

## The Mind Trust's Neo-colonial War on Parents Part One

Due to the Mind Trust's (MT) view that urban schools are broken and need fixing, this January the non-profit began looking for someone to launch "an independent parent advocacy organization" with emphasis on social justice and closing the Achievement Gap for communities of color in high poverty areas.

However, this commentary argues urban schools are not broken. As concluded in *The White Architects of Black Education* by Watkins, America's public schools never meant to educate all children, especially children of color. We can't call schools broken that were designed to fail.

Because America's school system was designed to fail and/or mis-educate certain children, it was colonial. That is, its purpose was to colonize Native Americans and other non-whites, "fitting" them and settlers/immigrants into America's "melting pot."

"Education's indoctrination if you're white--subjugation if you're black." -- James Baldwin

Thus, initial (and current) public schooling confused education with conformity via assimilation/acculturation, making coloniality (kuh-loh-nee-al-i-tee) the main characteristic of US public education.

Coloniality is based on a Euro-centric world view. It's the continued existence of colonialism (assimilation/acculturation) even after anti-Jim Crow and Civil Rights legislation.

MT's concern for neighborhoods of color comes from its "Othering" mentality. "Othering" is inherent in MT's "settler-minded" DNA because without this "other" there would be no reason for MT to exist.

So, intentional or not, this positions MT as purveyors of coloniality and "whiteness" as normative, presupposing difference from "the norm" as somehow inherently "damaged" and needing assistance. Such deficit models of these neighborhoods misconstrue social justice by emphasizing the Achievement Gap and its creator, standardized testing. Both perpetuate the assimilationist/missionary logic of coloniality.

Failing to challenge MT's coloniality means the onus of change is forever on the "colonized." Success for people of color will endlessly revolve around finding ways to conform and succeed on another's terms, rather than around nurturing their own criteria for achievement.

"Urban students quickly receive the message that they can only be smart when they are not who they are. This in many cases is classroom colonialism." ~ Prof. Chris Emdin

From the perspective of this commentary, under MT's parent advocacy scheme, the value of parents will depend upon how they're able to get working-class students of color to assimilate towards the cultural normative dogma of whiteness.

## **What to do? De-colonize the Mind Trust**

To push back against this parent advocacy enterprise requires the un-settling of MT's anti-democratic ideology. Alternatives such as Transformational Community Schools and Local School Councils will begin a process of hope, rooted in resistance, leading Indy towards education for liberation.

Ultimately we need to de-colonizing parent advocacy efforts: center on the humanity and possibility of students of color, and dismantle the prevailing discourses of coloniality that only highlight their "otherness"/difference from whites.

But, will the Mind Trust and its elite-class board members allow their parent advocate to disrupt coloniality, playing transformative roles of cultural, economic, and political liberators of their communities of color?

John Harris Loflin  
Parent Power--Indianapolis  
Education-Community Action Team  
March 1, 2019

Please read Part Two here: <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-Mind-Trusts-Neo-colonial-War-on-Parents-Part-Two.pdf>