

The entanglement of racism and Individualism: The U.S. National Defence Education Act of 1958 and the individualization of “intelligence” and educational policy

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While primarily concerned with developments in the 1950s, this analysis begins by reexamining the historiography of IQ and intelligence testing in the first half of the 20th century, indicating as it does so an emergent emphasis on the individualization of “intelligence” in the Stanford/Iowa IQ debates of the 1930s. Given the character and tendency of the trend that emerges, I propose a model for understanding these developments: one which situates conceptions of racial and individual “intelligence” as entangled and co-evolving ideologies. With this historiographical model in place I turn to evidence from National Defense Education Act (NDEA) hearings and related NDEA-era texts. These documents demonstrate that NDEA reforms attempted to rehabilitate testing as fair and “race”-neutral, and were further structured around the logics of individual “ability.” While NDEA reforms asserted that such individualization of educational opportunity was a scientifically objective, “race”-neutral process, discourse analysis reveals that it was instead profoundly entangled with the logics of “race” and a history — indeed a present — from which it imagined it had cut itself loose.

Just as a serpent, when it sheds its skin
casts off old age and is resplendent in
its glittering scales and now, made new again,
rejoices...

— Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (Mandelbaum, 2017)

Overview: *Brown v. Board* and the National Defense Education Act (NDEA)

The 1950s have been historicized as a period of upheaval and transformation in US public education. The decade witnessed, notably, two monumental and unprecedented federal interventions in the nation’s schools: the *Brown v. Board* Supreme Court decision and the passage of the National Defense Education Act

(NDEA). With its unanimous 1954 ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education* rendered unconstitutional any and all state laws maintaining separate schooling for Blacks and Whites. *Brown* thereby ended the legality of segregation in US schools (upheld to that point by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision) and compelled what had been all-White public schools and school systems to open their doors to African Americans “with all deliberate speed.” Though the legal impetus of *Brown* was directed primarily at Southern (i.e. former slave-holding, Jim Crow) states where state-level laws still enforced segregation, the moral mandate of *Brown* was nonetheless felt nationwide, North and South.¹ School districts across the country characterized by longstanding patterns of de facto residential (as opposed to explicitly de jure) segregation soon also felt increasing pressure to integrate following the Supreme Court ruling. Richard Kluger has written of the Supreme Court decision that “probably no case ever to come before the nation’s highest tribunal affected more directly the minds, hearts and daily lives of so many Americans” (Kluger 2011, xii). Yet, while hailed by many as an unmitigated Civil Rights advance, *Brown’s* actual implementation over the decades following its ruling has often been characterized by foot-dragging and lapse, and a variety of other forms of resistance, some of which will be recovered and explored below. *Brown’s* promise to this day remains largely unfulfilled (Hannah-Jones 2014a, 2014b; Rosenberg 2008, 42–71).

The other landmark midcentury educational reform, The National Defense Education Act (passed in 1958, just four years after *Brown*) marked a precedent-setting expansion of federal funding of US public schools. While widely understood as a bill for the improvement of mathematics and science education in the wake of the 1957 Sputnik Crisis, a notable, though underexamined aspect of NDEA legislation was its incentives for curricular stratification by “ability.”² About 50%

of its total spending was for increased “intelligence” testing, and guidance and placement strategies, which worked hand in hand with independently voiced calls for strengthening of curriculum (particularly math and science) and grouping by “ability” in schools across the nation (Porter 2017a; Urban 2010, 172-173; National Defense Education Act 1958, 1592). Whereas *Brown’s* implementation was resisted, and in many regions



George Hayes, Thurgood Marshall, and James Nabrit on the steps of the US Supreme Court following the 1954 *Brown v. Board* ruling. Photo courtesy of Getty Images.

reversed by the early the 21st century, the NDEA quickly became foundational to post-WWII US educational policy. As the first major, non-categorical federal spending bill for US public education, the NDEA was the progenitor of and blueprint for subsequent presidential administrations’ education legislation. It also marked the arrival and institutionalization of mass-testing in US public education.

Brown v. Board and the National Defense Education Act are often historicized separately as part of compartmentalized Civil Rights and Cold War trajectories. Yet drawing them into historiographic relation reveals a mid-century tug-of-war over the structure of educational opportunity. This was a struggle moreover which played out on top of a longer-running shift in expert discourses about group and individual difference. *Brown’s* mandate to desegregate, for example, sought to broaden and equalize access to public education in the interest of racial justice. It thus worked at the level of the group in an attempt to unmake institutional logics of group difference. The NDEA, as I will argue below, can be seen conversely as a subsequent program for educational selection and stratifi-

cation, and one predicated on claims of natural *individual* difference. As such these rapid mid-century transformations in public education mark an opportune place to engage in historical analysis of arguments about groups and individuals in educational policy-making and the social sciences. To this end, this article examines — in the NDEA moment — a reintensified emphasis in an educational context on identifying and sorting by what were alleged to be natural *individual* differences. In demonstrating the preponderance of “individualization” here, this analysis further suggests the historiographical implications of a broader, longer shift in claims about the “intelligence” (or educability) of groups and individuals through the interwar and into the post-Second World War eras. Such claims are, I argue, entangled and historically co-evolving.

One demonstrable manifestation of this entanglement is that these NDEA-related discourses pressing the common sense of grouping by “individual ability” worked to *justify* durable structural changes that remade or maintained divisions by “race” (and so “race” itself) *via* racialized tracking. Educational sociologists have documented both a black-white achievement gap and nation-wide patterns of racialized tracking, beginning in the 1960s and carrying on into the 21st century (Clotfelter 2011, 126-147; Coleman 1966; Oakes 2005; Tyson 2011, 60-67). Indeed, sociologist Karolyn Tyson situates racialized tracking in historical proximity to *Brown* and desegregation. She finds moreover that the overrepresentation of white students and the underrepresentation of students of color in honors, advanced and college preparatory classes — reproduces educational structures that can lead to the implicit association of whiteness with “smarts” or academic achievement. Tyson maintains on these points that, “students’ tendency to link achievement with whiteness emerged after desegregation and is a consequence of racialized tracking...” (2011, 6, 15).

This article’s examination of interwar debates on “race” and “individual intelligence,” and of ensuing NDEA policy-making related to the individualization of “ability” then begins to fill in the historical linkages that Tyson and others have suggested. This analysis reconstructs how “schools within schools” (Meister, 114) — segregating intramurally by individual “ability” as they were compelled to integrate by “race” — were justified as a model for US public education in the

years following the passage of the National Defense Education Act. This was a moment when some of the boundaries and markers of “race” could have been unmade — at least in part and in these particular contexts — in an earnest fulfillment of the promise of *Brown*. Instead they were remade here as “individual ability” through the systematic reintensification of testing and grouping.

This article begins (sec. II) by reexamining a well-established historiography of IQ and intelligence testing in the first half of the 20th century, indicating as it does so, an emergent emphasis on the individualization of “intelligence” in the Stanford/Iowa IQ debates of the 1930s. I then follow this discourse into educational policy prescriptions under Truman in the late 1940s. Given the character and tendency of this trend, I propose a model (sec. III) for understanding these developments, one which situates “race”-group and individual “intelligence” as entangled and co-evolving ideologies. Such an interpretive framework makes possible the historicization of both “race” and individual “intelligence” as social constructs and — in their overlapping and reinforcing applications — as instruments of differentiation and oppression.³

With this historiographical model in place I turn (secs. IV-VI) to evidence from three important and wide-reaching sets of sources in the post-*Brown*/NDEA-era: 1) pre-NDEA Congressional speech-making 2) hearings for the National Defense Education Act (1958), itself, and 3) planning documents related to James Bryant Conant’s NDEA-affiliated *The American High School Today* (1959). Here I demonstrate that these arguments for reform were structured around the logics of individual “ability,” the assumption that the proper positioning of such natural individual differences lay at the bedrock of liberal democracy, and the belief that individualized testing and placement were fair and “race”-neutral. Yet despite assertions of race-neutral individuality, this discourse analysis reveals nonetheless that the NDEA-era reform effort was profoundly entangled with the logics of “race” and a history — indeed a present — from which it imagined it had cut itself loose. Indeed, these entanglements between racism and individualism often manifested themselves in the affective registers of discursive exchange. In this regard, I am in sympathy with recent applications of the “emerging ‘emotional turn’ in history” to the study of the Cold War/Civil Rights era, an approach which opens new interpretive horizons by revealing “how policy recommendations, traditionally explained in rational terms, can be decoded by looking at the emotions surrounding them” (Costigliola 2016, 1076).

Background: Shifting the Difference from “Race” to Individual in Interwar Expert Discourses

This analysis builds on a history of IQ and intelligence testing for the First World War and interwar periods in the US (Carson 2007; Cravens 1993; Gould, 1996; Zenderland 2001). This historiography documents how mainstream psychometricians, such as Henry Goddard, Carl Brigham, Robert Yerkes and Lewis Terman, widely popularized the conception that differences in measured intelligence (IQ) were predominantly hereditary and moreover could be understood not only as a rankable distribution of individuals but also as a hierarchy of races (Brigham 1923; Cravens 1993, 23; Gould, 1996; 176-263; Yoakum and Yerkes, 1920).

While such claims about “intelligence” became a normative discourse over ensuing decades, durable lines of criticism also emerged from anthropology, sociology, and from within psychology itself (Carson 2007, 252). These social scientists produced a body of research through the twenties and thirties that actively sought to explode hereditarian assumptions about perceived or measured “race”-group differences in intelligence. They accomplished this largely through experimental refutations exposing fundamental flaws in the methods and analysis of First World War Army testing, and by actively exploring cultural and environmental influences on development and performance (Degler 1992, 67, 84-104, 167-178). By the early 1930s the “racial” verities of the World War I intelligence testers had been vigorously challenged and the cultural school now stood viably on its own impressive redoubt of scientific literature. Mainstream psychometricians had begun to quietly withdraw once-confident claims concerning the heredity of *group* differences (Gould 1996, 221-222). Yet, historians are in agreement that these withdrawals signaled for these actors not the positive refutation or disproof of biological theories of racial IQ but rather a stalemate between these scientific camps (Degler 1992, 184-185; Gould 1996, 221). This interwar shift in the social sciences can perhaps then be best described not as an overturning of the race-science of intelligence but a movement from racial dogma to doubt. “Race” had been thwarted — and in just precisely these terms — but certainly not undone.

In contrast, assumptions about the biological heritability and fixity of *individual* differences in measured intelligence would become — following its own set of debates and controversies — more deeply ensconced and widely accepted over the next several decades. The widely publicized debates between Iowa Child Welfare Research Center and Stanford psychometricians in

the late 1930s bear this dynamic out (Whipple 1940). Iowa researchers had consistently demonstrated significant changes in mean IQ in relatively small sample sizes of individuals over time and across often abrupt transitions in social environment, i.e. from orphanage to adoptive home (Cravens 1993, 185-216; Hilgard 1987, 481-482; Wellman 1934, 59-83). They concluded that individual IQ was a far more labile than had been previously believed. Stanford psychometricians, led by Lewis Terman and representing the normative center of the field, rejected the Iowa approach as methodologically flawed, and appealed instead to the long-established stability of individual IQ correlates within large statistical aggregates and across comparatively continuous social environments. Observing the heated rhetoric attending the debate, one commentator noted in 1940 that the IQ issue was now even more controversial than it had been in 1928, at the height of the “race”-group intelligence controversy (Whipple 1940, xvii). Indeed a great deal was at stake. If the validity and stability of IQ could also be questioned at the level of individual, then what good was it *at all* as a measure of natural difference?

In his careful reconstruction, historian Hamilton Cravens observes the Iowa research group’s challenge failed, and ultimately served to reify normative assumptions regarding the fixity of *individual* IQ. Cravens notes that the preponderance of studies assembled for a synopsis of the debate aligned with the Stanford position. Cravens also indicates that the Iowa research program as a whole — along with the scientific reputations of particular Iowa Child Welfare Centre researchers — declined noticeably following the controversy. Interest in the malleability hypothesis disappeared and did not reemerge as a coherent research approach until the mid to late-1960s, in the wake of the Johnson administration’s “compensatory education” programs such as Project Headstart (Cravens 1993, 202-216; Vinovskis 2008, 9-11). And though it became commonplace following the Iowa-Stanford controversy to avow the (albeit imprecisely defined) roles of both nature and nurture in individual development, here again Terman’s earlier assertion of a 4:1 weighting (nature to nurture) was still generally accepted as a kind of rule of thumb (Burks in Whipple 1928, 219-316; Cravens 1993, 200-201; Terman 1916, 115; Terman 1928, 362-369).

The Terman orthodoxy had prevailed. Moreover, the Iowa-Stanford controversy, coming as it did on the heels of the “race”-group IQ controversy, served to draw debate and attention more intensively toward the locus of *individual* difference, and to harden and reanneal the position that such individual differences

were preponderantly hereditary in nature and certainly largely fixed by early childhood (Cravens 1993, 132-134, 173-174). Cravens (1993, 257) describes this shift thus:

[The] individual could now be thought of as a person whose group membership was no fatalistic identity, and whose membership in a particular group could be questioned, if for no other reason than the individual’s perceived distinctiveness, idiosyncrasy and asymmetry.

The individual-as-individual — specifically in terms of his or her measured “intelligence” — was emerging from and standing more clearly distinguishable next to his or her circumstantial group identities.

Furthermore, this kind of individuality, narrowly defined within the technical parameters of a psychometric dispute, aligned itself in the post-Second World War era with broader and longer-running processes of individualization across other disciplines and moreover within US culture itself. The foregrounding of psychometric individuality occurred, for example, contemporaneously with emergent psychological and social science models arguing for the individual-temperamental origins of racism and authoritarianism, and in tandem with models for economic analysis that favored rational-choice individualism (Adorno et al. 1950; Gordon 2015; Herman 1996, 2, 310-315). It was also matched by atomizing political and economic trends themselves: namely the rise of consumer individualism, and a growing tendency in Cold War public and political rhetoric to position American-style governance — in direct contrast to the image of the authoritarian collective — as a democratic assemblage of free rights-bearing individuals (Cohen 2008, 124-33, 146-47, 189; Cravens in Solovey and Cravens 2012, 127, 132). Of course, too, overt indications of racist or “race”-driven institutional policies at the heart of US democracy were increasingly a political liability — especially in the aftermath of Nazi atrocities — in both a national civil rights and international Cold War context (Degler 1993, 203-204; Dudziak 2011, 3-17; Roman 2012, 1). Thus this claim to see only individuals in these political discourses was also driven by the need for these discourses to levitate above racism, to deny its existence in the present, and relegate it to an American past.

It is then no surprise that the language and logics of individualism also found expression after the Second World War in emergent educational policy prescriptions. In 1947, President Truman’s Commission on Higher Education published a report asserting a “race”-free definition of equal educational opportu-

nity that foreshadowed the language of post-Brown v. Board educational policy: “The time has come to make public education at all levels equally accessible to all, without regard to race, creed, sex or national origin” (Zook 1947, 38). Such a confident, explicit “race”-free nondiscrimination policy vision — if we take it at face value as a sincere and actionable prescription and not a pleasing political mirage — would remove social and institutional prejudices directed at an array of groups, leaving only what were held to be the natural internal limits of the individual learner. The report promised that no “qualified individual in any part of the country will encounter an insuperable economic barrier to the kind of education suited to his aptitudes and interests” (Zook 1947, 36, my italics). Here was the assertion of a new post-Second World War meritocratic definition of equal educational opportunity, one tailored to individual differences in aptitude or ability.

This discourse of educational individualism obviously did not arise de novo out of the ashes of World War II, but it was resumed — and carried into the 1950s — with an intensity that suggests a great deal of new weight was placed on it. This way of reasoning about the social order seemed to have exorcised itself of all the perils and *bête noires* of group determinacy that had haunted interwar and wartime US: Soviet Communism, totalitarianism writ large, Nazi racism, even and perhaps especially, Jim Crow racism. All of these anathema were problems of the group, group-think, and/or prejudice directed against a particular group. This new kind of policy vision — with the individual as the primary and politically explicit locus of difference — then opened the way in the 1950s for a redoubled, and unprecedentedly systematic school-place search for and sorting by that most important of differences within a meritocratically structured social order: individual educability or “intelligence.”

Extrapolating a Model for Interpretation

Given these particular historical exchanges between group and individual as modes of social analysis, I hold that beliefs about “race” and individual “intelligence” need to be scrutinized together within the same framework for their ideological continuities. There we will find intriguing symmetries and points of attachment. Consider, for example, this pair of statements made within a few years of each other: one from geneticist L.C. Dunn on “race,” the other from chemist, educator and testing proponent, James Bryant Conant, on individual difference in “intelligence.”

Though Dunn was a progressive critic of interwar scientific racism, he felt compelled nonetheless in the early 1950s to reassert the alleged biological reality of

“race” itself in the face of constructivist critique from cultural anthropology.⁴ Dunn noted:

The physical anthropologist and the man in the street both know that races exist; the former from the scientifically recognizable and measurable congeries of traits which he uses in classifying the varieties of man, the latter from the immediate evidence of his senses. (Dunn 1951 quoted in Brattain 2007, 1401)

All “races” might be equal, but “race,” Dunn averred, was more than social construction; it was a manifest reality, both scientifically knowable and self-evident.

Consider then sympathies between Dunn’s comments and those of James Bryant Conant, but now regarding *individual differences* in an educational context. Prodding Henry Chauncey, president of ETS, to develop more tests of purported natural “ability”, and to more clearly demarcate “aptitude” from “achievement,” Conant (1958) wrote:

You ought to be able to devise tests that are essentially tests of aptitude and others that are tests of achievement. Having done so, you should be prepared to explain this to the layman. All the professionals admit there are two types of tests...and... most laymen recognize that there are bright and dull pupils.

The whorl that has frozen across both panes — Dunn’s and Conant’s — is compelling. Conant’s *individual differences* in intelligence has assumed the properties of Dunn’s “race,” knowable through science, yet also manifestly evident to the man on the street, and to teachers and students in the classroom. Everyone could simply see with their own eyes what psychologists measured with their tests. Both statements amount to attempts to reinscribe a kind of common sense in relation to alleged natural difference: how was it organized or compartmentalized in the world, where could we look for it, how could we know it, and where was it allowable to attach value to it? Dunn, in step with a new critical awareness of racism, now suspended (justly) the matter of value — inferiority or superiority — in relation to perceived difference. Conant felt obliged toward no such compunction.

A symmetrical approach to “intelligence” and “race” is perhaps especially pertinent given long-durée ideological connections between “race” and “intelligence.” I refer here to historical assertions — voiced unabashedly in 18th and 19th century race sciences, and as we have seen, gradually muted in the expert discourses of the 20th century — that the ultimate or most salient difference between “races” amounted to rankable differences in the mental and moral characteristics of these alleged groups (Gould

1996, 62-141; Painter 2011, 59-90, 190-200). "Intelligence" has long been the soul of "race." If "race" and "race" difference — once promulgated as natural hierarchies — have come to be widely understood within the field of history as a socio-historical construction, then a similar discourse analysis can and should be extended to "intelligence" and its typical organization as a rankable spectrum of allegedly natural, hereditary individual differences. In this sense, and in the context of an emergent post-Second World War meritocracy, I argue that "intelligence" (even as an alleged hereditary *individual* difference) should be viewed as a culturally constructed category in its own right, and one that increasingly functioned with some degree of independence but also in dynamic relation to other highly salient categories of cultural analysis like race, class, or gender. Moreover, a symmetrical approach here gains us a great deal of analytical scope and depth. Namely, it illuminates the continuity and fluidity of an underlying reservoir of hereditarianism, and examines how across time this reservoir could shift its investment between categories of group and individual.

In this regard a more fully historicized analysis of "intelligence" in relation to both "race"-groups and individuals reveals insufficiently explored entanglements between racism and individualism. Specifically, this article illuminates an exchange between racism and individualism across the interwar and into the post-Second World War era that allowed for the refurbishment of intelligence testing as an apparently objective and race-neutral practice. In expert discourses, claims about race-group intelligence receded — challenged but undisproved, quiescently operant — into the background. The *politically explicit* focal point for discrimination (or discerning worth) then came instead to fall, with more weight yet also seemingly more precision, onto measured *individual* differences. Consequently, a hereditarianism that had been more strongly associated with *racial* intelligence shifted toward the locus of the *individual*.

This is not in any way to suggest that racism went away, even attenuated, or that it was exchanged for a more fair objective science of individual difference. Indeed racism is a constantly proliferating discourse comprising many strains and currents. Look only to white protestors in Little Rock, Arkansas after *Brown* to see its full-throated, unapologetic expressions, running continuous and unreconstructed from post-Civil War to well past mid-20th century US.⁵ Rather, I examine here but one aspect of the discourse of "race" (and "natural" difference) — those fascicles produced by and shared among educational psychology and educational policy on "race" and "intelligence." Precisely

here, I wish to examine how the language and some of the discriminatory power of "race" difference, by a kind of capillary action, came to more fully saturate the discourse of individual difference.

But of course this symmetrical approach does not only tell us about changes in the discourse of "intelligence," individual or otherwise. In fact, one of the arguments of this article is that tracing ideologies of "intelligence" over time also illuminates aspects of the concurrent and underlying historical evolution of racism and ideologies of "race." Indeed, as Michelle Brattain notes, critical race theorists are frequently calling for historians to "move beyond the insight — and some lament, now largely ceremonial observation — that race is a social construction, to [actually] do the neglected work of historicizing race and racism" (2007, 1388). In this vein, Karen Fields and Barbara Fields introduce the concept "racecraft" to help make visible the incessant and subtle mediations by which "race" is made and re-made — processes in motion — out of racism.

Playing on thaumaturgic double-entendres in their term ("racecraft"-*witchcraft*), Fields and Fields refer to the making of "race" *via* racecraft as a "conjurer's trick" (2012, 19-20, 25, 30). Indeed there is a kind of religious magic at work in the particular historical transformation I aim to document. It is the metamorphosis of some part of "race" difference into individual difference *via* the mediating property of "intelligence" from a quality allegedly inherent in both groups and individuals to a quality allegedly inherent *only* in individuals. The science of "intelligence" could be ostensibly purified in this process, freed for the time being of its negative history of associations with eugenics and scientific racism. "Race" could then be quietly remade — at least in part — out of disparities in educational opportunity codified and institutionalized in practices of testing and grouping. Consider how important such measured 'gaps' in standardized test performance have been to those — like Arthur Jensen — who have periodically reasserted differential racial "intelligence" (*cf.* Herrenstein and Murray 1994; Jensen 1969; Wade 2014). Neo-hereditarian individual difference was now the ideological repository out of which racial IQ could be made again and again at moments when the political climate was amenable.

Educational Opportunity by Individual "Ability" in NDEA and Pre-NDEA Testimony

More systematic standardized testing of "ability" or "aptitude" was reintroduced in the mid to late 1950s (after a depression-era and wartime lull) as the best, fairest means available for "individualizing education,"

a catchphrase among many who lobbied for educational reform at this NDEA moment (e.g. Chauncey 1958a, 1102). While “individualized education” might sound to our contemporary ear like an instructional program that was flexibly modifiable to a student’s unique palate of interests and competencies, instead, it actually in this period most often delineated a three-track stratification — “bright,” “medium” and “dull” — based on measured individual “ability” (Conant 1959, 24–26, 46–47, 93, 106, 111; Anonymous 1958, 120–121). These calls for individualized education were also often advanced along with the supposition that education had been in recent decades somehow de-individualized, collectivized, or otherwise driven by a leveling tendency favoring the average or mediocre — and the needs of the group as a whole — in preference to the needs of the ‘bright.’

In “The Undertow in Modern Education,” a pre-Sputnik speech to President Eisenhower and the Senate, Vermont Senator Ralph Flanders drew together these very themes to mount a call for individualized education which situated individual ability as a cornerstone of American democracy and safeguard against international communism. Flanders described, with no small amount of concern, the efforts of the “nation-wide monopoly of the National Education Association [NEA] and of... [the] Teacher’s College at Columbia [TCCU]” to push into “every nook and corner of the United States” a new-wave of collectivism under the banner of progressive education. While naming the NEA and TCCU as its current prime disseminators, Flanders traced the provenance of progressive education back to John Dewey, who in Flanders’ estimation should be reckoned as one of “four horsemen of the educational apocalypse.” Flanders argued that Dewey’s ‘child-centric’ approach to teaching and learning might at first blush seem individualistic. Yet by stressing “learning by doing and doing together” it actually underemphasized the formal academic and disciplinary aspects of curriculum in favor of the social, contextual and pragmatic. This Deweyism had been cultivated over the years by the NEA and Teacher’s College “educationists” and translated into a kind of socialistic educational doctrine: “man is a social animal and nothing else.” By this stroke the “individual pupil...was swept under the rug” (Flanders 1957, 3–5, 7). Flanders (1957, 4) held that:

by acting on this principle, it is possible to discharge a very limited responsibility for the individual pupil by concentrating on the progress of his ‘group.’ In too large a measure your child ceases to be trained to the limit of his own powers and he progresses only as the group progresses.

So the *bête noire* of group-think, with both its anonymizing powers and its invitation to prejudice, threatened even and perhaps especially here, in the classroom. Further, such a school-place dynamic “results in standards of scholarship which are low enough to give everybody a chance” and which preserved the “self-respect of those whose abilities lie in lines other than those of true scholarship” (1957, 4). This was for Flanders the error at the heart of progressive education: an unwillingness to acknowledge individual differences in ability or capacity.

Flanders further noted that ignoring natural individual differences would not only push the American school place toward mediocrity but also toward a culture of collective anonymity, the antithesis of liberal democratic individuality. Flanders (1957, 7) claimed:

The educationist’s (not educator’s) ideal is the anthill. The American ideal is to train every American child to the best and highest use of his faculties and character...This is not the natural occupation of the anthill, whose citizens busy themselves with little routines.

And if education could be socialized, collectivized, then government and all of civic life were as a consequence at similar risk. He concluded his speech with a call to arms in the pitch and register of a révolutionnaire:

Unless we are successful we will lose our democratic form of Government for one imposed on children by indoctrination; we will lose the services for society of the most gifted among us in favor of the leveled-down, nonprogressive life of the anthill. “*Aux armes, citoyens*”. (Flanders 1957, 8)

The relevance of Flanders’ message to this NDEA policy moment did not go unnoticed. It caught Eisenhower’s ear and Flanders was soon encouraged by White House staff to send the speech to James Bryant Conant who then was in the middle of his *The American High School Today* study (Cutler 1957).

The 1958 NDEA hearings themselves were overstuffied with argumentation for individualized education. Expert witness Frederick Hovde, chemical engineer and president of Purdue University took a lead in establishing the theme in bold, broad strokes: “This is a big job. Education is an individualistic job in the last analysis because all of us are separate individual entities” (Hovde 1958, 95). There was, in direct connection with this sentiment, a general agreement between witnesses and committee members that this individualization now entailed a meritocratic reconfiguration of the meaning of “educational opportunity”: ‘equal education for all’ into ‘equal for all according to ability’ (e.g. Chauncey 1958b, 1639).

William Carr, the executive secretary of the NEA, had been well known in the very recent past for broad unqualified universalistic statements of educational equality (*vis.* “Education for all”). But testifying before the Senate on behalf of the NDEA, he was now obliged to make cautiously formed stipulations:

Now, the American commitment to universal education, available at public expenses, has a second fundamental reason. If equal opportunity, which we seek to provide through education, is to be a reality, all individuals must not only have education, but they must have an education appropriate to them. (1958, 477)

Senate committee member Gordon Allott interrupted here to help Carr cement his point: “You mean to them, individually?”

Carr replied, “Yes, sir, to them as individuals. Thank you for the clarification.”

Allott excused his interruption (“I just wanted to be sure I understood your meaning”) and Carr continued on the Senator’s lead:

Yes, sir. In other words, merely to provide a fixed educational program...is not quite good enough. We have to consider the adaptation of the educational program within its broad purpose to the needs and abilities and capacities of each person. (1958, 477)

If this feels like the pertinacious heeling of a slightly errant expert, the specific language of “individualization” was nonetheless freely, unambiguously asserted by countless other expert witnesses throughout the bulk of the testimony.

Moreover, this selective matter of just which individuals got what kinds of opportunities — could be captured in other phraseology as well, such as in the juxtapositions of “quality” versus “quantity” that were often a part of discussions about “manpower” in this Cold War moment. Stewart Udall, Congressman from Arizona framed it bluntly, “...there is no great shortage today in numbers; there is a shortage in quality” (Udall in Chauncey 1958a; 1644). Senator Flanders was likewise convinced that the “quantity of such students and graduates is not our problem” (1958, 1155). Paul Elicker, executive secretary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals set the same theme against a broader historical and demographic perspective, noting that compared with high schools in 1920, there was now enrolled a “growing army of youth” with a much greater range of “interests, aptitudes and capacities for learning” (Elicker 1958, 753). And in case his meaning might be misunderstood, he stressed: “I think you must realize

that more students go through the high school and try to gain admissions to college, with a lower level of intelligence now than 25 years ago” (1958, 794).

If the quality/quantity tradeoff was often positioned as a domestic matter, it could be set against an international backdrop as well. Mounting an argument for selective education that positioned a talented American minority against international communist “masses,” Detlev Bronk, president of the National Academy of Sciences held:

We cannot compete with Russia and China...in terms of numbers of men and women. Because of that, it is very important to have a very high level of education in our country in order to compete against greater numbers with men and women of greater competency. (Bronk 1958, 5)

But of course not everyone was capable of such a “high level of education,” and again, if Bronk’s statement was not quite explicit enough in this regard, Wayne Morse, Senate Committee Member from Oregon stepped in to grind the argument to a point, adding:

It is not difficult now with our educational tests to find these uncut jewels...When we find one...we cannot waste that brainpower. You...said we cannot keep ahead of Russia and Asia in numbers or in manpower, but we had better keep ahead of them in brainpower. I care not where God gave birth to that child, because these births, after all, are but by the grace of God. (Morse in Bronk, 1958, 28)

Likewise, most of these calls for selection and individualization carried, as in Morse’s statement — at turns both explicit and implicit — assumptions about the organic (or even divine) basis of the individual differences they sought to sort by. Elicker for example anchored his claims with references to an individual’s “inherent potentialities and aptitudes” (1958, 782). Psychometricians Roger Russel and Lee Cronbach claimed that individual differences in intelligence and educability were a “basic reality of mankind” objectively knowable through science (1958, 757). Bronx High School for Science principal Morris Meister noted, “some of us are born to be plowhorses and some of us are born to get out on the track...and win the Belmont sweepstakes.⁶ This applies mentally as well as physically” (1958, 116). Often simply avowing the sacred geometry of the bell curve distribution could imply that a stable social pattern must be rooted in nature, simply by virtue of its stability. Hovde offered:

When you deal with people one of the first things you learn is that every individual is a different and separate and distinct

entity. If you look at the distribution of any type...of attribute, you get a standard distribution curve of all your people...What is easy for one student is very, very difficult for another...The problem is to select and differentiate...and then provide the educational experience and opportunity which the individual has capability of mastering or learning effectively. (1958, 94-95)

If tests were a technology that allowed us to sort by such distributions of natural individual difference then *the need to do so* was more pressing than ever. There was widespread concern that with the Sputnik satellites above us, the Soviets had taken a definitive lead in the “space race,” and that Soviet science moreover propelled the vanguard of global communism and the Soviet way of life. Just as Senator Flanders worried about the spread of collectivistic ideologies and the soulless anonymity of life in the ant hill, countless other NDEA expert testifiers signaled the dangers of Soviet communism. Many noted in fact that totalitarian ideologies were inimical to liberal democratic individuality, and in fact arose from conditions where unnatural limits were placed on such natural individuality (e.g. Lister Hill in Carr, 1958, 506).

Principal of The Bronx High School for Science, Dr. Morris Meister, testifying before the Senate Committee, versified on this very theme noting in particular the dangers to democracy posed by the heterogeneous mixed-“ability” classroom:

The essence of democracy in this country is to give every individual an opportunity to attain his potential, his God-given potential, and you cannot do so if you place our able children in a heterogeneous group where excellence and intelligence are dragged down toward mediocrity (106).

If as Meister held, democracy and social equality could be both realized and safeguarded through the proper organization of individual difference, such democratic process perhaps achieved its apotheosis in a high school like his.

The Entanglement of Racism and Individualism: from Segregation by “Race” to Integration by “Ability”

Though a public school, Meister’s Bronx High School for Science, a magnet, had a highly selective admissions process governed by an I.Q. test. By accepting only 20% of their applicants, Meister argued they could give their students “a curriculum...worthy of their ability” (1958, 107). The school claimed a median IQ of 137 among its student body (“probably the highest of any high school in the United States”) and Meister boasted, as if talking about zoological or meteorological phenomena, “we’ve had them up to I.Q. 208 at Science”

(126). Meister further explained how a school like his worked as an engine of democratic process within the city or region it operated:

[A]ny child anywhere in the city, whether he lives in a slum, or...a swanky residential neighborhood, can come and take an examination.

If he is found to be able, or potentially able, he is admitted to the school. It is an essentially democratic procedure where in great concentrations of population, slum areas develop, and neighborhood high schools in a given area might tend to segregate pupils of one type. Here...there are five special schools to which any child in the city can go by demonstrating ability and interest in the purpose for which the particular school is organized. It makes this procedure essentially a democratic one (107).

The “examination” (here explicitly an I.Q. test) and what it allegedly measured became the objective standard of worth and fairness, applied across the whole city: Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, Staten Island, and Manhattan, all with their segregated and racially-coded geographies, “slums and swanky neighborhoods.” Selection based on “ability” then naturally allowed — and most importantly — *structured* the comingling and coeducation of students of all “type[s]”, from all walks of life. Moreover, precisely because it was in his estimation fair, objective and democratic, Meister posited selection by individual “ability” as the antidote to *de facto* segregation, one of the few explicit — albeit fleeting — mentions of “segregation” in NDEA hearings. Thus without explicitly referencing *Brown*, Meister nonetheless presented a model for *integration*, one predicated on natural individual differences in “intelligence.”

While Meister allowed that *his* public school — a well-resourced urban magnet with selective admissions — was a special case, nonetheless regular public school systems across the country could achieve, he insisted, a “great deal of improvement” by “identifying children of different abilities and giving each level [of] ability the best possible education we can” (116). By such measures, he allowed, “schools within schools” could be developed. For example, in a smaller, less-resourced school of 500 students, “one hundred or two hundred children are given a special program, a special track” (114). Indeed this was the very model of individualization (grouping by measured individual “ability”) that Conant advocated as well.

Though Meister’s evocation of integration (specifically integration-by-“ability”) might have been fleeting, it was more than enough to draw a challenge from entrenched segregationist and Senate Commit-

tee Member from South Carolina, Strom Thurmond. Tellingly, Thurmond began by assuming a basic consensus between himself and Meister on the matter of individual differences: "I presume you would consider it unfair to mix children with inferior preparation or inferior minds...with children who are well-prepared or have bright minds?" (Meister, 118). Thurmond's line of argumentation then questioned not Meister's alliance with NDEA plans for "ability" testing or curricular stratification, but instead disputed Meister's vision at the level of integration, the new law of the land, itself. In so doing, Thurmond sought to depict desegregation as at best impracticable — involving cumbersome transportation logistics — and at worst as dangerous.

To make his point, Thurmond shifted to the subject of discipline in schools and, by such excursions, on to crime and delinquency, producing at length, and even reading out loud from, a sad and readily sensationalizable news item ripped from the headlines that very morning: "Head of School Beset by Crime, Leaps to Death." This *New York Times* story reported the suicide of a Brooklyn junior high school principal following the criminal investigation of an alleged sexual assault — of a 13 year old by a 15 year old — within his school. While no information about the ethnicity of either party was reported the article noted that this had occurred in a school that "was almost equally divided between white and Negro pupils" (Perlmutter, 1958; Meister, 120). Stoking this insinuation, Thurmond finally proposed, "It is also true that since they began bringing about the forced integration in the schools in New York, that you have more delinquency and crime, have you not?" (Meister, 122). Though Meister quickly disagreed, the point had now been aired as a serious question on the Senate floor. Thurmond had spuriously linked a reported crime, and crime in schools in general, with integration and thus also specifically with African American students.

Senate Committee member Allott stepped in here to restore order, and reset the frame around which new policy would form. Allott reminded the assembly that all Meister's students were "drawn solely on ability without regard to race, religion, color, or creed." Then speaking directly to Meister, Allott asked the high school principal, "And you accept them as human beings?" (Meister, 123). Meister of course answered in the affirmative. But who is Allott talking about? *Them?* *Human beings?* Who might not otherwise have been accepted as a human being? What is the subtext here? It is of course that selected African American students, who before might have been treated as somehow less than a person were now, based on their measu-

red intelligence, accorded full humanity as members of the Bronx High School for Science community. Ah, how "intelligence" resolved and equalized, united, even integrated. Now everyone would be treated as a "human being," provided of course they had measured up on the test.

Thus given the right phraseology — Meister's specific use of "segregation" — and the right arrangement of historical actors — Thurmond with his segregationist challenge, and Allott with his ham-fisted mediation — discussion of testing and grouping around *individual* ability could light a jagged through-line from one level of discourse to another. The matter of integration was often well-masked in these hearings, but always close to the surface. These debates in the chambers of Congress were, of course, just 4 years after the *Brown v. Board* decision. Thus what really is being considered in these NDEA hearings — though often unexpressed or in elliptical terms — is the matter of desegregation and the question of 'just how will we integrate?' The vision that Meister and many others conjured was the sorting of individuals by their measured "ability" as the most objective way of achieving integration and maintaining democracy. Thus curriculum stratified by individual "ability" had come (or was readily coming) to stand in this new policy making context for integration, or what was envisioned as integration in its practicable, realizable form. This was — these policy makers suggested — *how* the mandate of *Brown v. Board* could in part be carried out, whether through schools like Meister's magnet, or in the main, and more commonly, through more systematized testing and grouping across US public comprehensive schools, creating in the process and in (Meister's words) "schools within schools."

Planning Documents for The American High School Today: Conant, Integration and Individual "Ability"

The same entanglements of "race," integration and school place grouping by individual differences in "intelligence" was occurring in other texts, discourses and systems of correspondence outside of, but closely related to these NDEA proceedings (Porter, 2017b). While these NDEA hearings were underway, James Bryant Conant was busy finalizing *The American High School Today*, a report — intended for wide public circulation — of the results of a large-scale school study he had conducted from 1956-1958. The purpose of Conant's study from its inception had been to demonstrate that "it was possible to provide a satisfactory orthodox academic training for students of high IQ...in schools where there was a wide spread of intellectual

ability" (Conant 1957a). Such a possibility (as it had been framed here) could be achieved through selective "ability"-based grouping or in (the parlance of the day) "individualized education" (Conant 1959, 24–26, 46–47, 58–59).

Like his contemporaries in NDEA proceedings, Conant similarly avoided any open discussion of desegregation or a long US history of educational disparity by "race" in the published version of the *The American High School Today*. Yet planning documents for the study, shared among collaborators, reveal that shifts around these issues — desegregation and the problem of "race" — were central to the design of the study itself. This is particularly apparent in the analytic language Conant developed to talk about degrees and kinds of difference or diversity within the framework of his study.

In very early planning documents Conant used the terms "homogeneity" and "heterogeneity" to refer somewhat loosely, at this point, to three potential variables of interest: a school population's range of measured IQ along with its socio-economic and its racial composition (Conant 1956). Soon though William Carr of the NEA, offering early criticism of Conant's study plan, raised concerns about the ambivalence and polysemy of "homo/heterogeneity" across these contexts (Carr 1957)⁷. Conant immediately understood the import of Carr's critique. He relayed to other collaborators that Carr had warned him to avoid talking imprecisely about "homogeneity or heterogeneity as mentioned in my memo. For he said you will find yourself landed in the segregation issue if you don't look out!" (Conant 1957b). Away from the "segregation issue" seems to be precisely where Conant wanted to steer his study.

From this point on in planning documents, Conant tightened and systematized the meaning of "hetero/homogeneity," using these descriptors now to refer exclusively to the range (or lack thereof) of "*academic talent*" — by measured individual IQ — within the student body: the central variable of interest to his study in the first place (Conant 1957c). Disparity by "race" (and socio-economic status) had been removed from consideration. Carr's warning helped Conant clarify his terms, sharpen the framework of his analysis, and retrain his focus exclusively on individual differences in "ability." Yet, of course, this maneuver reveals to historical analysis the hidden role of "race" in structuring Conant's study of "individual difference" in the American public school.

Conant also, in his planning documents and published report — subtly repurposed the term "integration," altering the meaning and usage of the word

from its widespread post-*Brown v. Board* understanding as specifically by "race." An unqualified advocate of curricular differentiation, Conant nonetheless had expressed concern that, if mishandled, stratification of curriculum by intellect could contribute to a decline in the social climate of the school. The remedy for this potential fragmentation would be to offer a handful of non-ability grouped courses. Here Conant recommended specifically "homeroom" (student governance) and "American Problems" (civics/current events) (Conant 1959, 34–35, 41), noting that 'heterogeneous' courses like these would function as "instruments for social *integration*" (Conant 1957d; Conant 1959, 74).

Thus Conant was, through numerous instances of usage like this, attempting to resituate "integration" as a process that resolved not *racial* segregation but rather potential fragmentation by individual "ability." He was arguably then, on the heels of *Brown v. Board*, already attempting to reimagine the diverse school — the integrated and democratically functioning school — as one that achieved social harmony despite a necessary (yet "race"-neutral) stratification by "*intelligence*." Measured "individual ability" was now for Conant, and these many other leading educational policy makers, the only and precisely the kind of difference that mattered.

All this flux, slippage and relocation of terms — Conant's adjustments to Carr's warnings about "the segregation issue," the context-specific modifications of "integration" — indicate a concerted attempt to transcend "race" through the language of individual difference. Yet, by the same stroke they reveal the hidden organizing power of "race" over these very discussions. The dark matter against which Conant hammered out his meanings, and which in turn stamped its contours into his framework in relief, were his and his collaborator's anxieties about "race," and desegregation, and their difficulties over how to make policy in this post-*Brown v. Board* context that would both restabilize the educational order and ostensibly leave the problem of "race" to the past.

Conclusion: Body and Spirit, Theater and Routine

This labor was of course not Conant's alone, but part of a more widely adopted strategy in educational policy discourses whereby conversations about "individual difference" could be substituted for considerations of "race," racism or racial disparity in educational opportunity. We have seen here in this regard a bricolage of texts — pre-NDEA speech-making, a range of NDEA expert testimony, and planning documents for Conant's *The American High School Study* — that tessellate together

to suggest a discursive whole and with it the formation of consensus. In many of these instances the symmetries in these texts were, at least in part, the product of active communication through networks of individuals and institutions: here *via* the Eisenhower Administration, Conant, Flanders, Chauncey, and Carr for example (see Porter 2017b, 8-13, 223-239, 290-333).

And while individual differences were presented as commonsensical and *natural* — “a basic condition of humankind” — forging consensus around this alleged fact was indeed a labor. It takes a lot of social work to make a natural fact. The NDEA hearings themselves enacted in many places a kind of laborious political theater replete with a chorus of obligatory avowals, rehearsals, and refrains on the theme of individual differences in educability.

One such refrain took up the problems of the group and group-think. This concern manifested itself in animated gestures toward the communist or totalitarian other and the threat these collectives posed to democracy, indeed to the nature of individuality itself. Meister, Bronk, and others’ concerns about mediocrity and wasted potential in the heterogeneous classroom — unstratified by “ability” — was like life on Flander’s anthill. Here was the *bête noire* of the group, the spectre of the anonymizing collective. This is where people wasted their potential even lost their individuality, that unique spark that made them them, and instead became drones in service of the group. Sorting students by their natural differences into different places in a stratified curriculum would restore their humanity, their individuality.

But here of course, too, this cataract of alarum over international communism had downstream carved out a languid pool of meaning in which many possible senses and shades of difference might luxuriate and swap for one another. What other sorts of groups animated the anxieties of these policy makers? Anathemizing the political group abroad — the Communist ‘masses’ — and avowing individualism as its antidote could serve to short-circuit discussions of disparity by (and inclusion of) ethnic groups at home. NDEA testimonies were thus like a kind of dress rehearsal with a new script for a new post-Second World War order: we did not think that way — in the terms or logics of groups — anymore. And precisely here, in educational policy, this denial of any kind of ‘group’ as a framework for discussion afforded a way to de-politicize (*viz.* “individualize”) the educational landscape. This occurred in this particular educational context even as — in Omi and Winant’s assessment — other realms of the social were becoming increasingly politicized around ethnic identity and the politics of “race” (2015, 150-154).

Thus, disaggregating individuals-as-individuals from the social groups of which they were a part could work to undercut the power of those groups to mobilize — in an educational context — on their own behalf.

These Congressional-hearings-as-political-theater could also serve as stage for the dramatic clash of new versus old: that often superficial morality play about what was our past and what was our future. Witnesses like Meister who stood for the way forward (pro-integration, pro-NDEA, pro-science, pro-science-of-“intelligence” and individualized education) parried with the likes of Strom Thurmond who stood for the explicitly racist, repressive Jim Crow past and who resisted the NDEA because it compelled integration even as it limited educational opportunity by “ability.” But if the audience of this theater — which included of course the actors themselves — failed to stop and more carefully consider the shifting language of discrimination at this pivotal moment, then they were more likely to receive the play at face value. There is no moral universe in which Thurmond could be construed as on the right side of history (or justice or equality), but paired *next* to Thurmond the problems with *Meister’s* position appear to fall away. Meister’s way forward (or Conant’s, Chauncey’s or Carr’s for that matter) becomes more clear and more self-evident to its contemporary audience as the only way forward in relief.

And if this NDEA testimony was in some sense dramaturgy it was also a kind of thaumaturgy, too. It was through this theater that the metamorphosis of some part of “race” difference to individual difference in “ability” was conjured. Of course, as I have argued here and elsewhere, such a constructed individualism — through its very appeals to natural difference via neo-hereditarianism — was entangled in numerous ways with a racism from which it supposed it had freed itself. Indeed as we have seen, at key junctures conversations about individual differences in ability could readily summon an older legacy of “race” and segregation.

And the new psychometric individualism could still accomplish the work of “race” not only because of the neo-hereditarian principles around which it was structured, but also because “race” was embedded latently in the tests, in the structures of schooling itself, and indeed in the broader knowledge production practices and social matrix that surrounded them. Others have argued at turns that both “smartness” and “race” can function — in their inclusions and exclusions — *like* or *in tandem with* property regimes (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; Leonardo and Broderick 2011). This history then demonstrates just how — at this time, in this particular context — these property rights were institutio-

nalized: as permission to inhabit certain spaces within a rapidly stratifying public school curriculum. It was precisely in this way — in the post-*Brown*, post-NDEA classroom — that the ideational qualities of “race” and “intelligence” were married with institutional practice and routine.

This analysis has necessarily focused on “race” because of the salience of *Brown v. Board* to this moment. Yet it is also important to note that this policy shift did not exercise its effects along lines of “race” alone, but was part of a more general (if modified) reassertion of hereditarianism (*i.e.* neo-hereditarianism) that could work to explain and naturalize difference across other social categories like class and gender. So, while this new testing regime might have worked with especial intensity by “race” within desegregating school systems in the years following *Brown*, post-NDEA reforms left everyone not identified as “academically talented” — regardless of “race” and across differences better characterized by class, sex, color, creed, ‘dis’-ability (or in Swedish, *funktionsvariation*), life-history, language, place of origin, or affective orientation — to *varying degrees* in the shadows of this new policy. Consider, on this point, the growing gap in measured achievement by class or socioeconomic status over the last half century since the NDEA (Duncan and Murnane 2011; Tavernise 2012).

If *Brown* and the NDEA were a tug-of-war over the structure of educational opportunity, they also represented a shift in the contest over the locus of difference: from group to individual. In this mode, the expansion of rights accorded by group (*Brown*) was then quickly converted and redefined as privileges awarded by differential individual ability (NDEA). This new policy, of course, technically promised to transcend categories of “race” preserving a spot for high achieving members of any group. But the long legacy of structural inequality in educational opportunity — by “race” group — would be carried through into the new test-driven meritocracy based on individual “ability.” Thus, some of the gains of *Brown* began to erode along these very lines even as the Civil Rights movement gained momentum.

Endnotes

¹ “Jim Crow” refers to a racial regime in the Southern United States supported by an intertwined complex of state-level laws and customs. Jim Crow practices extended from the end of the Civil War through the mid-20th century and were intended to enforce the segregation and inequality of Blacks and Whites across a range of social institutions, including public education.

² The “Sputnik Crisis” refers to the alarmed reaction in the US following the Soviet launch of the two Sputnik satellites—the first-ever human-made earth-orbiting satellites—in October

and November of 1957. The Sputnik launches contributed to the impression among many US commentators that the Soviet Union had surpassed the United States in its scientific and military development. For an excellent account of the effect of the Sputnik Crisis on education debates in the US, see Clowse, 1981.

³ For a similar conceptualization of “intelligence” or “smartness” but in the field of critical pedagogy see Leonardo and Broderick 2011, 2215-2217.

⁴ On Dunn’s progressivism see (Gormley 2009).

⁵ The 1957 protests in Little Rock, Arkansas were an attempt by vocal White segregationists to prevent newly enrolled African American students from entering and attending Little Rock Central High School. These protests quickly attracted international attention when a militarized standoff between state and federal armed forces ensued. In flagrant disobedience of the recent *Brown v. Board* decision, Orval Faubus, the Arkansas Governor, summoned the Arkansas National Guard to the high school to support the segregationist blockade. Faubus’ defiance of federal authority provoked President Eisenhower to deploy the 101st Airborne Division of the US Army to Little Rock where it assumed command over and dispersed the Arkansas Guard, effectively reopening Little Rock Central to its African American students. An excellent account of this event as it unfolded for both domestic and international observers can be found in Dudziak, 115–151.

⁶ The Belmont sweepsakes are a major US horse-racing event. Meister’s metaphor here carries strong hereditarian connotations as it recalls animal breeding (*i.e.* purebred/thoroughbred racing horses and mixed/wild-type stock) and the different kinds of work or performance for which these animals are allegedly suited based on their breeding.

⁷ This document is unsigned but by triangulating with other known participants, we can infer with a high degree of probability Carr’s authorship

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