

A close-up photograph of two hands touching. The hand on the left is dark-skinned, and the hand on the right is light-skinned. The hands are positioned as if they are about to shake or are in a gesture of connection. The background is dark and out of focus.

# FAULT A PRIMER ON RACE, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY LINES

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## The Boomerang

### How eugenics and racial science in the German colonies rebounded on Europe and the rest of the world

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#### Introduction

In 1936, the British-trained professor of zoology Harold Benjamin Fantham published an article titled “Some Race Problems in South Africa” in *The Scientific Monthly*.<sup>1</sup> The opening section of the article provided detailed “physionomical” descriptions of the “Bushmen” and “Hottentots”, alongside accounts of the other “races” of South Africa:

The Bushmen are a primitive people, short of stature, slim, muddy yellow in color, with small tufts of rusty brown, wooly hair, giving a peppercorn appearance. Their skin is greatly wrinkled. They have low foreheads, prominent cheekbones, small, sunken eyes and ears with very little trace of lobes. Their noses are small, flat and broad. Their jaws project only a little. They have hollow backs due to inward lumbosacral curvature, making the buttocks appear prominent ... The Hottentots are of medium stature and slight build, with small hands and feet. They are reddish-yellow in color, with narrow heads, black wooly hair, high cheekbones, hollow cheeks, pointed chins, eyes far apart, ears with moderately developed lobes and broad, flat noses. A fair degree of prognathism is present. There is marked lumbosacral curvature and characteristic steatopygia ...

This description was followed by a detailed analysis of the physical, social, psychological and intellectual characteristics of the “racially mixed Cape Coloured” population, including an account of a family with Jewish and Cape coloured ancestry:

In Family (7) the Jewish influence is very marked. In some parts of the Cape Province, for instance, in the neighbourhoods of Port Elizabeth and Outdshoorn, Cape Colored people with markedly Semitic cast of nose and countenance can often be seen. Europeans in these neighbourhoods, intimately acquainted with local conditions, have expressed their opinion that these Hebrew-like Coloured people “mark the past of the itinerant Semite pedlar,” and there appears to be very good evidence for this view.<sup>2</sup>

Fantham, who held positions as Professor of Zoology at both the University of Witwatersrand and McGill University in Montreal, was by then widely published in the field of parasitology; he was also clearly deeply influenced by the then “cutting-edge” global science of eugenics. By measuring, describing and categorising these physical features, he sought to address “race problems” in South Africa. He believed that by the mid-1930s, South Africa was already well placed to use eugenics to address problems of “racial mixing”:

In general, as I have often stated, while intermarriage of black and white is not desirable biologically or socially, yet that does not condemn racial admixture as a whole, for admixture of peoples at similar levels of civilization may result in the perpetuation of highly desirable qualities. In South Africa, and in other countries where the color problem exists, more attention to the maintenance of racial integrity seems desirable ... Fortunately, the need for such eugenics research has been realised. In South Africa since 1920 there has been an active Eugenics and Genetics Committee of the South Africans Association for the Advancement of Science, which is a member of the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations and work on racial admixture has been published by the Association. Also, since 1930, there has been a Race Welfare Society in Johannesburg ... for the encouragement of propagation among the better types in the community and the restriction of the same among the less mentally and socially adequate members.<sup>3</sup>

While clearly much has changed in the human sciences since 1936, it would seem that certain eugenics ideas about how “racial miscegenation” contributes towards the creation of new stable and homogenous “hybrid races” seems to have somehow persisted into the present.

In 2019, the South African media reported on a study by the Stellenbosch University’s Department of Sport Science that claimed that “coloured women in South Africa have an increased risk for low cognitive functioning, as they present with low education levels and unhealthy lifestyle behaviours”.<sup>4</sup> While many South Africans were indeed shocked that such a sweeping (and unscientific) generalisation could be inferred from a small sample of 60 women, for others this was hardly surprising, given the vast number of books, research reports and journal articles produced at Stellenbosch University on the social, economic, cultural and psychological characteristics of “the coloured population”. Such studies have tended

to be based on the essentialist idea that this culturally and biologically homogenous group needed to be “rescued” from a litany of endemic pathologies. Similarly, the 2019 Sport Science article implied that this homogeneity was self-evident: “The Coloured community is, in terms of social class, considered the most homogenous group in South Africa and are generally described as a poor, lower working-class community.”<sup>5</sup> Yet, a vast body of social science literature insists that the apartheid category of “coloured” is a social and political construction that is in reality anything but homogenous.<sup>6</sup> In fact, it could be argued that “coloureds” are *the most* culturally, politically and economically heterogeneous group in South Africa. Moreover, it is common knowledge that this population has diverse Khoe, San, European, and African and Asian slave ancestry. It will be suggested that the legacy of racial science research on “mixed race” populations could go some way towards accounting for how “the coloured population” has come to be seen as homogenous group in need of “rescue”.

This chapter seeks to understand the ways in which, during the early twentieth century, the global science of eugenics created anxiety about “racial mixing”. This concern is traced to the 1908 eugenics<sup>7</sup> study of the German scientist Dr Eugen Fischer, who studied the “mixed-race” Rehoboth Bastards of Namibia. It will be shown that Fischer’s study provided a template for thinking about the problem of racial miscegenation.

In the first half of the twentieth century in South Africa, anxiety about racial mixing found expression in a number of commissions of inquiry, including the 1938 Wilcocks Commission, which investigated virtually every aspect of coloured life and arrived at conclusions that have had enduring effects. As Steffen Jensen has observed:

The Wilcocks Commission distinguished between three classes. One was the “the undesirable class, comprising the ‘skolly boys’ (often habitually armed with knives or razor blades), the habitual convict, the ex-convicted, the drunkards, and the habitual loafers”. A second comprised “the farm and the unskilled labourers, the factor workers, and the household servants in rural and urban areas”, and a third, “the relatively well-to-do and educated coloured people”.<sup>8</sup>

Jensen also observes that the Commission lamented the fact that whites typically placed all “coloured” people into the first group, i.e. the *skollie* category. Nonetheless, the Commission still ended up reproducing such stereotypes by concluding that this population lacked proper leaders and upstanding male role models, and that it was this that contributed towards undermining social cohesion and a host of other social pathologies, including the *skollie* phenomenon. It was this conception of a leaderless group living in chronic poverty that contributed towards constructing “the coloureds” as a population in dire need of rescue and urgent remedial action by the

paternalistic state. The following excerpt from Jensen's account of the Wilcocks report focuses specifically on Chapter 3, which addresses "Special Problems":

These [problems] included deleterious home influences, illegitimacy, juvenile delinquency, intemperance, dagga smoking, theft, minor offences, recidivism, need for legal assistance, social discontent and miscegenation. All these "special problems" related to a particular class of people among the coloureds, the "submerged class"... What emerged from the Commission's discussions was the image of a mother's uphill battle to be a true homemaker. She was obliged to work, had little education and knowledge about nutrition, was poor and worn out by multiple pregnancies – and, crucially, was not supported by husband and father figures in her efforts. This failure to make the home sound often allowed children to go astray, and they subsequently became anti-social, that is, *skollies*. In sharp contrast, the image of the father was of someone absent, shirking his responsibilities and indulging in alcohol ...<sup>9</sup>

What is particularly interesting about this account of the Wilcocks report is the gendered dimensions of the framing of "the Coloured problem". These gendered images and stereotypes have found expression in studies produced at Stellenbosch University over the past century; and, as the Sport Science study illustrates, such ideas persist into the present.

What is also of note in Jensen's account of the Wilcocks report is the apparent lack of consensus amongst Commission members about the consequences of racial miscegenation, and what to recommend in terms of policy. Yet, once the apartheid government came to power in 1948, it immediately set about introducing racial laws such as the Immorality Act precisely to prevent racial miscegenation. This aspect of apartheid policy, it will be argued, emerged in the shadow of eugenics-based policies introduced in the German colonies and in Nazi Germany to prevent racial mixing. The following sections will show how scientific ideas concerning racial miscegenation in German South West Africa boomeranged back to Europe with such catastrophic consequences in the 1930s. This excursion into the early twentieth century history of racial science will provide insights into the global spread of eugenics and the persistence of similar forms of race-thinking in the contemporary period. Due to space constraints, the chapter will not be able to discuss the twentieth-century history of the close relationship between eugenics and immigration policies that restricted entry to Europe and the United States of unwanted populations of poor people, the "feble-minded" from Southern and Eastern Europe, and racial, ethnic and religious minorities.<sup>10</sup>

A systematic history of race-thinking would have to go back to at least the 1730s, when Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist, physician and zoologist, and founder of modern taxonomy, established the modern system of naming and classifying

organisms. This chapter, however, limits itself to early twentieth-century racial science and focuses specifically on how this contributed towards the Nazi genocide and the global spread of eugenics. What this account will also attempt to show is that, even though eugenics was thoroughly discredited after World War II, similar forms of race-thinking continue to reproduce racial stereotypes and essentialist beliefs, for instance, the notion that “the coloureds” constitute the most homogenous group in South Africa.

### The boomerang

When scholars write about the role of eugenics in the Nazi genocide, they usually view it as simply a European affair, involving German scientists, as well as politicians, bureaucrats, police, soldiers and ordinary citizens. In popular accounts of the rise of Nazism, Dr Josef Mengele typically features as the evil, irrational, if not mad, medical scientist. Yet, this story of Nazi eugenics can be told from a very different perspective – one that recognises the pervasiveness of eugenics and racial science throughout the world. So, while the Nazis took eugenics-based policies in unprecedented directions in the 1930s and 1940s, since at least the first decade of the twentieth century, eugenics had been accepted as a legitimate, modern scientific enterprise across the political spectrum, especially in Europe and the United States. It was also widely acknowledged as one of the most progressive sciences of “human improvement”. In fact, it could be understood in relation to ways in which genetic science is now widely believed to be the key to future public health interventions. By focusing on influential German scientist Eugen Fischer, this chapter seeks to understand how eugenics came to acquire such worldwide scientific authority, and how it contributed towards reinforcing “common-sense” beliefs about the perils of “racial mixing” (miscegenation), ideas that animated apartheid policies and continue to haunt our contemporary world.

Conventional accounts of the complicity of science in Nazism usually begin in 1933, when Hitler appointed his favourite racial scientist, Dr Eugen Fischer, as rector of the Friedrich Wilhelm University (now Humboldt University) in Berlin. By 1938, with Hitler’s unequivocal support, Fischer became one of the most influential scientists involved in the Nazis’ eugenics programmes, which included the forced sterilisation and euthanising of mentally and physically disabled people. The discrimination against and murder of the Reich’s Jews were also underpinned by the science of anthropology, and by eugenics in particular.

The sciences of anthropology and eugenics colluded with biologically inflected state programmes that claimed to improve the health and welfare of national populations but, in the process, sent those deemed unworthy of belonging to a race or population

to their deaths. In the words of political philosopher Giorgio Agamben, “For the first time in history, the possibilities of the social sciences are made known, and at once it becomes possible both to protect life and to authorize a holocaust.”<sup>11</sup> This is the tragic story of the complicity of Western Enlightenment thinking in the genocidal violence of the last century. A significant strand of this story, somewhat surprisingly, begins, not in the heart of metropolitan Europe, but in a remote section of the colonial periphery of southern Africa. This unlikely story begins in 1870 with the visit of a German anthropologist and eugenics scientist to Rehoboth in South West Africa. Dr Eugen Fischer began his Rehoboth research in 1908, in the immediate aftermath of the Herero and Nama genocide. Yet, this context was not mentioned in his writing. It was only in July 2015 that the German government officially recognised that this colonial catastrophe was “part of a race war”. It is striking that Fischer’s Rehoboth study does not mention that it took place in the aftermath of an anti-colonial rebellion and genocide. Hannah Arendt and contemporary historians have provided chilling accounts of how the Nama and Herero genocide set the stage for what would happen in Nazi Europe only a few decades later.<sup>12</sup> Fischer’s scientific ideas, developed in Rehoboth in the early twentieth century, would likewise boomerang back to Europe.

Fischer’s study of 310 Bastards, who were the offspring of white Boer or German fathers and “Hottentot” (Khoikhoi) mothers, was part of a scientific enquiry into the role of heredity in human evolution, with a focus on the effects of racial mixing.<sup>13</sup> The study was of great significance at the time, when German scientists and colonial officials in South West Africa were debating the cultural and biological consequences of miscegenation. Historian George Steinmetz writes that, in the early 1900s, some scientists argued that “mixed-race” populations could become a genetically stable “new type”, while others maintained that they would “remain ‘in flux’, expressing a mishmash of traits from both parent races, splitting into two opposing types, or reverting to one of the two ancestral genotypes”.<sup>14</sup> German colonial officials were perturbed by what they regarded as this racial and cultural instability of mixed-race peoples such as the Rehoboth Bastards, making them the perfect population for Fischer’s study. They were also curious about whether the “admixture of white blood” rendered the Bastards more reliable and amenable to colonial rule, or if their “in-between status” (*zwitterstellung*) made them more dangerous, unpredictable and troublesome. The rediscovery of Mendelian genetics in 1900 further fuelled Fischer’s interest in “race-mixing” in the colonies and in Germany.<sup>15</sup>

During his four months in Rehoboth, Fischer measured the size, facial structure, nose, lips, ears, hair, eyelids and eye colour of the Bastards to determine, amongst other things, whether the interbreeding of peoples of different races would result in a “new type” of mixed-race Mischlinge (mulattos). He concluded that Khoikhoi

and European features appeared in a myriad of possible combinations, and, because of this, the Rehoboth Basters could not constitute a stable mixed race. Fischer consequently abandoned his initial eugenics research programme and classified the Basters as a *mittelding* (literally a “middle thing”), or an intermediate class between the Khoikhoi and the Boer, as well as a “wedge” between the Herero and Ovambo on the one side and the Nama on the other.<sup>16</sup> While assets to the colonial administration, they were nonetheless relegated to the biologically determined category of natives, who would forever be racially inferior to whites.

The Rehoboth Basters had acquired their intermediary position in the colonial social hierarchy in 1885, when their leaders signed a “Treaty of Protection and Friendship” with the German colonial government. Through this, they were able to secure protection and a privileged status within the regime, as well as self-governing capability in Rehoboth. In return for these privileges, they fought alongside German soldiers to suppress uprisings by the indigenous Herero and the Nama, between whom some two or three thousand Basters had been living as a wedge for three decades of German colonial rule. In Fischer’s view, General von Trotha had “honoured the Basters” by allowing them to fight on the front lines during the Herero campaign.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding their privileged status, Basters were still targets of colonial panic about intermarriage, as expressed in the growing concern that German men, and soldiers in particular, would marry Christian, Europeanised and Dutch-speaking Baster women. This would swell the numbers of Mischlinge who qualified for German citizenship and who could then move into European-settler society. The culmination of this sexual panic was the 1906 decree banning mixed marriage in the colony, a racial law that was later to be adopted in Nazi Germany in 1935 and introduced to apartheid South Africa as the Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts of 1949 and 1950.

By the time Fischer arrived in Rehoboth in 1908, the colony had already assimilated popular eugenicist ideas that racially mixed peoples were politically unreliable, potentially dangerous, and subject to cultural degeneration and biological decay. Although the Rehoboth Basters continued to be loyal and useful allies to German officials, the possibility of a Baster rebellion remained a worry. In 1913, Fischer’s ethnography, *The Bastards of Rehoboth and the Problem of Miscegenation in Man*,<sup>18</sup> was published to widespread acclaim. Its appendix provides practical recommendations for German colonial policy, including the use of Basters as low-level officials, foremen and native police to reinforce German colonial rule. Fischer also recommends that the ban on mixed marriages and racial miscegenation in the German colonies be upheld, which would later influence Nazi laws to promote “the protection of German blood and honour” through the Nazi Marriage Act of 1935 and what became the Nuremberg Laws.

Fischer's study in Rehoboth was also deployed by National Socialists to support the idea that the recessive genes of racially mixed populations led to physiological, psychological and intellectual degeneration. By the late 1930s, Fischer was one of Germany's most influential scientists, with his institute in Berlin laying the foundations for Nazi eugenics, which would find their ultimate expression in the Final Solution. Fischer's position on Jews as a foreign body in the German Volk allowed him to promote his institute as Germany's foremost architect of racial-classification policies, including the notorious "genetic and race science certificates of descent". Fischer was also appointed a judge for Berlin's Appellate Genetic Health Court, where he helped to implement the Sterilisation Law of 1933 to combat hereditary medicalised conditions.<sup>19</sup>

Fischer's story provides sobering lessons for science, and for my own discipline of anthropology. He was an ambitious man who believed that scientific expertise ought to determine state policies, but he had struggled to influence policy during the Weimar Republic period because of the accountability structures of liberal democracy. To influence policy one had to lobby and pressure parliamentarians, which was a slow and laborious process. The Nazis' rise to power presented him with unprecedented opportunities to short-circuit all of this. In no time, he had a direct line to the most powerful Nazis. As director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin, Fischer and his colleagues offered to provide the Nazis with scientific expertise to guide their eugenics policies. In return, Fischer attained unprecedented access to state resources for research. Medical scientists and doctors became virtual gods during the Third Reich. Their expertise was seen to hold the key to the modern eugenicist state so desired by the Nazis.

## Conclusion

Fischer contributed to the co-authored book, *Human Heredity*,<sup>20</sup> which Hitler read in a Munich prison in 1923. By then, it was already the standard text on German eugenics, and, once it was translated into English in 1931,<sup>21</sup> it became a bible for a burgeoning international eugenics movement. Fischer wrote Section Two of the book, "Racial Differences in Mankind", which included anthropometric photographs of "racial types" arranged in the following sequence: Nordic, Alpine (Maritime Alps), Oriental, Mongoloid, Negroid; the section ends with photographs of "Cross-Breeds between Europeans and Hottentots in German South West Africa".<sup>22</sup>

This social-evolutionist brand of eugenics was not a uniquely German invention. By the 1920s, it had become part of an international scientific movement that, in addition to promoting compulsory sterilisation of the "inferior types", sought to

influence immigration policies to keep out undesirable individuals and populations. In Britain and the United States, the eugenics movement largely derived its inspiration from the English scientist Sir Francis Galton, who was the younger cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton studied the English upper classes and determined that their dominant social position was based on their inheritance of superior physical and mental characteristics. His ideas were also influenced by his experiences in southern Africa in 1850, when, for most of his visit, he travelled on the back of an ox through the hot, dry and dusty interior of what is now Namibia – interestingly, the same territory where Fischer forged his ideas half a century later. Galton returned to London in 1852 and published his 300-page memoir, *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa*,<sup>23</sup> a year later. Not for the last time, scientific ideas incubated in the laboratories of the violent colonial frontier found their way back to Europe.

Following the catastrophic consequences of Nazi eugenics, UNESCO produced an authoritative statement<sup>24</sup> insisting that there was no scientific evidence for claims concerning the biological determination of racial categories and boundaries. This document concluded that *Homo sapiens* was one species and that there was no evidence for the existence of “pure races”; there was also no scientific justification for discouraging reproduction between people of different so-called races. Furthermore, by the latter decades of the twentieth century, social scientists seemed to share a consensus that concepts such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality were social, political and cultural constructions that had no biological foundation whatsoever. However, “common-sense” ideas about the cultural and biological differences between different “races” continue to circulate in both popular and academic discourses.

What is especially disturbing in the contemporary moment is how, with the rise of the right-wing authoritarian nationalism, as well as anti-Muslim and anti-immigration movements, discredited eugenics ideas have been resurrected by conservative politicians, activists and scientists who insist that white people of European descent are biologically, culturally and intellectually superior to everyone else. These ideas continue to be disseminated through social media and right-wing publications, including academic journals such as *Northlander*, the *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, the *Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies* and Roger Pearson’s *Mankind Quarterly*.<sup>25</sup> As Angela Saini, the author of *Superior: The Return of Race Science*<sup>26</sup> observes, “[a]fter the Second World War, the belief that differences between so-called ‘races’ are genetic became taboo. Now, with the far right resurgent, it’s back.”<sup>27</sup> She also notes that what is of great concern is that these racial ideas are not simply the views of right-wing politicians, neo-Nazi extremists and their supporters, but that they are now recirculating in academic journals.

These ideas persist despite the post-war scientific consensus that eugenics is a pseudoscience and that “race” is a myth. Most social scientists these days would no doubt also agree that “race” is a social and political construct – rather than being a biological essence. Yet, what is becoming increasingly clear is that, due to perceived threats of competition for jobs and an increase in religious and cultural diversity and intolerance towards immigrants, some ethno-nationalists and populists are once again seeking to reassert essentialist conceptions of fixed and discrete bio-cultural differences and hard, immutable boundaries between “racial” populations. In other words, scientific ideas forged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the name of “racial purity” seem to be gaining traction once more. It would appear that a discredited eugenics science and “common-sense” beliefs about the existence of homogenous racial, religious and ethnic groups continue to haunt both scientific and political discourses.

Although it appears that the crude, pseudoscientific eugenics of the early twentieth century is dead and buried, the Sport Science study reveals that common-sense beliefs that it is possible to identify and classify homogenous racial and ethnic populations persist. It was precisely this type of thinking that made it possible for the Sport Science researchers to make the claim, based on a small sample of 60 women, that “[t]he Coloured community is, in terms of social class, considered the most homogenous group in South Africa and are generally described as a poor, lower working-class community”.<sup>28</sup> It was from this unwarranted generalisation that the researchers extrapolated from their findings to assert that “coloured women” suffered from cognitive deficiencies. These conclusions not only reflected bad science, but also mirrored the kind of racial, ethnic, religious and cultural stereotyping that currently plagues our world. Such “common-sense” conceptions of homogenous racial categories can become particularly pernicious in an age of nationalist populism, where right-wing politicians seek to draw clear bio-cultural boundaries between indigenous natives and undesirable outsiders. As we have seen in many parts of the world, including postapartheid South Africa, these beliefs can fuel the toxic rhetoric of ethno-nationalist demagogues who incite their followers to attack migrants, who are blamed for “stealing our jobs and our women” and are labelled as dangerous criminals and drug dealers. In recent decades, we have also seen how “ethnic cleansing” in the Balkans, Rwanda and numerous other parts of the world began with the circulation of “othering” discourses that contributed towards pitting “our people” (e.g. virtuous national citizens) against “the enemies within”. Although the Sport Science study clearly did not have such malicious intent, the lessons from early twentieth-century eugenics (and apartheid), reveal that scientific theories, concepts and categories can, under specific conditions, become lethal.

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## Endnotes

- 1 H.B. Fantham, "Some Race Problems in South Africa", *The Scientific Monthly* 42, no. 2 (1936): 151-68.
- 2 Ibid., 162.
- 3 Ibid., 168.
- 4 Sharné Nieuwoudt et al., "Retracted Article: Age- and Education-Related Effects on Cognitive Functioning in Colored South African Women", *Neuropsychology, Development, and Cognition. Section B: Aging, Neuropsychology And Cognition* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13825585.2019.1598538>
- 5 Ibid., 6.
- 6 Zimitri Erasmus, *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2001).
- 7 For a comprehensive account of the shift from eugenics to genetics, see Adam Rutherford, *A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived: The Stories in Our Genes* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2016). Various accounts of the history of eugenics suggest that in his 1883 book *Hereditary Genius* (London: Macmillan, 1869), Francis Galton coined the term "eugenics" to refer to what later became a global science that advocated controlled selective breeding of human populations (for instance, by means of sterilisation) to improve the population's genetic composition. Galton insisted upon human hierarchies and advocated the selective breeding of "the better sorts" (i.e. the English elites and aristocracy) to ensure that they bred in larger numbers than the poor, working class and other inferior classes. In 1873, he wrote in *The Times* (Francis Galton, "Africa for the Chinese", *The Times*, 5 June 1873, <http://galton.org/letters/africa-for-chinese/AfricaForTheChinese.htm>) that it would be best if Africa was colonised, because the "negro race" would not develop by themselves. Galton was also convinced that Boer advances during South African War indicated that something needed to be done urgently, for instance compulsory sterilisation, to improve the British national stock. Other sources on the history of eugenics include Edwin Black, *War against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003); Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics, 1927-1945: Crossing Boundaries*, ed. Robert S. Cohen, Jürgen Renn and Kostas Gavroglu, vol. 259, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6600-9>; Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511817199>; and Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington, VT: University of Vermont Press, 2009).
- 8 Steffen Jensen, *Gangs, Politics & Dignity in Cape Town* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008).
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 See Steven L. Robins, *Letters of Stone: from Nazi Germany to South Africa* (Cape Town: Penguin, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevLett.116.145302>
- 11 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 10.
- 12 See David Olusoga, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).

- 13 This discussion of Fischer draws extensively from the work of Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics, 1927-1945: Crossing Boundaries* and Annegret Ehmann. See 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 J. Peck (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 115-33.
- 14 George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 217, <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226772448.001.0001>
- 15 *Ibid.*, 233-34. In 1865, Gregor Johann Mendel discovered laws of biological inheritance that were controversial at the time but had, by the early 1890s, come to be accepted in scientific circles.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 234.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 217-25.
- 18 Eugen Fischer, *Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardisierungsproblem beim Menschen: Anthropologische und Ethnologische Studien am Rehobother Bastardvolk in Deutsch-Suedwestafrika* (Jena: Verlag Gustav Fischer, 1913), <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01943440>
- 19 See Handri Walters, “Tracing Objects of Measurement: Locating Intersections of Race, Science and Politics at Stellenbosch University” (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2018).
- 20 Erwin Baur, Fritz Lenz and Eugen Fischer, *Grundriss der Menschlichen Erblchkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene* (Munich: Lehmann, 1923), <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.33345>
- 21 Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer and Fritz Lenz, *Human Heredity* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931), <https://doi.org/10.1097/00007611-193111000-00017>.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 192.
- 23 Francis Galton, *The Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* (London: John Murray, 1853).
- 24 UNESCO, *The Race Concept: Results of an Inquiry* (Paris: Unesco, 1952).
- 25 Angela Saini, “Why Race Science Is On the Rise Again”, *The Guardian*, 18 May 2019, <https://bit.ly/31C87Iu>
- 26 Angela Saini, *Superior: The Return of Race Science* (London: 4th Estate, 2019).
- 27 Saini, “Why Race Science Is On the Rise Again”.
- 28 Nieuwoudt et al., “Retracted Article: Age- and Education-Related Effects on Cognitive Functioning in Colored South African Women”, 1-2.

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