Beyond Integration:
Elite White Universities, Black Abuse and Integration as Social Control

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ABSTRACT: In legal discourse increased racial integration in higher education is often presumed to be a boon to black advancement. In the absence of racial domination it is, of course, ideal to have racially integrated schools. However, when notions of black inferiority and white supremacy remain embedded in our national psyche, putting black students in predominantly white schools often results in psychologically and intellectually abusive experiences. There is a progressive critique of integration that tends to go unacknowledged in legal debates. This article attempts to accomplish three tasks: (1) explain how and why we have wedded the concepts of integration and racial equality, (2) review the existing social science data on the lived experiences of black students in predominantly white institutions in order to suggest that black students suffer significant harm in the process of integrating into what are often racially hostile environments, and (3) offer a theoretical framing to understand how integration can serve as a tool of ideological coercion, stifling the expression of progressive racial views, thereby helping to preserve the same racial order that integration was thought to dismantle.