toward contemporary biomedical opportunities, shifting away from research that might consolidate racial regimes useful in population management and state orders. Even so, nationalist talk of the ‘Filipino genome’ and the ‘Indonesian genome’ persists: recently a scientist has proposed, for example, that his ‘genetic data resource will protect and empower the Filipino people’.¹ Generally, though, contemporary genetic research into human difference in Southeast Asia follows a dispersive logic, a complex patterning that no nation-state or region can contain, an intricate diffusion respecting no boundaries, not even Wallace’s biogeographical line. It has become a project consistent with global imperatives. Thus the ‘detailed palimpsest of Indonesian genetic diversity’, according to recent investigators, ‘is a direct outcome of the region’s complex history of immigration, transitory migrants, and populations that have endured *in situ* since the region’s first settlement’.² Scientists continue to tell us who we really are, or were, or even might be — but in new modes and with odd inflections. In this special issue of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (*JSEAS*), we bring together articles that outline a critical history — an elucidative archaeology — of a century and more of such research into human difference in Island Southeast Asia, revealing

This special issue brings together papers originally presented at the panel ‘Colonial and National Racializations in Southeast Asia’ as part of the 7th EuroSEAS meeting in Lisbon, in July 2013. We are grateful to James Dunk for extensive research assistance. The Australian Research Council provided research support (FL110100243).

1 Frederick C. Delfin, ‘The population history of the Philippines: A genetic overview’, *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 63, 4 (2015): 471.

2 Meryanne K. Tumonggor, Tatiana M. Karafet, Brian Hallmark, J. Stephen Lansing, Herawati Sudoyo, Michael F. Hammer and Murray P. Cox, ‘The Indonesian Archipelago: An ancient genetic highway linking Asia and the Pacific’, *Journal of Human Genetics* 58, 3 (2013): 165.

the entanglement of scientific investigations with colonialism, nationalism, regionalism, and their contraries.

Scholarly awareness of the significance of these entanglements has been little more than embryonic in Southeast Asian Studies in the last two decades. ‘An important aspect of the power imbalance [between colonisers and the colonised],’ historian Carl Trocki stated in the *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* of 1999, ‘was that Europeans imposed their own perceptions of race and ethnicity upon Southeast Asian society.’³ And yet it is remarkable how little attention this issue has received. Surprisingly, most historians of Southeast Asia have been loath to consider critically theories and practices of racialisation in the region.⁴ Often, race appears as a ‘given’ in our histories, a natural composite or group formation that required management and insight (as in the expression ‘race relations’). How racial imagery came to coalesce around certain figures, how they were made to do colonial and national work in the region, generally has escaped historical scrutiny. While their pattern can appear vividly real, if frequently contested, the fabric of these racial imaginaries, clumsily knitted together from threads of biology, prejudice, and mundane politics, has been spared extensive critical analysis — at least until the last decade or so. Now we are beginning, it seems, to appreciate that imagined races have contributed as much to the invention of modern Southeast Asia as those fabled imagined communities.⁵ It is timely, then, to bring together here five articles that further illuminate the racialised dimensions of colony and nation in the region.

Despite a few notable exceptions, historians of Southeast Asia have come relatively late to critical studies of ‘race’. During the past three decades, there has been increasing interest elsewhere in how the production and circulation of racial science might frame — perhaps sometimes construct or even deconstruct — colonial and national regimes. Several endeavours in imperial history, postcolonial studies, cultural anthropology, and the history of science and medicine have indicated that racial frames were fashioned in connection with modes of colonial governmentality, the establishment of nation-states, and the formation of modern social and cultural identities and hierarchies. Concepts and taxonomies of human difference, alloyed with varied forms of ‘racism’ — sometimes blending class, gender, indigenous constructs, labour relations, and other sociocultural assumptions — have helped to constitute and rationalise nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western colonial regimes. This ‘racialized politics of classification’, in Ann L. Stoler’s words, also pervaded the mechanics

3 Carl A. Trocki, ‘Political structures in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’, in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, ed. Nicholas Tarling, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 107.

4 The relevance of ‘race’ as ‘ethnic’ marker in the post-colonial history of Indonesia is treated dismissively in the entry for ‘Race’ in Robert Cribb and Audrey Kahin, *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2004), pp. 362–4.

5 See, for example, Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Rethinking colonial categories’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, 1 (1989): 134–61; ‘Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures’, *American Ethnologist* 16, 4 (1989): 634–60; and ‘Sexual affronts and racial frontiers: European identities and the cultural politics of exclusion in colonial Southeast Asia’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, 3 (1992): 514–51. See also Warwick Anderson, *Colonial pathologies: Race, hygiene, and American tropical medicine in the Philippines* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

and machinations of colonial rule in Southeast Asia.⁶ Race categories were central to colonial interaction: they formed a ‘dynamic, contextual, contested, and contingent field of power’ that, as Paul A. Kramer observes, both presumed and enabled, and was produced and reconfigured by, the dynamics of empire in the Philippines.⁷

Racialisation additionally has marked the rise of Southeast Asian anticolonial movements and modern nationalisms and ethnic identities.⁸ Indeed, colonial and anticolonial visions of nation, race, and government often displayed more affinities than any party was prepared to recognise.⁹ The categories of ‘Malay’ and ‘Malayness’ offer an example: they were the object of intense racialisation in colonial discourse during the nineteenth century, and later reappeared in nationalist discourses to create a core sense of ethnic community. Historians have studied how these categories’ meanings were shaped, and how they influenced the formation of modern selves and the imagination of national communities in Southeast Asia.¹⁰ Similarly, the lowland/upland divide and the politics of representation of mountain peoples have become important themes in the past decade or so.¹¹ The complex links between these aspects of colonialism, nation- and state-building, and the epistemologies of biology and race are now beginning to be acknowledged.¹² Studies of

6 Ann L. Stoler, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: Race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 8. See also Jean Gelman Taylor, *The social world of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); and Frances Gouda, *Dutch culture overseas: Colonial practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995).

7 Paul A. Kramer, *The blood of government: Race, empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), pp. 2–3. See also Warwick Anderson, ‘Racial conceptions in the global south’, *Isis* 105 (2014): 782–92.

8 ‘The underlying racial basis of anti-colonial movements’, Paul Kratoska and Ben Batson summarise, ‘produced a heightened awareness of ethnic identities’. ‘Nationalism and modernist reform’, in Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. 2, p. 313.

9 See Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The cultivation of a nation, 1860–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007).

10 Anthony Milner, *The invention of politics in colonial Malaya: Contesting nationalism and the expansion of the public sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Adrian Vickers, ‘“Malay identity”: Modernity, invented tradition, and forms of knowledge’, *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 31, 1 (1997): 173–211; Anthony Reid, ‘Understanding *Melayu* (Malay) as a source of diverse modern identities’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 295–313; Anthony Milner, ‘Afterword: A history of Malay ethnicity’, in *Contesting Malayness: Malay identity across boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 241–57; Robert E. Elson, ‘“Constructing the nation”: Ethnicity, race, modernity, and citizenship in early Indonesian thought’, *Asian Ethnicity* 6 (2005): 145–60; and Joel S. Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the modern Malay World* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2006).

11 Hjørleifur Jonsson, *Mien relations: Mountain people and state control in Thailand* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); James C. Scott, *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Ricardo Roque, ‘Mountains and black races: Anthropology’s heterotopias in colonial East Timor’, *Journal of Pacific History* 47, 3 (2012): 263–82; and the essays recently collected in Oliver Tappe, ed., ‘Frictions and fictions: Intercultural encounters and frontier imaginaries in upland Southeast Asia’, special issue, *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 16, 4 (2015).

12 For example, Anderson, *Colonial pathologies*; Kramer, *The blood of government*. Recent collections include Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard, eds., ‘Race, place and civilization: Colonial encounters and governance in Greater Oceania’, special issue, *Journal of Pacific History* 47, 3 (2012); and Christina Skott, ed., ‘Europe and the Malay world’, special issue, *Indonesia and the Malay World* 42, 123 (2014). See also Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard, eds., *Foreign bodies: Oceania and the science*

particular national and colonial histories of physical and racial anthropology in the region have also appeared recently.¹³ Yet the wider significance of twentieth-century racial science has yet to be explored and brought together within a broader comparative frame.

The current special issue of *JSEAS* aims at further investigating these connections, bridging case studies that explore histories of race, science, colonialism, and nationalism in Island, or Maritime, Southeast Asia. We consider this region as a privileged space in which to situate and compare racial sciences and their interactions with colonial and national histories. During the nineteenth- and twentieth-century, as we demonstrate here, Island Southeast Asia became a critical field site for racial analysis in the biological and human sciences. Indeed, the very distinction of this archipelago as a separate *region* in the world map is entangled in racial ethnology. At the same time, this distinctive assemblage of peoples and places endured a plurality of European colonial and imperial powers, including Portugal, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Britain, Spain, Japan, and the United States; it experienced a devastating world war, European decolonisation, Indonesian national and regional expansionism, and the rise of island claims for independence.

The articles here cover the late period of European colonisation, from the 1870s to the 1950s, while suggesting links and connections with subsequent national histories. They encompass a variety of Southeast Asian island settings — Luzon, Timor, Bali, Kisar — and of European imperial histories — Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, North American, and German. Florentino Rodao tracks the amplification of racial theories in the writings of Spanish settlers, the so-called *peninsulares*, in late nineteenth-century Philippines, then a Spanish colony on the eve of its nationalist revolution of 1896–98. These writers rejected miscegenation and celebrated their own social and biological superiority. Rodao reads this hardening of the settlers' racial theories in the context of a continuing struggle for social and political power in the colony, with the *peninsulares* in opposition to the creole and mestizo Filipino elites, the *insulares*. Focusing also on the Philippines' late-colonial period, then under American rule, Francis Gealogo analyses how the colonial state evaluated, categorised, and essentialised the racial otherness of the Filipino 'native', often through the census and prison surveys. Fenneke Sysling examines the history of the islands of Bali and Lombok as imagined laboratories for the study of 'primitive' human races, in the work of Dutch physical anthropologist J.P. Kleiweg de Zwaan in the 1930s. Sysling reveals the distinct forms of de Zwaan's racial ideas and practices locally, during fieldwork in Bali, and their mobilisation later in Europe. Ricardo Roque investigates the

of race, 1750–1880 (Canberra: ANU ePress, 2008). An earlier sociological analysis is Charles Hirschman, 'The making of race in colonial Malaya: Political economy and racial ideology', *Sociological Forum* 1, 2 (1986): 330–61.

¹³ Ricardo Roque, *Headhunting and colonialism: Anthropology and the circulation of human skulls in the Portuguese Empire, 1870–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010); Hilary Howes, *The race question in Oceania: A.B. Meyer and Otto Finsch between metropolitan theory and field experience, 1865–1914* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 2013); Sandra Khor Manickam, *Taming the wild: Aborigines and racial knowledge in colonial Malaya* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015); Christina Elizabeth Firpo, *The uprooted: Race, children, and imperialism in French Indochina, 1890–1980* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016); and Fenneke Sysling, *Racial science and human diversity in colonial Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016).

racialisation of East Timor and its relationship with the figuring out of colonial territories in the first half of the twentieth-century. Roque follows the work of Portuguese physical anthropologist António Mendes Correia to reveal the strong links between racial geography and colonial borders in the association of ‘Portuguese Timor’ with a particular ‘Malayan’ type. Finally, Hans Pols and Warwick Anderson examine the history and impact of research on race mixing and human hybridity conducted by the German anthropologist Ernst Rodenwaldt in the 1920s on the secluded island of Kisar, in what is now eastern Indonesia. Using the Mestizos of Kisar, a presumed lost white tribe, as a case study, Rodenwaldt made an influential argument on the benefits of race mixing, a view he subsequently recanted, conveniently, in favour of Nazi ideology. Intriguingly, his racial studies seem to have an afterlife among the contemporary Kisarese diaspora.

Modes of racialisation

This collection of articles explores how one might become racialised by others, or racialise oneself, in a variety of Southeast Asian settings — such processes included the production of pure or originary identities as well as mixed or hybrid identities. We understand racialisation as a means by which ‘race’ and its technical and conceptual paraphernalia get insinuated creatively into the imaginaries of identity, difference, inequality, and ancestry — and come to permeate the interstices between these seductive categories. Accordingly, racialisation constituted a crucial feature of colonial and national biopolitics in the last two centuries, whether in Southeast Asia or elsewhere. Race sciences were a key component of the process, but ‘scientific’ components never exhausted the content and meaning of racial ordering. Racialisation was a broader, eclectic set of activities, adapted and contested at multiple sites, a mundane ordering or disrupting of identities and social relationships. Thus race interweaved scientific, social, moral, and political ideas and practices; it articulated biological views of human relations that often intersected or meshed with — or contradicted — other ways of expressing difference, such as family, gender and class.

Notwithstanding their specific geographies and approaches, the articles here share this broad focus. Together, they make visible again the watermark of science in the dynamics of racialisation in Island Southeast Asia, during and after the colonial period. They demonstrate that racialisation took — and continues to take — mutable and multiple manifestations that often connect, perhaps more than differentiate, colonial and national periods. At an analytical level, we can distil from this plurality of manifestations at least three ‘modes of racialisation’ of others and of self in Southeast Asian histories.

The first mode was oriented toward determining Indigenous or autochthonous forms of identity, diversity and ancestry. Native-oriented racialisations encompass taxonomic and genealogical reports of affinities and differences between peoples perceived to be originary figures in the archipelago — while these framings usually express depreciative othering, they also can become re-inflected as self-empowering claims to autochthony and purity. Conventionally, such formulations proliferated as taxonomies of ‘primitive’, or purely ‘aboriginal’ Southeast Asian race types and ancestries, often framed within debates about their proper spatial location and geographical distribution. Concurrent and cognate practices emerged within colonial

administrative structures and bureaucracies with a view to the government of wild, even 'savage', native others. As such, this mode of racialisation also prevailed in surveys, questionnaires and other knowledge technologies developed by colonial authorities with regard to those perceived to belong to races outside, or on the margins of, 'civilisation'. Later, such racialisation processes took on new vigour, and acquired different values. Colonial-crafted 'native' categories could be re-fashioned to articulate positive claims of pure, originary, Indigenous identities, for example. States might resort to racialised categories either to enhance self-perceptions of national community, or to articulate domestic alterity and thereby generate mechanisms of governing and controlling internal ethnic 'others'.

A second mode of racialisation put emphasis on the theme of race mixing, *métissage*, or hybridity. This comes to the surface in debates about autochthonous racial diversity, with reference to the mixing of originary types, such as between Malay and Papuan (or Austronesian), for example. It can also emerge in relation to Asian peoples considered to be foreign to Southeast Asian nativist assumptions, as in the case of Chinese immigrants and mestizos.¹⁴ In late colonial contexts, however, it is principally in reference to relations between European 'whites' and Southeast Asian 'natives' that mestizo racialisation appears as an expression of dramatic scientific, social, political, and governmental anxiety. Concerns with the presumed dangers of transgressive race mixing found their way into racial theories and into the machinery of colonial government. At the same time, hybrid populations might be reinterpreted as providing human resources for development and modernisation. Mixing could be seen as a problem for colonial order; conversely, mixing could also be flagged as a potential accelerator of the civilising process, even a promoter of national awakening. Over time these racialised terminologies and narratives came to represent a powerful resource, at least among some groups, for positive self-perceptions of mixedness in Southeast Asia.

Intersecting with issues of race mixing, a third modality of racialisation can be distinguished that focused on the trope of whiteness. In the colonial period, this flexible, polysemous identity often appeared in close connection with strategic claims to authority and social status. Thus many white scientists and white colonial officials concentrated on the categorisation, segregation, and surveillance of (real, or perceived) white ancestry and purity. In these contexts, claims to whiteness typically expressed 'boundary strategies' among settlers and colonists, including the creation and protection of a biologised sense of an imperilled imperial white self — a classic boundary object, or subject. Such valuable whiteness has been 'the most sensitive marker or tracer of social stress and anxiety in settler nations and colonies', a shifting category within local fields of power, status, and class hierarchies.¹⁵ Yet, whiteness can also be observed beyond exclusive European claims. The idealisation of whiteness could mobilise forms of racialisation from within Indigenous cultural repertoires, including certain Southeast Asian visions.¹⁶

14 See Chee Kiong-Tong, *Identity and ethnic relations in Southeast Asia: Racializing Chineseness* (New York: Springer, 2010).

15 Warwick Anderson, 'Traveling white', in *Re-orienting whiteness*, ed. Kat Ellinghaus, Jane Carey and Leigh Boucher (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 66.

16 For example, L. Ayu Saraswati, *Seeing beauty, sensing race in transnational Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013).

Racial categories — be they native, mestizo, foreign (including white) in character — acquired different meanings in historical usage and geographical context, whether pejorative and discriminatory, or self-empowering and positive. These conceptual operations always were contingent; they could take a variety of concrete historical and political manifestations; they might relate to one another in any number of ways. Here we seek to make legible some of the local specificities of processes of racialisation in Island Southeast Asia. First, we will offer a brief historical overview of some themes in the history of race science in the region. Then we introduce the articles assembled here, highlighting connections with the modes of racialisation we have outlined.

The ‘Malay Archipelago’ as racialised site

From a look at a globe or a map of the Eastern hemisphere, we shall perceive between Asia and Australia a number of large and small islands forming a connected group distinct from those great masses of land, and having little connection with either of them. [...] It is inhabited by a peculiar and interesting race of mankind — the Malay, found nowhere beyond the limits of this insular tract, which has hence been named the Malay Archipelago.

Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, p. 1.

The islands of Southeast Asia, the vast and diverse archipelagic world between mainland Asia and Australia and the Pacific, have played an important role in staging race since the late-eighteenth century. They first came into prominence in natural history and scientific research in the aftermath of French and British maritime exploration in the Pacific in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. European racial categories — such as the ethnonyms ‘Papuan’ or ‘Malayan’ — had roots in early-modern Iberian accounts and in situated asseverations of regional otherness.¹⁷ Yet only in the later nineteenth century did such categories become part of a coherent ethnological language, proclaimed as scientific, and centred on biologised ideas of race and hierarchical visions of civilisation. During the nineteenth century, European maps and geographical descriptions of Oceania displayed and confirmed such racialised notions of human difference. As historian Bronwen Douglas notes, attempts at describing and partitioning the wide ‘Oceanic area’ as a geographical unit were ‘inherently racialized’.¹⁸ In this context, a multiplicity of terms, different and competing, was used for consolidating or partitioning Island Southeast Asia as both a geographical and ethnological entity. There was no fixed or agreed term by which it could be described until at least the 1860s.¹⁹ Many savants resorted to ‘East Indies’, following

17 J.H.F. Sollewijn Gelpke, ‘On the origin of the name Papua’, *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 149, 2 (1993): 318–32.

18 Bronwen Douglas, *Science, voyages, and encounters in Oceania, 1511–1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014). On the history of early classifications of Oceanic peoples, including French Dumont d’Urville’s famous Melanesia/Polynesia/Micronesia divide, see Nicholas Thomas, ‘The force of ethnology: Origins and significance of the Melanesia/Polynesia division’, *Current Anthropology* 30, 1 (1989): 27–41. See also Rainer F. Buschmann, *Anthropology’s global histories: The ethnographic frontier in German New Guinea, 1870–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), pp. 4–6.

19 On this historical uncertainty on geographical naming, leading also to the designation ‘Indonesia’, see Russell Jones, ‘Earl, Logan, and “Indonesia”’, *Archipel* 6, 6 (1973): 93–118.

Dutch colonial terminology. French scholars preferred to include the islands within more encompassing geographical definitions, like Oceania, or Malaisie. Loyal to former early-modern understandings, Spanish writers preferred to view Southeast Asian islands through a trans-Pacific lens, thereby seeing a so-called ‘Spanish Lake’.²⁰ In Britain, terms evoking the specific geography of the region were popular. Thus ethnologists like James C. Prichard, John Crawfurd, and George W. Earl in the early-nineteenth century referred confidently to the ‘Indian Islands’, or the ‘Indian’ or ‘East-Indian Archipelago’, terms to which the qualifier ‘Malay’ might be attached, invoking the ‘Malay Archipelago’.

Increasingly during the nineteenth century, the Malay Archipelago was construed as an *anthropological* region, and its many islands were configured as unique nature-made ‘laboratories’ for the study of racial difference.²¹ Of course, the preface ‘Malay’ itself indicated a preoccupation with the region’s racial distinction. The region was ‘Malay’, British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace observed, because that peculiar ‘race of mankind’ could be ‘found nowhere beyond this insular tract’.²² From the 1870s onwards, it became the most common term for designating the region, thanks largely to the inter-colonial impact of Wallace’s book, *The Malay Archipelago* (1869). A meticulous description of his journeys in the archipelago, the monograph eventually became renowned for its contribution to the theory of evolution. But contemporary readers of this work found themselves equally fascinated by his observations and deductions on race.²³ Wallace proposed a dualistic racial classification of the archipelago, a division between two ‘natural human races’ — Malayan and Papuan — divided by a biogeographical line in the east. Wallace’s ethnological line was highly debated and contested. It became an obligatory point of passage for discussions on ‘native races’ and the anthropogeography of the archipelago for another century and more, a path to be traced and retraced. Wallace’s writings triggered a long-amplitude, trans-national wave of racial and sociocultural field research in the archipelago — as Roque’s study in this issue shows in relation to Timorese ethnology, one example among many of the intellectual detritus washed up on island shores. At the turn of the twentieth century, the popularity of Wallace’s findings contributed greatly to establishing the islands of Southeast Asia and the Pacific as a dominant ‘area’ for research in physical anthropology.²⁴ As Sysling’s article indicates, anthropometric

20 Oskar H.K. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1979); and Rainer F. Buschmann, *Iberian visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507–1899* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014).

21 For critical studies of the notion of ‘island laboratories’, see Roy MacLeod and Philip F. Rehbock, eds., *Darwin’s laboratory: Evolutionary theory and natural history in the Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994); Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith, eds., *Islands in history and representation* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Warwick Anderson, ‘Racial hybridity, physical anthropology, and human biology in the colonial laboratories of the United States’, *Current Anthropology* 53, S5 (2012): S95–S207; and Sujit Sivasundaram, *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka and the bounds of an Indian Ocean colony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

22 Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago: The land of the orang-utan, and the bird of paradise. A narrative of travel, with studies of man and nature* (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. 1.

23 See Jane R. Camerini, ‘Evolution, biogeography, and maps: An early history of Wallace’s Line’, *Isis* 84 (1993): 700–727; 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): 89–123; Roque, *Headhunting and colonialism*, pp. 153–9.

24 Chris Ballard, ‘“Oceanic negroes”: Early British anthropology of Papuans, 1820–1869’, in Douglas

fieldworkers continued to follow in Wallace's wake, elaborating on his taxonomic sketches, adumbrating 'native types' well into the twentieth century.

Alongside research on the distinctiveness of 'native races' in the Malay Archipelago has gone a scientific preoccupation with the crossing of race types and the formation of human 'hybrids'. Hybridity had emerged as an ethnological problem in European natural history and comparative anatomy in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. For much of this period, speculation on the relative fertility of hybrids served as a proxy for attribution of 'monstrosity' and 'degeneracy' to mixed progeny, though incapacity to reproduce declined in importance as a criterion as mixed populations proliferated, and as polygenism, which posited separate racial creations, lost credibility. Some self-styled experts continued to wonder whether human hybrids suffered a mismatch of parts, rendering them defective and maladjusted.²⁵ And yet there were always others who looked instead for hybrid vigour, for reproductive improvements among previously inbred populations. Race mixing might offer a means to elevate particularly degraded groups — even if the miscegenated offspring did not meet the standard of the supposedly superior parental type, they might represent an improvement on the primitive parental stock. Mixed-race populations could appear transgressive and challenging to the existing order, an affront especially to colonial categories; or they might be viewed as needy and discomposed but obliging products of migratory humans — marginal men, as the sociologists came to call them — and thus potentially useful colonial functionaries. What the European scientist saw depended on what he expected to find — and there always seemed to be plenty of ways to confirm expectations in the Malay Archipelago.

Race mixing in the archipelago came to assume two distinct, though related, variants in scientific and bureaucratic reveries. On the one hand, miscegenation could present a tricky challenge to the taxonomic project of Southeast Asian racial regimes, confusing the boundaries between ostensibly pure types. The ambiguous or exiguous connection of some islanders to existing categories prompted the disturbing possibility of new racial forms and genealogies. The presence of 'intermediate' or 'mixed-race' autochthonous populations challenged the taxonomy of originary and stable, even fixed, types.²⁶ This was at the core of discussions of those peoples — like the Timorese, as in Roque's article — who seemed to inhabit an ambivalent classificatory space, between yellow (or Malayan, or Asian) and black (or Papuan/Austronesian, or

and Ballard, *Foreign bodies*, pp. 157–201. On the Oceanic phase of anthropology see James Urry, 'Making sense of diversity and complexity: The ethnological context and consequences of the Torres Strait Expedition and the Oceanic phase in British anthropology, 1890–1935', in *Cambridge and the Torres Strait: Centenary essays on the 1898 Anthropological Expedition*, ed. Anita Herle and Sandra Rouse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 201–33; and Buschmann, *Anthropology's global histories*, pp. 154–70.

25 Robert J.C. Young, *Colonial desire: Hybridity in theory, culture, and race* (New York: Routledge, 1995). See also Claude Blanckaert, 'Of monstrous métis? Hybridity, fear of miscegenation, and patriotism from Buffon to Paul Broca', in *The color of liberty: Histories of race in France*, ed. Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 42–70. See Bronwen Douglas, 'Confronting "hybrids" in Oceania: Field experience, materiality and the science of race in France', *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 27 (2015): 27–63.

26 For early Iberian discourses on 'purity of blood' and mixing in Asia, see Max S. Hering Torres, M. Elena Martínez and David Nirenberg, eds., *Race and blood in the Iberian world* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2012).

Melanesian) types. On the other hand, the problem of race mixing between supposedly 'higher' and 'lower' human races — most notably between white European sojourners and Southeast Asian inhabitants — excited heated inquiry in the twentieth century. In effect, this scientific research was a displacement of prurient colonial interest in sexual liaisons between 'native' women and white men. The viability and functionality of hybrid offspring, the destiny of children born from European and Asian unions, and the dangers and opportunities such groups might pose to European settlement and colonisation, were subjects of debate among ethnologists and comparative anatomists well into the twentieth century. Indeed, between the 1920s and the 1930s, physical anthropological research on race mixing in Southeast Asia and the Pacific was gaining momentum.²⁷ The article by Pols and Anderson demonstrates the extent to which the Malay Archipelago might be perceived internationally as a pivotal site for race mixing studies in the inter-war period. Both adversaries and advocates of race mixing — the experts within science and the imperial bureaucracy — could mobilise concepts of genealogical hybridity to disparate, or collusive, political ends. Moreover, self-professed creoles or mestizos also could make use of racial theories, reframing and valorising these vital colonial abstractions so they might work for them, as Rodao and Pols and Anderson describe here.

The scope of our historical critique

The articles in this issue examine a set of specific manifestations of these broad historical trends. They allow us to deconstruct the 'racial laboratories' of Island Southeast Asia, reframing these sites as platforms for critical historical investigation of different modes of racialisation. The first two articles look at the racialisation of 'native' others as a knowledge practice that bears importantly on the biopolitics of colonial governance. Set in the context of the Philippines in the early years of the US occupation, Gealogo's contribution describes racialisation as a multi-sited process of othering and social control within the colonial administrative apparatus. From a Foucauldian perspective, Gealogo argues that the 'pejorative' differentiation and typification of Filipino bodies and minds — whether as 'insane', 'uncivilised', 'primitive', 'degenerate', or 'criminal' — resulted from a conjoined series of institutional projects, at once epistemic and governmental, in epidemiology, criminology, and population statistics. Central to the finely tuned mechanism of classificatory control was the census, promulgated in 1903 by the US administration, and informed by anthropological studies on alleged criminals at the infamous Bilibid Prison. The prison became a privileged laboratory of colonial population management and a test site for operationalising American racial categories, predicated on assumptions of Filipino degeneracy — an exemplary site, an instructive miniature, very much like the Culion leper colony.²⁸ 'Bilibid as a colonial penitentiary,' Gealogo writes, 'created the opportunity for the construction of knowledge about Filipino "types" in a strongly racialised manner, and allowed correlations to be made between the physical attributes of criminals and the physical attributes of Filipinos.'

27 Warwick Anderson, 'Hybridity, race, and science: The voyage of the *Zaca*, 1934–35', *Isis* 103 (2012): 229–53; Anderson, 'Racial hybridity, physical anthropology, and human biology'.

28 Warwick Anderson, 'Leprosy and citizenship', *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 6 (1998): 707–30.

Complicities between colonial politics and scientific racial classification are also revealed in Roque's contribution. Rather than exploring such co-constitution and abetment within particular administrative projects, his article looks at this biopolitical mutualism as a contingent artefact that was already emergent in the technical, theoretical, and rhetorical elements of what passed for rigorous scientific and academic classificatory work. Roque analyses the Timorese writings of Portuguese physical anthropologist Mendes Correia between 1912 and 1945, showing us the links between colonial boundary definition and maintenance in the Portuguese Empire and the demarcation of race types and ethnological lines. An island divided between Portuguese and Dutch powers, Timor epitomised the anxieties and the hopes of ethnological reasoning in Oceania, becoming a paradigmatic example of the rewards and perils of racialisation in the region. Mendes Correia's Malayan anthropogeography corresponded closely with colonial constructs and frontiers, to the extent that his racial science mapped perfectly onto the eastern part of Timor as a bounded possession of Portugal. Yet as Roque indicates, such conjunction, even duplication, cannot be reduced to a colonial artefact, or waived away as a meretricious figment of empire. Indeed, the science could also be harnessed successfully to later processes of nation building, belying any simple colonial congruence. Thus colonial racialisation of others could merge into the racialisation of the national self. After the end of Portuguese colonial rule in 1975, those struggling for national identity and political autonomy in Timor-Leste took up again the topic of their territory's ethnic affinities. In opposing the Indonesian occupation, East Timorese political leaders came to reject any ethnic affiliation to Indonesia, asserting instead the affinity of their island people with Papuan or Melanesian groups, those other compelling colonial constructs.

In her article, Sysling considers racial science and its taxonomy of 'native races' further west in the Malay Archipelago. Sysling follows the work of a prominent Dutch physical anthropologist Kleiweg de Zwaan, who in 1939 endeavoured to discern and define the 'primitive' and aboriginal types of the islands of Bali and Lombok. She shows how de Zwaan's field research depended upon colonial administrative networks. But her focus here is less on the interplay between de Zwaan's field anthropometry and the practicalities of the colonial situation than on the distinct meanings and values that accrued to his racialisation of Balinese both locally and in the Netherlands. Racialisation, Sysling suggests, had different outcomes depending on the setting in which it was communicated or mobilised: racial thought always was part of a larger structure of sensibility. Fieldwork encounters could be moments of learning and exchange as much as occasions of dominance and submission. In examining the fine texture of interaction in the field, Sysling shows that de Zwaan's racialised practices could be appropriated or adapted by his erstwhile research subjects. Sometimes there was a sort of unequal reciprocity in anthropometric encounters on Bali and Lombok. In 1939, Balinese community leaders could use race categories to their own ends, thus subverting or at least rechannelling the Dutch science that degraded them. As Sysling explains, 'the category of Bali-Aga was of both local importance and of interest to the anthropologists — partly because of local claims of Indigenous origin — so an individual Balinese could appropriate Western scientific notions to strengthen his identity claims'.

The two articles by Rodao and by Pols and Anderson offer critical histories of racialisation around the themes of hybridity and whiteness. These contributions chart the relationships of scientific racial conceptions with the anxieties and identity politics of white settler and sojourner communities. Rodao examines how Spanish and Filipino intellectuals reappropriated and deployed racial theories in the context of local struggles for power and prestige in the late-nineteenth-century Philippines. In this period, according to Rodao, growing Spanish emigration to the Philippines led to the establishment of a new Spanish-born coloniser community, the so-called *peninsulares*, which competed with creole and mestizo groups for social and political prominence, and used race to rationalise its position. Rodao analyses the racial thought of *peninsulares* through the influential works of Antonio Cañamaque, Pablo Feced, and Vicente Barrantes. He shows how *peninsulares* came to celebrate their whiteness, expressed as pure European ancestry, and to disparage mixed-race competitors in the colonial archipelago. Cosmopolitan Filipino nationalists, or *ilustrados*, also drew from the Spanish racial well, though they pragmatically adulterated these scientific speculations to their advantage.²⁹

Pols and Anderson address further complexities of archipelagic racialisation in their account of Rodenwaldt's research on the 'Mestizos of Kisar'. In the 1920s, the German physical anthropologist — later a committed Nazi — decided to undertake innovative field research among an impoverished and isolated mixed-race community on the island of Kisar, in the far east of the Dutch East Indies. Visiting race experts in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries had regarded this Indo-European group as a lost white tribe, an experiment in white settlement in the tropics, significant for colonial settlement policies. Obsession with the once and future German Empire shaped Rodenwaldt's interest in the Kisarese-European community. He presented his Kisar research as a case study in the consequences of miscegenation, as valuable in assessing the capacities and proper status of mixed-race people in any empire, whether Dutch or German. He came to regard mestizos as ideal colonial functionaries, superior to indigenous inhabitants, and socially marginal and therefore ripe for exploitation. 'In his biopolitical framing,' write Pols and Anderson, 'the island laboratory could be scaled up to cover every circumstance; it could be made relevant to any condition of racial confusion or ambiguity.' Sceptical of prevailing Dutch assumptions of the biological degeneracy of mixed-race people in the Indies, Rodenwaldt's research emphasised the relative and moderate success of race mixing, at least in its supposed elevation of the island's original inhabitants. Later, when Rodenwaldt returned to Germany and embraced Nazism, his positive findings proved an embarrassment to him (until after the war when they could be used to achieve exoneration from war crimes). The Kisar study continued to be seen internationally as a model for the scientific investigation of an increasingly mixed and impure developing world, an acceptably positive evaluation of *métissage* in the modernising archipelago, and beyond. Over time, Rodenwaldt's colonial scientific racialisation of the Kisarese also gained currency locally and among the islanders' diaspora. Many descendants of

29 See also Anderson, *Colonial pathologies*; and Raquel A.G. Reyes, *Love, passion, and patriotism: Sexuality and the Philippine Propaganda Movement, 1882–1892* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

the Mestizos now refer proudly to his weighty tomes to confirm their ancestry and assert their identity.

Racialised legacies

When John Smail, almost sixty years ago, advocated ‘autonomous’ or ‘domestic’ histories of Southeast Asia, he drew attention to the historical agency of local actors, to the past and continuing cultural vitality of the region’s peoples. But he never demanded we ignore the historical truths of colonialism and its aftermath. ‘The colonial relationship remains a theme of great importance for modern Southeast Asian history,’ he wrote.³⁰ The challenge is to craft histories of colonial science and racialisation that partake of domestic histories, recognising creative local agency and cultural appropriation and adaptation. After all, even race science was never the possession solely of Europeans: it could always be modified and adopted for a multitude of local purposes. Nonetheless, the ‘voices’ of most of those racialised in one way or another are now scarcely audible, often little more than faint whispers in authoritative scientific texts and colonial archives. However, these ‘research subjects’, whether engaged, hostile or indifferent, continue to haunt our readings, as a sort of spectral presence disconcerting claims to expertise and control. There is no denying the ‘epistemic violence’ of colonial and national racialisations in Southeast Asia, and elsewhere, yet suppression was never absolute, acquiescence could never be assumed, and island life might go on regardless.³¹ Some of the subjects we discuss here possess no other historical presence, no archive to be mined — unlike cosmopolitan elites in cities like Batavia and Manila. Access to their conceptual world, their sensibilities and structures of feeling, may be limited in the texts we are studying — this enigmatic presence, sadly, is often all we have.³² To dismiss the discourse of racialisation as just another imperial artefact would silence the most ‘marginal’ of these people altogether.

Concerning island sites often considered more peripheral than central, these preliminary and partial studies of the complex mosaic of racialisation in Southeast Asia suggest that conceptions and formations of human difference are flexible and contingent, yielding to circumstances, and at the same time stubbornly persistent, durably altering our impressions of ourselves and the world around us. Racialisation required a certain cognitive repertoire, a biological mindset, but it drew strength and motive power from deeper social and economic forces, felt by colonisers and the colonised, by nationalists and internationalists. Few could resist the attraction of differentiating, aggregating, and characterising human collectives, even though their typologies and classifications were constantly under duress, always subject to contestation, distortion, and adaptation.

30 John R.W. Smail, ‘On the possibility of an autonomous history of Southeast Asia’, *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, 2 (1961): 101.

31 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.

32 These issues are discussed more extensively in Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009). See also Warwick Anderson, ‘On the beach in the Marquesas: Weedy historicities and prosthetic futures’, in *Pacific futures: Past and present*, ed. Warwick Anderson, Miranda Johnson and Barbara Brookes (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2018).

The critical historical study of racialisation in Southeast Asia, and inquiry more generally into the constitutive biopolitics of the region, has hardly begun. We need further comparative investigation of the relations of the artifice of race to the fabrication and reproduction of region, nation, caste, tribe, clan, and family across Asia and the Pacific, and beyond.³³ For a place once given over to racial speculation, the historical study of Southeast Asia's biopolitical conceptions and formations is still regrettably meagre. Thus we hope our collection of articles provokes other contributions to historicising the racial present in Southeast Asia.

33 Warwick Anderson and Hans Pols, 'Scientific patriotism: Medical science and national self-fashioning in Southeast Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, 1 (2012): 93–113. The critical study of the Chinese nationalist invocation of Peking Man is exemplary: see Barry Sautman, 'Peking Man and the politics of paleoanthropological nationalism in China', *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, 1 (2001): 95–124; and Yinghong Cheng, "Is Peking Man still our ancestor?": Genetics, anthropology, and the politics of racial nationalism in China', *Journal of Asian Studies* 76, 3 (2017): 575–602.