

A Scientific Conspiracy

Founded in 1970, the Behavioral Genetics Association (BGA) is dedicated to the “scientific study of the interrelationship of genetic mechanisms and behavior, both human and animal.”¹ Like many professional organizations, the BGA has the president of the association address the banquet at the annual meeting. In 1995 the president of the BGA was Florida State University psychologist Glayde Whitney, who had been on the editorial board of the association’s journal, *Behavior Genetics*, for a number of years and had an established research program investigating taste preferences in mice. His address, “Twenty-five Years of Behavioral Genetics,” started in a typical fashion for such occasions, as Whitney recounted his training at the University of Minnesota and his arrival at Florida State University in 1970, where he established his “mouse lab” and began his lifelong research program. The address soon took a different turn, however, as Whitney began discussing the racial basis of crime. Such an investigation had been hampered, he declared, by the dogma that the environment determined all behavioral traits and by the taboo against scientific research into race. Whitney decried these trends, as he saw them: “The Marxist-Lysenkoist denial of genetics, the emphasis on environmental determinism for all things human . . . [represents an] invasion of left-liberal political sentiment [that] has been so extensive that many of us think that way without realizing it.” Whitney’s invocation of Lysenkoism was a quick one-two punch for his audience of geneticists. First, it called up the discredited doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Often called “Lamarckism” after Jean-Baptiste de Lamarck, one of its eighteenth-century proponents, it claims that changes to the body caused by the environment could be passed down through the generations. Second, it recalled that when Trofim Lysenko, a Stalinist functionary, declared Lamarckism was demanded by Marxist ideology, geneticists who refused to toe this party line were purged.² For many in the

West, “Lysenkoism” became a cautionary tale for the dangers of control over the free inquiry of science—science should remain apolitical, or bad science is the result.

Against this leftist tide, Whitney declared that objective scientists should fearlessly investigate racial differences in behavior. As an example, Whitney used crime data from the United Nations to argue, “Like it or not, it is a reasonable scientific hypothesis that some, perhaps much, of the race difference in murder rate is caused by genetic differences in contributory variables such as low intelligence, lack of empathy, aggressive acting out, and impulsive lack of foresight.” Whitney ended his address with a call for behavioral geneticists to “do for group differences what we have already accomplished with individual differences.”³

Many BGA members were appalled by Whitney’s address. Beginning in the 1930s, Daniel Kevles has argued, “students of human heredity insisted that human genetic investigations had to be emancipated from the biases that had colored mainline-eugenic research—notably the attentiveness to vague and often prejudiced behavioral categories.” After World War II and the overt eugenic racism of the Nazi regime, geneticists in general, and human geneticists in particular, had struggled to guard their growing discipline from accusations of racism. BGA member Nicholas Martin spoke for many of his fellow geneticists following Whitney’s address: “To have all this blown in one evening by one insensitive person is galling, to say the least.”⁴

The official minutes of the business meeting noted that Whitney had “shared his feelings about ethnic differences.” The Executive Committee also made explicit that “the Association has no official spokesman and the presidential address does not represent official policy of the association.” For some, this disavowal of Whitney’s speech was not enough, and there were calls for his resignation. Two members resigned from the BGA Executive Committee in protest, including the incoming president, Pierre Roubertoux. A compromise was eventually reached where Whitney would not be asked to resign but would not attend next year’s meeting and would not identify himself with the BGA when he wrote on racial differences.⁵

In 1998, in his next published piece on racial differences, however, Whitney was listed as the “Past President of the Behavioral Genetics Association,” and unlike his presidential address, the piece brought him some national notoriety. The piece was the introduction to the autobiog-

raphy of David Duke, the American Nazi and Klansman. The major theme of Whitney's presidential address, that racial differences were real and that scientific investigation into them was being smothered, was reemphasized in this introduction but with a new element: the Jewish conspiracy to control academia. "From personal experience in academia," he wrote, "it is sometimes hard to believe that Jews constitute only 2% or 3% of the general population. Individuals of Jewish ancestry are vastly overrepresented in the ranks of highly successful scientists." When these Jews organized, danger was afoot, for "[o]rganized Jewry . . . dogmatically attempts to keep the general population from awareness of the findings of modern science."⁶

As Whitney came under increasing criticism, Florida State University, like the BGA, anxiously distanced itself from his views. The university was quick to defend his freedom to write and speak as he saw fit, without agreeing with his conclusions. Robert J. Contreras, his departmental chair, made it clear that "Gladyde's views are his alone and do not represent my views or those of the department."⁷

While Whitney's brief national fame quickly faded, he continued to write on racial difference and the smothering of scientific research. Whitney's most extensive critique of Jewish control over racial research was given in 2000 at the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Institute for Historical Review (IHR), where he claimed:

Even though common knowledge among academics, the suppression of knowledge about Jewish involvement in issues linking genetics, race, psychology is being actively pursued. In many countries "politically incorrect" discussion of these topics can get you fired, while worldwide the B'nai B'rith and allied pressure groups are pushing to criminalize any mention of race differences.⁸

It was no accident that Whitney made these claims at this venue. The IHR was dedicated to "historical research" that purported to show the Nazi genocide of Jews was a myth created by worldwide Jewish conspiracy to extort money. The parallels between the IHR's conspiracies about the fabrication of history and Whitney's conspiracies about the taboo on racial research were the result of a commonly shared anti-Semitic worldview. For example, Whitney pointed to the early-twentieth-century rise of cultural anthropology that signaled "the shift from legitimate science to ide-

ological pap under the direction of the Jewish immigrant Franz Boas.” Boas as the chief villain of racial science was a theme in other writings by members of the IHR.⁹

While he had saved his depreciation of Jewish control over scientific research for David Duke and the IHR, the basic thrust of Whitney’s argument about the taboo on racial research and the reality of racial differences in crime appeared in pieces he authored long before. In a 1990 article, Whitney had surveyed the history of behavioral genetics, noting that the decline in hereditarian thinking owed in large part to political rather than scientific reasons. After the Nazi regime, Whitney noted, “considerations of genetic bases of individual and group differences in human and animal behavior tended to be received with an assortment of responses that ranged from impolite to insensitive to outrageous violations of taboo. Even today it is not unusual for the epithet ‘Nazi’ to be hurled at any public discussant of behavior genetics.” In a 1995 article in the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, Whitney explained the decline of hereditarian thought in a similar fashion and argued that it was time to abandon environmental explanations for human behavior. “The theory of a flat Earth at the center of the universe would not have gotten us to the moon,” he wrote, “and environmental determinist theories of human behavior have not yet solved most of our social problems.” Writing specifically about race and crime, Whitney declared in 1990 that “[i]nclusion of a racial dimension in developmental studies obviously could be productive for criminology. Ignoring or denying the possible genetic bases of racial differences in criminal behavior has not made the differences go away.”¹⁰

The Whitney episode represents a number of tensions in postwar American scientific discourse. There is a tension between Whitney’s claim of the reality of racial differences and his claim that scientific research into racial differences has been taboo—how do scientists know if this reality if the research is smothered? There is a similar tension between mainstream scientists’ toleration of claims of racial differences in staid scientific prose and their attempts to distance themselves and their professional organizations from those claims when baldly stated. These tensions and the arguments that give rise to them have a documented history in the United States. Since the 1920s a small number of scientists have lent their names and the mantle of scientific objectivity to the political cause of the American racialist right wing. The focus of this book is to explore the symbiotic relationship between racist ideology and science by exam-

ining the origins of these arguments in the fight to preserve racial segregation in the 1950s and 1960s. My central argument is that science provides racist ideology with important rhetorical tools that allow the perpetuation of racist claims that would otherwise not be tolerated in public discourse. At the same time, the use of science, or rather speaking in a scientific mode, gives us insight into the nature of science.

Massive Resistance and Racism

The three great racist regimes were Germany during the Nazi era (1933–1945), South Africa during apartheid (1948–1980), and the American South before 1965. It was in these three regimes that, as George Fredrickson has argued, “white supremacy attained its fullest ideological and institutional development.”¹¹ In the American South, whites articulated their defense of the racist regime most fully in two historical periods. The first was between 1830 and 1865, when the threat of slave uprising and a militant abolitionist movement required the white South to elaborate the “proslavery argument” against threats to the established order. The second was in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*, when the burgeoning civil rights movement required a similarly elaborate defense of the “southern way of life” that segregation represented.

The proslavery argument has received a lot of historical attention, but despite the importance of the massive resistance movement, scholars have paid little attention to the articulated ideology of the segregationists. Historian David L. Chappell wrote, “Historians have on the whole ignored the ideas of the segregationists of the 1950s and 1960s. They assume, apparently, that racism—which historians have studied from every conceivable angle—is enough to explain how and why people fought to preserve a racist institution in a specific time and place.”¹² Chappell argued that the segregationist cause ultimately failed, at least in part, because they had no coherent intellectual agenda. Writing on what he calls “The Divided Mind of Southern Segregationists,” Chappell states that there were at least two distinct groups of southern segregationists. The first group centered their demands on constitutional and legal arguments. For these writers, among them Senators Richard Russell of Georgia and Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, the U.S. Constitution laid out a specific division of powers between the state and federal governments. This division of powers was violated by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1954 *Brown* decision and

again in 1957 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in paratroopers to enforce the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. “After 1957,” writes Chappell, “the federal executive was helping the courts usurp the powers reserved to the states. According to this interpretation, it was not merely a state’s right, but an American’s duty, to resist [desegregation].”¹³

In Chappell’s second group were racial purists who believed that states’ rights were a diversion from the real issue, which was the threat of racial intermarriage. The archetypal example of this second group was segregationist writer Carleton Putnam—a key figure in this book. Time and time again, Putnam warned that the South was wasting its time with the call to defend “states’ rights” and should instead call forth the true danger: miscegenation. Putnam laid out his case clearly in a speech before the Citizens’ Council of Jackson, Mississippi, in 1961:

The issue here is *not* equality of opportunity. The issue here is *not* the democratic way of life. The issue here is that school integration is social integration, that social integration always and everywhere, has and does lead to intermarriage in the long run and that intermarriage, under our population ratios in the South, will destroy our society.¹⁴

Putnam believed that science had proven the truth of his contention regarding the dangers of miscegenation and was the most outspoken publicist for a small group of scientists who provided him with his scientific armamentarium. Yet Putnam’s racism, based as it was on the notion that the races were clearly divided by immutable differences, was not the only argument science could provide to the South. It was possible to defend segregation scientifically without resorting to biological racism of this sort. When it came time directly to assault the *Brown* decision, segregationist lawyers abandoned Putnam’s biological argument in favor of an argument that did not turn on essential biological differences between the races but that held it was sociologically and psychologically beneficial for the races to attend separate schools. That the segregationists could so easily abandon an essentialist argument about race gives us insight into the flexibility and adaptability of racial ideology.

Recent writers on the history of racial ideology in Western thought and society agree that racism is a recent phenomenon, quite different from forms of subjection and oppression that existed before the late eighteenth century. Audrey Smedley provides a convenient listing of the traditional

relevant elements of racial ideology that distinguishes it from “mere” ethnocentrism: first, humans can be classified into discrete biological groups; second, these groups can be arranged hierarchically; third, physical characteristics of human beings are indications of their inner mental and spiritual qualities; fourth, these qualities are inherited; fifth, and finally, these racial groupings are fixed and cannot be transcended.¹⁵

One puzzle this has left for historians is that racial oppression, or what certainly looks like racial oppression, has existed in times and places when there was no coherent concept of a race to support it. The most telling example is the racialized slavery that developed through the Atlantic slave system in the Americas. Europeans developed the racialized slavery that typified the American South without a firm concept of Africans as racially “other.”¹⁶ One historian who has addressed this dilemma is George Fredrickson. Fredrickson notes that the South African regime that founded apartheid did so because of cultural rather than biological differences. Fredrickson concludes that our conceptualization of the ideology of racism needs to be reformulated in light of the different ideological justifications for racial oppression. “If the term racism is to apply,” Fredrickson argues, “its association with the specific form of biological determinism that justified slavery and segregation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries must be regarded as fortuitous rather than essential.” In his most recent book, Fredrickson noted correctly that “deterministic cultural particularism can do the work of biological racism quite effectively.”¹⁷

Science and Objectivity

The actors at the center of this book were scientists, and as such, they had a unique voice in American society. One way the objectivity of science could aid the segregationist cause was by providing appeals to the natural order of the world. Scientific arguments could be persuasive in the public forum because “science” had, and has, a unique cultural authority in American society.

In a public dispute in the postwar United States, science is a powerful weapon. As Gordon Mitchell has argued, “Advocates who can claim successfully the mantle of objectivity tend to gain the upper hand in public disputes by virtue of their ability to exploit the ethos of scientific research and tie their arguments to favorable cultural practices about the scientific

practice.”¹⁸ At the center of this conception of objectivity is the idea that a scientific text does not represent the perspective of the author but is rather an unmediated account of how the world “really” is. This notion of objectivity, called “the view from nowhere” by Thomas Nagel or the “god trick” by Donna Haraway, allows scientists to present their arguments without acknowledging scientists’ own agency in their creation.¹⁹

David Hollinger has cast the notion of scientific objectivity in terms of personae. He argues that modernity has two hallmarks: In the *strategy of artifice*, people respond to the modern condition by creating resources artistically, as a novelist or painter might. The *strategy of reference*, by contrast, looks to the logical analysis of the world provided by science; instead of creating something new, it seeks to discover what is already there. Hollinger argues that these two strategies can be represented by the personae of “Artificer” versus “Knower.” The Artificer embraces such terms as “making, generative, contriving, myth-constructing,” while the Knower embraces “finding, referential, demystifying.” The Knower persona presented itself as the discoverer of a truth that existed in nature rather than a truth created by artistic endeavor.²⁰

The Knower persona was, itself, a creation of the scientific enterprise and grew out of the increasingly social nature of scientific investigation in the nineteenth century. Lorraine Daston has called the “view from nowhere” “aperspectival objectivity” that aims at “eliminating individual . . . idiosyncrasies.”²¹ One way scientists present themselves as aperspectival is through a specific form of writing that “focus[es] attention away from people and toward things.”²² Scientific prose is designed to give the impression that it is not the author who is making the argument but nature; hence to dispute science is foolishly and futilely to dispute nature.

The appeal to nature as a justification for racism was, as Michael L. Blakely argued, “endemic, untested, and marginal compared to other justifications [for racial inequity] throughout much of European history” and did not come to the fore until the rise of science.²³ When science proclaimed the biological basis of our social relations, the result was to undercut attempts at social reform. Immaculada de Melo-Martin argues that both critics and supporters of biological determinism in human affairs agree that “if biological determinism were correct, then we would be exempt from critically analyzing and maybe transforming our social practices and institutions.”²⁴ We cannot possibly change the present order because it is nature’s order.

When Glayde Whitney invoked the dangers of leftist-Lysenkoist doctrines, he was, perhaps unknowingly, recreating the scientific–political battles in the early twentieth century between neo-Lamarckians and the new Mendelian/Weissmanian proponents of “hard heredity,” which declared that acquired characteristics could not be inherited. Often lost in the history of these battles was that those who believed the doctrine of hard heredity did so for both scientific and political reasons. As Robert Proctor has argued, those attracted to the notion of a heredity immune from environmental changes

were attracted to the conservative implications of this idea. Those objecting [to Lamarckian ideas of heredity] did so (in part) out of fears for the political implications conceived to flow from a doctrine that suggested a high degree of plasticity in the genetic or “racial” structure of life.²⁵

What was not made explicit in Whitney’s address was that *both* sides in the debate over the nature of heredity had a political stake; it was not just the Stalinist purges of apostate geneticists but also the horrors of race hygiene under Hitler. Whitney’s speech can then serve as a model for most of the figures I will address in this book: they refused to recognize that *their* science was imbued with their values and ideology. While using the club of “a science dictated by social wishes” against their political and scientific opponents, they did not acknowledge their own social and political stances toward purportedly scientific evidence.

Conspiracy Argument in Science

The scientists who spoke out in favor of segregation were a tiny minority compared to the “liberal orthodoxy” that reigned in the scientific academy in the 1950s and early 1960s. One reason the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Education Fund (NAACP-LDEF) could call upon social scientists to serve as expert witnesses in *Brown v. Board of Education* was that most working social scientists in psychology, sociology, and anthropology had rejected the scientific racism of the prewar era. Most American social scientists believed that segregation was harmful to the psychological development of school-children and that there were no fundamental differences in intelligence

between the races. Indeed, many scientists were rejecting the entire notion of race as a scientific concept.²⁶ Despite Glayde Whitney's protestations to the contrary, since the 1930s there has been very little scientific evidence for innate behavioral differences between races, even in IQ or intelligence. Indeed, the concepts of "race" and "IQ" are often argued to be scientifically valueless. And yet frequent, well-publicized studies, such as Arthur Jensen's "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" in 1969, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve* in 1994, and, indeed, Glayde Whitney's address in 1995, continue to draw the nation's attention back to the matter of innate differences between the "white" and "black" races.²⁷ In his recent history of racism in psychology, Graham Richards claims, "The interesting question is no longer which side is correct [on the race/IQ issue] but why the issue resists closure despite the demonstrable incoherence" of the case for differences in race and IQ.²⁸

I will answer Richards's question by arguing that for the past five decades, scientists who claim there are racial differences in IQ consistently have held that scientific truth was and is being muzzled by a conspiracy of powerful, shadowy figures who control the public airings of academic discourse. But, because of the unique cultural position of science in American society, scientists could use their minority status to their rhetorical advantage in the face of overwhelming rejection of their arguments by mainstream scientists and their organizations. While the public dispute over segregation is over—no one in public life calls for a return to legally enforced racial segregation—the dispute over the nature of the scientific inquiry into racial differences remains a live issue. J. Philippe Rushton, currently one of the more outspoken proponents of this view, claims that contemporary scientists are forbidden "even daring to look through the genetic analog of Galileo's telescope."²⁹ Invoking Galileo, as Rushton does, is drawing on the Galileo legend as "scientific folklore," to borrow Thomas Lessl's phrase.³⁰ In particular, the Galileo legend is a cautionary tale that science, viewed as the search for the unvarnished truth, cannot be controlled by the superstition of the church. Peter Weingart argues, "The legacy of Galileo comes in two related but distinguishable parts: as the (ultimately futile) suppression of scientific 'truth' through church and/or state, and as the (equally unsuccessful) support of 'false' science (i.e. pseudo-science) and thus abuse of the authority of science."³¹ The conspiracy rhetoric invoked by racial researchers for five decades uses both sides of the Galileo legend.

In part, the consistency of this rhetoric is explained by the tight organizational structure of this particular scientific community. Often funded by the Pioneer Fund, a philanthropic organization founded in 1937 to support scientific research into human differences, this small coterie of scientists often write and publish in the somewhat obscure journal *Mankind Quarterly*. Since 1960, *Mankind Quarterly* and the scholars associated with it have held forth against what they view as the political domination of the scientific enterprise by liberals, Communists, and Jews.³²

The legend of Galileo is mirrored in the institutionalization of science in the postwar United States and the prevalence of the metaphor of science as a “free market.” Uskali Maki writes that, “The belief that there is—or should be—a market, or something like a market, within science, seems to be increasingly popular among philosophers, sociologists, and other students of science.”³³ Like Galileo, who should have been free from the dogmatism of the church, science should be free from all external controls. Such was the message of Vannevar Bush in *Science the Endless Frontier*, widely viewed as the template for the organization of the scientific community in the postwar United States.³⁴ David Hollinger writes:

Bush was merely codifying two popular beliefs that dominated American discourse about science and society in the 1920s and 1930s. First, knowledge advances the most quickly and surely when its pursuers are liberated from social influences of any kind. Second, society’s welfare ultimately depends upon advances in scientific knowledge. . . . Individual investigators were best left to do as they wished, for the truth controlled the outcome of inquiry in much the same way that Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” controlled the outcome of entrepreneurial activities.³⁵

This view of science as a free marketplace of ideas was put forth in order to free science from external controls, which, it was argued, belonged to the domain of “political questions.” According to this view, only scientists themselves could truly understand which questions to investigate and which answers would lead to the truth, which, presumably, would be socially useful.³⁶

The creation of this public image of science as a free market is an example what Thomas Gieryn refers to as “boundary work.” According to Gieryn, such work “construct[s] a rhetorical boundary between science and some less authoritative residual non-science.”³⁷ By demarcating

“real” science from its pretenders, Gieryn argues, scientists create the cultural space they need to exercise epistemic authority:

When credibility is publicly contested, putatively factual explanations or predictions about nature do not move naked from lab or scientific journal into courtrooms, boardrooms, newsrooms, or living rooms. Rather they are clothed in sometimes elaborate *representations* of science—compelling arguments for why science is uniquely best as a provider of trustworthy knowledge, and compelling narrations for why my science (but not theirs) is *bona fide*.³⁸

These public disputes over what “counts” as trustworthy science are influenced by the notion of aperspectival objectivity. Science reveals the truth about nature because it speaks with no one’s voice. But the Knower, like all personae, is a constructed identity—even the most dedicated believer in scientism knows that scientific articles do not write themselves. However, the objective ideal nonetheless relies on forms of social relations in which scientists are isolated from the larger, social environment. It is this isolation that produces knowledge. David Hollinger wrote, “The presumption has remained that the crucial dynamism in [knowledge’s] wondrous advance was human energy, distinctly organized. Whatever might be the ontological status of truth itself, knowledge of it was inseparable from the human activity of truthseeking.”³⁹ This social organization required that science be an autonomous field of activity, free from social and political concerns. The architects of postwar U.S. science policy freed science from many institutional controls by contrasting the failures of science in totalitarian regimes with its triumphs in democratic ones. Steve Fuller points to Harvard’s James B. Conant as one architect of the public image of science after World War II:

Conant sold the public value of “basic research” . . . by providing contrasting explanations for the success of the atomic bomb project and the failures of Lysenkoism in Russia and eugenics in Nazi Germany. The atomic bomb was built because the relevant aspects of atomic physics were already known. This knowledge was the natural outgrowth of the physics research agenda, not agenda of some governmental planning board. . . . By contrast, the Russians and Germans wanted science on demand to suit their ideological goals. This resulted not only in political failure, but also in the perversion of science.⁴⁰

This view of science is an argument by disassociation, whereby “real” science results from a scientific community that is free from outside control and “false” science results from one that is constrained by political or social norms.⁴¹ Researchers who maintain that science has demonstrated racial differences in intelligence have used this disassociation. *Their* science is the one threatened by political outsiders who should have no place in science.

The scientific defenses of segregation, and other controversies around the existence of innate racial differences, are examples of “expulsion debates,” which Gieryn defines as “a contest between rival authorities, each of whom claims to be scientific. All sides seek to legitimate their claims about natural reality as scientifically made and vetted inside the authoritative cultural space, while drawing up a map to put discrepant claims and claimants outside (or at least on the margins).”⁴² In a manner similar to Conant and Bush, race/IQ researchers charge that the attacks on racial research are motivated by ideological, rather than scientific, reasons. Conspiracy rhetoric is well suited to create a rhetorical boundary around the race/IQ researchers’ “good science” and the “bad science” of their critics.

Just as scientists’ boundary work is a disassociation that separates real science from pretend science, conspiracy rhetoric is a disassociation that aims to separate social reality from its appearance.⁴³ In the political sphere, conspiracy rhetoric flourishes during time of social stress when those who perceive themselves as powerless begin to posit the “real” explanation for society’s ills as a conspiracy of a powerful group who is ultimately responsible. As David Zarefsky writes, “It is alarming to think that a secret cabal is afoot, but some stability is provided by the belief that one knows what is going on, can make sense of difficult and complex phenomena, and hence can be on one’s guard.”⁴⁴

In conspiracy rhetoric, however, “normal modes of appeal are viti-ated.”⁴⁵ Conspiracies are committed in secret, by powerful figures. Moreover, counterinstances can always be “reinterpreted as the work of clever conspirators to conceal their true intentions”; thus, concludes Zarefsky, “[s]ince the argument can neither be proved or disproved, who ‘wins’ will likely depend upon who shoulders the burden of proof.”⁴⁶

In the debate over the reality of racial differences, those who endorsed scientifically proven racial differences seized presumption and pushed the burden of proof onto their opponents by offering two arguments. First, they maintained that science has proven the existence of these racial dif-

ferences. In other words, the status quo (which by definition enjoys presumption) lies with those who argue for racial differences. Hence it is the burden of racial egalitarians to establish a case for racial equality. Second, those who argue for racial inequality argue that scientific research is smothered by a conspiracy to stop racial research. Obviously these two claims are in tension: if race research is stifled, how can we know that science has proven racial differences? However, because both claims are offered in the context of a conspiracy, both are used to prove the existence of the conspiracy—hence the conspiracy argument is “self-sealing.”

Segregationist scientists depended on the public image of science as free inquiry. The conspiracy claim gained persuasive power because the notion of an ideologically controlled science was anathema to how science was widely perceived in U.S. culture. It was not necessarily government that was controlling racial research, however. Identification of those responsible for the conspiracy depended on who was making the argument and where they were making it: Jews, Communists, liberals, cultural anthropologists, and “politically correct” professors have all been fingered as those responsible for silencing the objective science of racial research. All these claims gain coherence from their ability to link to widespread beliefs about the autonomy of science from social influences.

Although segregationist scientists differed on a number of points, a central point of their agenda was to debunk the “equalitarian dogma” of modern anthropology. Glayde Whitney was hardly the first to criticize modern anthropology and Franz Boas in particular; such criticisms date back at least to the early part of the twentieth century, when Boas first rose to prominence. According to the segregationist line in the 1950s, Franz Boas and his students, the “equalitarians,” had substituted their political and religious belief in racial equality for hard scientific evidence when they proclaimed the races equal. The equalitarians had infiltrated the scientific establishment and, through political pressure, had successfully suppressed the truth about racial differences in a host of disciplines. In control of hiring and tenure decisions of all major universities and the publication boards of major scientific publishers, the equalitarians quickly and severely punished any “objective” scientists who dared reveal that the races were fundamentally unequal. In this way, the equalitarians perpetuated what segregationist and psychologist Henry E. Garrett described as “the scientific hoax of the century.”⁴⁷

According to the segregationist scientists, in the *Brown* school desegregation case the equalitarians succeeded in writing their scientific hoax

into constitutional law. In *Brown* the Supreme Court had found that segregation psychologically damaged schoolchildren, citing the work of Kenneth B. Clark and other social scientists who had worked with the NAACP-LDEF. After *Brown*, segregationist scientists took to print arguing that Clark and his colleagues had misled the Court about racial differences, and they eventually went to court themselves, serving as expert witnesses at trials directly aimed at a reversal of *Brown* on the basis of their scientific testimony.

If they spoke in the voice of science, the segregationist scientists' forum was the courtroom, which further complicates how they framed their arguments. Historians have noted that one of the struggles social scientists have had in American culture is the difficulty in getting people to replace their "common sense" about the social world with "expert knowledge" as provided by social scientists. This problem was particularly acute in a court of law when scientists would be called as expert witnesses to provide testimony on race relations. Courts consistently refused to substitute scientific understanding of race for "common sense" understandings.⁴⁸

The segregationist scientists were then in a unique rhetorical position. Just as they were in the scientific minority, they were in the popular majority—especially in the American South. In their testimony, segregationist scientists were providing scientific evidence that *supported* common-sense notions of race in the American South. Most white Southerners assumed that African Americans were not as smart, industrious, or trustworthy as white Americans.

The objectivity of these institutions was particularly important for upper-class defenders of segregation. In his study of the Citizens' Councils, Neil McMillen noted that many white Southerners had an obsession with respectability. Many wanted to defy integration but also wanted to distance themselves from the violence and destructiveness of the Ku Klux Klan and other militant branches of the massive resistance movement.⁴⁹ Litigation offered one road to respectability, as violence and threats were put aside in favor of reasoned discourse within an accepted legal forum. Layered over the respectability offered by the courts was the respect garnered by science. Science, viewed as a value-neutral, apolitical institution, could transform highly emotional issues of human differences into one of objective reality, immune from moral criticism. Hence the prospect of embracing both the neutrality of science and the neutrality of law offered segregationists a unique opportunity to claim the mantle of objective truth. The court system provided the perfect venue for segregationist sci-

entists because it allowed them to take advantage of their minority status within the scientific community. Segregationist scientists knew that their views did not reflect those of the vast majority of their scientific colleagues; indeed, several professional scientific associations drew up formal resolutions of condemnation of segregationist science. However, as the segregationist scientists were fond of saying, scientific truths were not decided by majority vote but rather by the cogency of scientific arguments. As the antimajoritarian branch of government, segregationist scientists believed, the court system provided perfect venue for them to put forth their case and let the court decide if the evidence was sound and the conclusions worthy. The segregationist scientists felt that judges, as experts in sifting evidence and discovering truth, would prove that segregation was scientifically justified. I hope to explore in some depth how the twin facets of the “objectivity” of the law and the “objectivity” of science were melded in these cases.

Organization of the Book

The second chapter traces the origins of the conspiracy rhetoric in the professionalization of Boasian anthropology and its opposition by racial anthropologists, most notably New Yorker Madison Grant. Grant despised Boas as a Jewish leftist who was polluting the science of anthropology. A key figure here was Virginian Earnest Sevier Cox, who was a close associate of Grant. Unlike Grant, Cox was concerned with “the Negro Question” and, far more than Grant, saw the racial problems of the United States through the lens of the black/white binary. Cox also lived three decades longer than Grant, becoming a central figure in the racist underground in the postwar United States.

Chapter 3 explores the origins and ideology of that racist underground, which came up into the sunlight in the late 1950s. I trace the origins of different groups of activists who eventually joined together by 1959. First were the heirs to the anti-Semitic worldview of Madison Grant and associated with the “Northern League” a Nordacist group organized by British writer Roger Pearson and American political activist Willis Carto. The Northern League members published a series of interlocking publications such as *Truth Seeker*, *Northern World*, and *Western Destiny*. In these publications, Northern Leaguers held forth against the

Jewish domination of the Western world and championed the Nordic as the true representative of the white race.

Chapter 4 examines a second group concerned about the Boasian conspiracy. This group was composed of an older generation of southern scientists who had grown up under segregation. These men were born in the late nineteenth century or the first two decades of the twentieth century. A good example of this group was psychologist Henry E. Garrett, one of three scientists who testified in favor of segregation during the *Brown* litigation. Garrett was on the faculty of Columbia University for decades before retiring in 1956 and assuming a position in his home state at the University of Virginia. Also in this group was anatomist Wesley C. George, who had been on the faculty of the University of North Carolina Medical School since 1919. For this group, having grown up in the South during the height of Jim Crow, the dismantling of segregation represented the dismantling of their culture. They were fully prepared to use their scientific expertise to defend the old order.

In chapter 5, I look at how these two groups came together in a formal organization. They were joined by a number of what I have chosen to call the “idiosyncratic conservatives.” Ernst van den Haag, psychoanalyst and social philosopher, was one of the earliest critics of the use of social science in *Brown*. A. James Gregor, who was closely associated with members of the Northern League, published widely within the social science literature criticizing *Brown*, published psychological studies with psychologists R. Travis Osborne and Stanley Porteus, and wrote highly theoretical articles on racial thought. These writers rejected the notion that African Americans were biologically inferior to white Americans and instead based their arguments for segregation on notions of group identity. These disparate groups came together in their own professional organization, the International Society for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics (IAAEE), founded in Washington, DC, in 1959. The expressed function of the IAAEE was objectively to investigate racial differences and to publicize their findings.

The IAAEE provided an organizational basis for the scientific attack on *Brown*, which is explored in chapter 6. The district court in the first of these cases, *Stell*, found segregation constitutional, justified on the basis of the inferiority of African Americans. The *Stell* decision was overruled by the court of appeals. The subsequent cases were forced to follow the rule laid down by the appeals court and the cases were denied a hear-

ing by the U.S. Supreme Court. The court cases died with a whimper after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which permanently ended *de jure* segregation in the American South.

In chapter 7, I look at how the mainstream scientific community struggled with the segregationist scientist attack. The mainstream scientific community needed respond to the segregationist appropriation of science when asked to do so by educational groups who were being bombarded with segregationist propaganda. Additionally, the scientific community struggled with notions of what it meant to be an objective scientist and the relationship between the production of scientific knowledge and the role of the scientist in the larger society.

In the final chapter I explore how the issues raised by the IAAEE proved enduring. The mainstream scientific community reacted to the activities of the IAAEE and struggled to take back the authority of science from what they viewed as the segregationists' abuses of science. Despite a number of official condemnations of the conspiracy charges, within a few years William Shockley and Arthur Jensen would put forth the position that there were significant heritable differences in IQ separating the races and that racial research was being smothered by political liberals. Of course, given the changes in political climate, no one argued on the basis of these arguments that the country should return to legally enforced segregation. Nonetheless, the conspiracy argument remains.