



RED EARTH,
WHITE LIES

*Native Americans and
the Myth of Scientific Fact*

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SCRIBNER

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LOW BRIDGE— EVERYBODY CROSS

It may appear that I have sufficiently discussed the origins of man and thereby eliminated the Bering Strait theory as a possible explanation of the source of the occupancy of the Western Hemisphere by American Indians and that devoting more time to this idea is superfluous. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Most Americans do not see the connection between the different scientific theories, nor do they understand that a shift or collapse of a major scientific doctrine requires a significant adjustment of all subsidiary doctrines that relied on it for their validity. Thus, people accepting the idea that outmoded explanations of human evolution have been modified substantially will continue to hold with the Bering Strait theory even though to do so is the great inconsistency. But another point must be made which requires a chapter of discussion—and that is whether or not the Bering Strait is simply shorthand scientific language for “I don’t know, but it sounds good and no one will check.”

There are immense contemporary political implications to this theory which make it difficult for many people to surrender. Considerable residual guilt remains over the manner in which the Western Hemisphere was invaded and settled by Europeans. Five centuries of brutality lie uneasily on the con-

