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The Shaping of a New Identity: Continuation of the Transformation Process of People of Color on White University College Campuses Into "White" People of Color

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> "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' (African 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 S1. Thomas. He earned a certificate 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 S1. 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 S1. 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.