10-27-2000

"THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS MANDATES SELF-NEGATION: THE MAKING OF DYSFUNCTIONAL WHITE PEOPLE WITH BLACK OR COLORED SKIN"

William B. Stewart
Director Emeritus, Minority Student Programs, University of Minnesota-Morris

Ida B. Stewart
Assistant Director, Institute Administrator, Research and Instructor, William B. Stewart Institute

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi5

Part of the Race, Ethnicity and post-Colonial Studies Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi5/40

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Building Diversity in the University and the Community----Fifth Annual National Conference (2000) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
“THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS MANDATES SELF-NEGATION: THE MAKING OF DYSFUNCTIONAL WHITE PEOPLE WITH BLACK OR COLORED SKIN”

William B. Stewart
Director Emeritus, Minority Student Programs
University of Minnesota-Morris

Ida B. Stewart
Assistant Director, Institute Administrator, Research and Instructor,
William B. Stewart Institute

"Our study will show how the pyramidal structure as a permanent feature of every aspect of American society continues to function in the same manner at institutions of higher learning" 

"We exist on given premises and readily acquire the habit of seeing the world not so much as it actually is but as we have been persuaded it is."
Andre Gide in Dostoyevski

Men make their own history but they do not make it as they please. They do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered given and transmitted from the past. What is obvious is not always observed. What is observed is not always understood. Non-whites' (Mrican American’s, American Indians, for example) experiences may be obvious yet not understood but perceived as if their experiences are produced by identical environments." Thus, revealing the contradiction inherent in the "equality of opportunity" myth that pervades and manifests itself in a prima facie manner only in the life of this nation.

Education is an evolutionary transformational process that is used by the ruling white power structure to transform non-white people, or people of color, by mandating that they give up their culture, history, religion, language, identity and way of life to embrace their (white) ways of life.

The white ruling group believes that their way of life is superior to that of the people of color, whose ways they believe to be inferior. Education is total. It is both formal (that which exists in schools and institutions of learning) and the informal which exists in the environment. Both reinforce each other which brings out the best or worst in individuals. Formal education is designed to serve as a means of upward mobility. The education in the schools serves as the gateway to equal opportunity in order to function in a democratic society. However, change and time have shown that to function as a transformation agent to bring justice and liberty to all. Most of all, it has not served to break down barriers to success and opportunity for people of color.

American society's infrastructure is one of a pyramidal hierarchy in which people of color are crowded on the bottom rung. The pyramid is a design that insures maximum control,
especially socio-economic control. Hence, the people of color who inhabit the urban
centers and those who inhabit the reservations can actually be said to live in colonies.
This colonial structure effectively controls its inhabitants by keeping them in" their
place."

Education in the schools reflect and perpetuate the psychic model structure and hierarchy
in that high quality elitist education is at the top. As one moves down toward the bottom
of the pyramid the quality of education ceases to be quality education. It is replaced with
the type of education that is deemed appropriate for that class. The type of knowledge
that emanates from this type of capitalistic hierarchy contradicts they myth that all-
American students get equal quality education.

Our study will show how the pyramidal structure as a permanent feature of every aspect
of American society continues to function in the same manner at institutions of higher
learning. Our research will demonstrate how this stage in the transformation process
continues the socializing into the image of "whiteness." The degree to which this
socialization is successful will determine the degree of success in the job market and to
pursue the American Dream.

**Presenters:**

**William B. Stewart** has been the director of Minority Student Program Emeritus at the
University of Minnesota, Morris since 1973. He is also the director of the William B.
Stewart Institute. He worked on his Ph.D. in Education and Professional Development at
the University of Wisconsin, River Falls. He worked on his Master's degree in
Counseling and Educational Psychology at the College of St. Thomas. He earned a cert-
tificate from the St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority. He received one
bachelor's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Architecture, and
another from Ripon College in Mathematics. The University of Minnesota, Morris has
established a scholarship in his honor.

**Ida B. Stewart** is the assistant director, institute administrator, researcher and instructor
for the William B. Stewart Institute. She will receive her doctorate in Critical Pedagogy
from the University of St. Thomas. She earned her master's degree in Educational
Psychology/Special Education from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and
another in Improvement of Instruction from the College of St. Thomas. She received her
bachelor's degree in General (Physical) Science from Macalester College, and another in
Biology/Chemistry/Math from Hamline University. She has extensive work in the public
schools, including serving as a substitute teacher and Community Education Teacher in
the Morris Public Schools currently. She was the educational coordinator of the Minority
Student Program at the University of Minnesota, Morris for four years. She also
volunteers regularly.