

THE IMPACTS OF BLACK AMERICANS' BLEACHING IN GEORGE SCHUYLER'S *BLACK NO MORE*

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Abstract

In analyzing George Schuyler's Black No More, I have discovered that Blacks' bleaching for their integration and consideration by their white counterparts as full American citizens capable of enjoying the full fruition of the American democracy in the United States, has resulted not only in the disappearance of the black skin color and the economic crisis in the South of this great nation, but also in racial confusion among Americans. For, it has become difficult for them to distinguish pure-white Americans from whitened ones because of the latter's new physical appearance. This racial confusion which has brought about the giving of birth to black and mulatto babies by white American women has finally urged pure-white Americans to burn Dr. Crookman's bleaching sanitariums as a way to fight for the existence and the integrity of both races in the white man's world. Consequently, Blacks' hope for integration through the bleaching process has been a nightmare, for none of them is given credit or value by Whites after the bleaching process.

Keywords: Blacks, Bleaching, Integration, Races, Disappearance, Confusion, Fight

INTRODUCTION

In the context of George Schuyler's *Black No More*, the phrase "the impacts of black Americans' bleaching", refers to the social and economic impacts observed in the United States after the turning of black characters' black skin color into white for their integration and acceptance in American society. Published in 1931, Schuyler's novel is about a young black man named Max Disher who accepts to have his dark skin bleached by Dr. Crookman for his acceptance in the United States as a full American citizen after being rejected by a racist white girl, Helen Given because of his blackness.

The choice of *Black No More* for this paper is linked to Blacks' experience of life after their bleaching process in the American community. Joseph Mills who first scrutinized it argues that "*Black No More demonstrates satire's democratic potential. Mockery becomes the great leveler, and by ridiculing all, the novel calls into question racial and class hierarchies*"¹. This quotation, in effect, raises the question of racial conflicts between black characters and white ones in Georges Schuyler's novel. These racial conflicts which are the main cause of black characters' bleaching urge me to concentrate on answering the following question: What are the impacts of black characters' bleaching in George Schuyler's *Black No More*? I hypothesize that the disappearance of the black skin color, the economic crisis in the South of the United States, and racial confusions are the impacts of Blacks' bleaching in the author's narrative.

Being concerned with a literary text linked to Blacks' post-bleaching experience of life in a world ruled by Whites, I find it necessary to resort to the sociological approach to better clarify the above hypothesis. For, the writer does not write in a vacuum, but is inspired by his society, as Toni Morrison

declares: “If anything I do, in the way of writing novels or whatever I write is not about the village or the community or about you (the African Americans), then it is not about anything (Morrison: 1984, 339). In almost the same way, Krutch argues that “art is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community” (Krutch, quoted by Scott: 1962, 123). This means that the novelist incorporates the experience of people in a given society into his work of fiction, and this incorporation is what Alex Haley terms “faction”².

Two main points are discussed in this paper. The first is the disappearance of the black skin color and the economic crisis in South America. The second deals with racial confusion among Americans because of Blacks’ new physical appearance.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE BLACK SKIN COLOR AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SOUTH AMERICA

In *Black No More*, Schuyler portrays black characters’ bleaching not simply as a process of Blacks’ integration, but as the cause of the economic crisis that gangrenes the South of the United States. For, with their white skin color, Blacks who formerly worked as manpower in most of the country’s companies no longer do it. Consequently, one observes a decrease of productivity and an increase of economic crisis that affects American life. The cause of all this is that America has almost become white. In the Harlem, for example, it has become difficult to find a human being with a black skin color. Everybody is white and there is no difference between pure-white Americans and whitened ones. They all look alike which renders it difficult to identify who is pure-white and who is not:

At the same time there seemed to be more white people on the streets of the Harlem than at any time in the past twenty years. Many of them appeared to be on the most intimate terms with the Negroes. Laughing, talking, dining and dancing in a most un-Caucasian way. This sort of association had always gone on at night but seldom in the daylight (BNM, p. 37).

As it can be seen, this passage demonstrates the consequence of the bleaching of the characters’ black skin color in the Harlem, the area formerly more inhabited by the black population. The narrator’s utterance “there seemed more white on the streets of the Harlem” attests of the absence of the black skin color in the public places of this area. When he adds that they were “laughing, talking, dinning, and dancing in a most un-Caucasian way”, he means that after bleaching their dark skin color, whitened Americans have not lost their former habits that visibly betray them, for they are recognized by the way they speak, laugh, eat, and dance. This means that despite their artificial whiteness, bleached Americans still keep their traditional behaviors which help pure Whites identify them in American society. Their manner of holding foxes, their brutality in dancing, and their incapacity to speak English fluently are weaknesses that show how difficult it is for these whitened individuals to adjust with the pure-white man’s way. The awareness of such a reality urges some of them to cohabit with pure-white Americans only at night for fear of being identified and rejected by the latter who refuse to see them, as said by an anonymous character in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*: “I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fibber and liquids. I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible simply because people refuse to see me” (Ellison: 1952, 3).

What is worth knowing is that after the bleaching process, many whitened Blacks decide then to leave the Harlem for the other areas of the United States to enjoy the full fruition of their whiteness.

Seeing the social change in the lives of those who have already turned their dark skin color into white, some black leaders who, at the beginning, mind the bleaching process, finish up accepting it, because they realize that whitening their black skin is the only way which can enable them to integrate the American society. The author evidences their bleaching process through Matthew Fisher and his close friend Bunny Brown who are astonished at the new image of the Harlem which is deprived of blackness, as it is illustrated in this passage:

Well, were you able to talk business with any of the Negro leaders? “couldn’t find any of them. Their offices are all closed and they’ve moved away from the places where they used to live. Broke, I suppose.” “Did you inquire for them around the Harlem?” “What was the use? All the Negroes around Harlem nowadays are folks that have just come there to get white; the rest of them left the race a long time ago. Why, Boy, darkies are hard to find on the Lenox Avenue now as they used to be in the Tudor City (BNM, p. 90).

What Schuyler shows in this passage is not only the integration of the black man through the bleaching, but more the consequences of equality of every human race. He demonstrates that if everybody is equal in society, there will be no progress or development because nobody will work for the other. Here, he evidences how the country’s economy starts collapsing with the closing of all their offices, which means that the profit they are used to making can no longer be made for the simple reason that they no more work. For most of black characters in the novel, going to work for Whites is synonymous of bondage continuation. The sentence “they’ve moved away from places where they used to live” shows that after having their black skin color bleached, black Americans of the Harlem decide to leave this area to join the white society where they mingle with pure-white Americans by sharing the same neighborhoods. This bleaching process which results in the rarity of the black skin color also includes their leaders who find it impossible to continue living under the domination of the white man because of their blackness. Despite their propaganda on the pride and value of the black race, they all end up considering the bleaching treatment as “*an emergency exit to claim their American citizenship*” (N’zambi-Mikoulou: 2020, 55). When the narrator, for example, argues that “Darkies are hard to find”, he means that it is now difficult to find a manpower, for everybody has become equal and full citizens of the United States, and as such, nobody can subject the other. With this rarity of Blacks in the Harlem that causes the lack of manpower in most of the City’s companies, Whites have certainly realized the importance of Blacks; their contribution in the development of not only the Harlem, but of all the United States.

What reinforces the disappearance of the black skin color in the Harlem is the solidarity observed between Blacks who are already whitened and those who are still black. The novel reads that there is a great assistance between these two categories of individuals sharing the same race. While some of them who cannot afford the bleaching treatment because of their poorness are helped by the rich among them, others are simply helped by their brothers and sisters who deal with some economic activities. This social assistance later on ends up crowding the Harlem with more white Americans than black ones. Schuyler compares this solidarity to that of black slaves in the days of the Underground Railroad when many of them succeeded in fleeing from the South to the North of the United States for freedom denied to them by their white counterparts:

The poor had been helped by the well-to-do, brothers had helped sisters, children had assisted

parents. There had been rived some of the same spirit of adventure prevalent in the days of the Underground Railroad. As a result, even in Mississippi, Negroes were quite rare (BNM, p. 101).

Through this passage, one understands that there is the disappearance of the black skin color in the South of the United States where they formerly lived with their black skin color. Their assistance to one another to afford the bleaching treatment, has widely contributed to the rarity of the black skin color, as Blacks start going easily to the cities formerly reserved to Whites. This massive movement causes their disappearance not only in the South, but also in the North of the United States where they are totally confused to pure-white Americans because of their new physical appearance. It has become difficult to find a black American in the streets or public places of this part of the United States, because many of them have been bleached. Those who have been reluctant to accept the bleaching process have finally gone to the South for the “Black-No-More treatment. The only Blacks seen in the North are mulatto babies whose mothers are proud of the color of their skin, which looks white like that of pure-white Americans:

In the North the only Negro to be seen were mulatto babies whose mothers, charmed by the beautiful color of their offspring, had defied convention and not turned them white. As there had never been more than two million Negroes in the North, the whitening process had been viewed indifferently by the masses because those who controlled the channels of opinion that felt the country was getting rid of a very anxious problem at absolutely no cost; but not so in the South (BNM, p. 101).

This passage is an illustration of how the black race is being eradicated in American society. The solution found by Dr. Crookman is although salutary for some Blacks willing to be accepted as equal citizens, but disastrous for the whole black community which sees not only the black color disappear, but the history of a people as a whole. This is viewed as a form of betrayal of the black race which is for many white “*bad and ugly, and that the white color symbolizes not only beauty, but also perfection and acceptance*” (N’zambi-Mikoulou & Massala: 2019, 195). What is depicted in *Black No More* is not only the integration of Blacks in various forms, but more the eradication of the black race. Whites appear hostile to this race because of their former consideration of Blacks as beasts, savages, and brainless individuals incapable of contributing to the development of the United States. But this black color’s disappearance does not only shock other Blacks who wanted to remain naturally what they were, but also white Northerners who find it unreasonable to live in a society where everybody is equal.

The novel, in fact, reads that the bleaching of Blacks all over the United States makes it difficult for people, especially travelers to figure out where they are. For, the South which was generally known as the fiefdom of Blacks, is now confused to other parts of the United States, because like the North, the South becomes almost white, as recognized by a character in the novel:

There was contrast and variety which was rare in a nation where standardization had progressed to such an extent that a traveler didn’t know what town he was in until someone informed him. The south had always been identified with the Negro, and vice versa, and its most pleasant memories treasured in song and story were built around this pariah class (BNM, p. 102).

The sentence “the traveler didn’t know what town he was until someone informed him” that almost

all Blacks have changed their black skin color into white brings evidence on the whiteness of the United States. But what is alarming is that this metamorphosis has not brought a positive change in the sense that it has impacted the American economy. Blacks who were used as a manpower become rare, because diluted in the mainstream American society where they enjoy the same rights with pure-white Americans:

The economic loss to the South by the ethnic migration was considerable. Hundreds of wooden railroad coaches, long since condemned as death traps in all other parts of the country, had to be scrapped by the railroads when there were no longer any Negroes to Jim crow. Thousands of railroad waiting rooms remained unused because, having been set aside for the use of Negroes, they were generally too dingy and unattractive for white folk or were no longer necessary (BNM, p. 102).

The author describes the economic crisis as the consequence of Blacks' rejection. He shows not only how the jobs formerly performed by Blacks were abandoned, but also railroad waiting rooms and other facilities where Blacks were forced to pay extra-money, are now unused. In showing that, the author pleads for Blacks' acceptance not with their artificial color, but with their black color, tradition, and culture. He shows the importance of this race when he, for example, argues:

The blacks had really been of economic, social and psychological value to the section. Not only had they done the dirty work and laid the foundation of its wealth, but they had served as a convenient red herring for the upper exploitation. The presence of the Negro as an underclass had also made of Dixie a unique part of the United States. There, despite the trend to industrialization, life was a little different, a little pleasanter, a little softer (id.,).

Through this passage, the narrator draws the reader back to Blacks' contribution to the development of economy in the United States. For, the sentence "the Blacks had really been of economic, social, and psychological value to the section" recalls Blacks' hard work in the building of this great nation. This means that with the disappearance of the black race and the decrease of the country's economy, Whites realize how important Blacks are in the United States. Certainly, their evil eye to Blacks will automatically change if the latter stop bleaching themselves for their integration. The problem with the American society is that Whites refuse to accept their black peers as they are, that is with their blackness, traditions, and customs. When I look at the way the author accounts for the disappearance of the black skin color because of Blacks' bleaching, I agree with Malcolm X that "*the white man has taught the black people in this country to hate themselves as inferior people, to hate each other*" (Malcolm X: 1963, 22). Malcolm X's view is not far from that of Toni Morrison's character in the *Bluest Eye* who thinks that "*colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud*" (Morrison: 1970, 87).

Schuyler does not limit his account of the impact of black characters' bleaching on their absence in the white man's companies, industries, and factories. He also illustrates this absence in the white Americans' home renting. In fact, whitened blacks decide then not to live any longer in the broken flats they used to rent, because their white owners did not consider them as tenants who deserved good living conditions before their bleaching process. As these broken flats become empty, white owners finally start improving all of their renting houses to attract and please their tenants:

Thousands of miles of streets located in the former Black Belts, and thus without sewers or pavement, were having to be improved at the insistent behest of the rapidly increased white population, real and imitation. Real estate owners who had never dreamed of making repairs on their tumble-down property when it was occupied by the docile Negroes were having to tear down, rebuild and alter the suit white tenants (BNM, pp. 102-103).

It is true that the integration of black characters with their new identity has facilitated the South development. For, one sees how the former black rural urbans are being improved by Whites who first consider Blacks with their black skin color as inferior citizens who could not deserve luxury houses and town's to live in. This means that despite the economic crisis, this new form of Blacks' integration has also urged the integration of the Southern cities formerly reserved to Blacks. To this is added the banning of racial segregation. One observes, for example, the closing of schools formerly reserved to black children. Knowing that white children now share the same color of the skin as whitened ones, the latter's parents decide to enroll their children in the same schools as white children to have the same education. This act puts an end to racial segregation between Whites and Blacks in the United States, because there are no longer places of limit to Blacks. Such an end is also visible through whitened teachers who refuse to teach in their former schools before the Government decides to give standard salaries to all teachers regardless of their origin:

Shacks and dry goods boxes that had once sufficed as schools for Negro children had now to be condemned and abandoned as unsuitable for occupation by white youth. Whereas thousands of school teachers had received thirty and forty dollars a month because of their Negro ancestry, the various cities and countries of the Southland were now forced to pay the standard salaries prevailing elsewhere (BNM, p. 103).

Despite the fact that history inhabits *Black No More*, the story told in this narrative is close to that of African Americans' struggle for integration in the United States. Unlike other African American novelists who have talked of Blacks' search for their American citizenship through peaceful and violent strategies such as complaints, speeches, sit-ins, marches, fights, and rebellion, Schuyler has revealed an ignored form of their struggle which consists in bleaching themselves. He demonstrates that any means that enables Blacks to be accepted by their white sisters and brothers was seen as a form of struggle for integration. Such is the case of black characters in his novel. One sees, for example, in this passage how Blacks who were first segregated are now accepted as full American citizens. There are no longer black schools and there are standard salaries for all Americans regardless of the color of their skin. All these facts attest that Blacks are no more viewed as second zone citizens, but as equal to Whites. This social improvement in terms of salaries finally affects many companies of the South to become unable to pay their taxes to the Government as they used to develop their economy thanks to the money they were withdrawing from black workers' salaries before the latter's bleaching process:

Naturally taxes increased. Chambers of Commerce were now unable to send out attractive advertising to Northern business firms offering no or very low taxation as an inducement to them to move South nor were they able to offer as many cheap building sites. Only through the efforts of the Grand Exalted Giraw of the Knights of Nordica were they still able to point to their large reserves of docile, contented, Anglo-Saxon labor, and who knew how long that condition would last? (id.,)

It becomes clear that with the integration of Blacks, the South faces a serious-economic crisis. This is quite explicit in the sense that Blacks who used to work hard and whose taxes to pay were higher than those of Whites, become equal to the latter. This means that they pay the same way as Whites. Odd jobs and other manual activities previously performed by Blacks are closed, and this closing results in a decrease of income that finally affects the American economy. In fact, if the disappearance of the black skin color on the American soil is seen as a positive aspect for whitened Blacks who now seem to enjoy the full fruition of the American democracy, pure-white Americans, however, find it as a drawback, because it hampers the development of their economy.

Schuyler does not stop his account for the impacts of black characters' bleaching from the disappearance of the black skin color on the American soil and the economic crisis in the South of the United States. He also invites the reader to discover how this disappearance brings about racial confusions between whitened characters and pure-white ones, as shown in the section below.

RACIAL CONFUSION BETWEEN WHITENED CHARACTERS AND PURE-WHITE ONES

In the need to portray some consequences originated from black characters' bleaching in the American society, Schuyler denounces the issue of racial confusion between whitened characters and pure-white ones. The novel reads that after the turning of Blacks' dark skin color into white, all inhabitants of the United States become white to such an extent that no one is capable of distinguishing a pure-white American from a whitened one. They are all suspected to have endured "the Black-No-More treatment" for their integration in the United States. Such suspicions end up creating a kind of mistrust in the mind of all inhabitants of this country. Consequently, all pure-white Americans refuse to get involved in any love affair with a partner who looks stranger to them. Their refusal is justified by the fear to give birth to mulatto babies if they accidentally get married with whitened Blacks instead of pure-white Americans. To find a solution to this situation, many of them decide to partake in "The Knights of Nordica", the major organization which is strongly opposed to the conception of Blacks' bleaching for integration:

The entire nation became alarmed. Hundreds of thousands of people, North and South, flocked into the Knights of Nordica. The real white people were panic-stricken, especially in Dixie. There was no way, apparently, of telling a real Caucasian from an imitation one. Every stranger was viewed with suspicion, which had a very salutary effect on the standard of sex morality in the United States. For the first time since 1905, chastity became a virtue. The number of petting parties, greatly augmented by the development of aviation, fell off amazingly. One must play safe. The girls argued (BNM, p. 89).

This passage attests of the panic created in American citizens' spirit by the total confusion observed among them after Blacks' bleaching. When the narrator, for example, argues that "there was no way, apparently, of telling a real Caucasian from an imitation one", he raises this question of racial confusion, for he means that there is no difference between pure-white Americans known as "real Caucasians" and whitened ones called "imitation Caucasians". What makes both categories of Americans stay in chastity is not only the fear of giving birth to mulatto children, but more of being accused, suspected, or recognized as whitened Blacks. For, if a woman gives birth to a mulatto baby, her husband is automatically suspected of being a bleached American. The woman, however, may be accused of adultery by her "true white husband" who may think that her pregnancy has been from a

whitened black man. The need to avoid such suspicions and accusations urges many pure-white Americans to object the bleaching treatment in order to fight for the preservation of the purity of both races which are about to collapse in all the sphere of the United States.

The novel portrays that characters' racial confusion is mainly linked to people who look stranger to them. Knowing that many whitened Blacks have moved to the pure-white Americans' cities to enjoy the full fruition of life, pure-white Americans start fearing white business men and women who come from the other cities of the United States. Any attempt of a White to escape a pure-white American in a public place makes it possible for the latter to conclude that he or she is a whitened Black:

The holidays of traveling salesmen, business men and fraternal delegates were made less pleasant than of yore. The old orgiastic days in the big cities seemed past for all time. It also suddenly began to dawn upon some men that the pretty young thing they had met at the seashore and wanted to rush to the altar might possibly be a whitened Negress; and young women were almost as suspicious. Rapid-fire courtships and gin marriage declined. Matrimony at last began to be approached with caution. Nothing like this situation had been known since the administration of Grover Cleveland (id.,).

One understands that the confusion occasioned by Blacks' bleaching results in the mistrust between the two races in American society, for the author demonstrates that even salesmen and businessmen are not excluded from it. They are now less considered than before for the simple reason that no one among pure-white Americans or whitened Americans is capable of knowing whether they are "Caucasians" or "imitation ones". When the narrator, for instance, argues that "young women were almost as suspicious", he means that white men are not the only people suspected of being black before the black-no-more treatment. He also means that if young women are suspected, it is because they often express the feeling of fear whenever a white person comes closer to them. It is exactly this fear that enables "true Caucasians" to conclude that they are from the whitened race. Consequently, all Americans refrain from getting married for fear of being mistaken in the choice of a partner. But some years later, whitened Americans start challenging their pure-white counterparts by flirting with pure-white women who find it useless to stay single. While bleached wives give birth to black babies, pure-white ones, however, give birth to mulatto babies. Schuyler describes this situation by referring to frequent reports in the daily press announcing the births of these babies:

From that time on there were frequent reports in the daily press of white women giving birth to black babies. In some cases, of course, the white women had recently become white but the blame for the tar-brushed offspring in the public mind always rested on the shoulders of the father, or rather, of the husband. The number of cases continued to increase. All walks of life were represented. For the first time the prevalence of sexual promiscuity was brought home to the thinking people of America. Hospital authorities and physicians had known about it in a general way but it had been unknown to the public (BNM, pp. 88-89).

Throughout this passage, one observes the impact of racial confusion on American couples, for the author demonstrates how the lack of distinction between the bride and broom in terms of the color of the skin leads the couple to give birth to black or mulatto babies. The responsibility of the presence of these babies is put on men because biologically speaking, children come from their sperm. It is this

sperm added to the ovule of a woman that makes the latter fall pregnant. Women make themselves exempted from this blame because they believe in this biological reality. But what they seem to ignore is that a pure-white American woman whose husband is a bleached white, may also beget black or mulatto babies. In this sense, the blame for the presence of such babies should be put on men and women. The novel reads that the presence of these black or mulatto babies does not astonish hospital authorities and physicians, because as skillful individuals on the matter, they knew it in advance, but were not ready to say it openly to the public. This awareness made them object the bleaching process which they knew would cause not only racial confusion, but also fear, suspicions, accusations, mistrusts, debates, and disputes among all Americans, as the author illustrates it through workers who now spend more time on talking about Blacks' blood and the bleaching process rather than discussing their wages and hours of labor with their employers:

Rumors continued to fill the air. People were always asking each other embarrassing questions about birth and blood. Fights became more frequent. Large numbers of the workers, being of Southern birth, were unable to disapprove charges of possessing Negro ancestry, and so were forced to leave the vicinity. The mill hands kept so busy talking about Negro blood that no one thought of discussing wages and hours of labor (BNM, p. 99).

This passage attests of racial confusion between bleached characters and pure-white ones, for the phrase "embarrassing questions" here brings evidence on the way white Americans question on this unexpected blood-mixture. If the talks at work are now based on "birth" and "blood", it is because they are astonished at how a white couple gives birth to a black or mulatto baby. This confused situation creates conflicts within many couples and urges everyone to mistrust the other. This means that this form of struggle causes fear and lack of confidence to each other. Then, through these black or mulatto babies from white couples, Schuyler shows not only the impacts of Blacks' bleaching in American society, but more the degree of white American authorities' imprudence in allowing a black Doctor to go ahead with his bleaching treatment. What one keeps in mind is that Schuyler's imaginative world is victim of the cause of the persistence of racism and segregation. What I mean here is that if Whites had accepted Blacks with their black identity, they would have not all involved in Doctor Crookman's treatment, and all the confusions and misunderstanding observed in American society would have not certainly been up to date. This is to say that the problem in America is not may be the problem of origin or religious faith, but the problem of color. For, the integration of Blacks through the bleaching process tells evidence on the above arguments.

What is true is that the United States is now confronted to the problem of black or mulatto babies mothered by white American women. This problem which is the result of the confusion made by these babies' parents at the time of marriage urges pure-white Americans to demand the immediate closing of Dr. Crookman's sanitariums in all the sphere of the United States. To appease the pressure from these pure-white Americans, Dr. Crookman announces in the press that he is establishing "lying-in hospitals" where all black babies are turned into white in a single day:

Black-No-More, Incorporated, was not slow to seize upon this opportunity to drum up more business. With 100 sanitariums going full blast from Coast to Coast, it now announced in full page advertisements in the daily press that it was stabling lying-in hospitals in the principal cities where all prospective mothers could come to have their babies, and whenever a baby was born black or

mulatto, it would immediately be given the 24- hour treatment that permanently turned infants white. The country breathed easier, particularly the four million Negroes who had become free because white (BNM, pp. 89-90).

In this passage, the author evidences the black doctor's scientific skills. His achievements which make the proudness of the black community is an awareness to Whites who still regard them as inferior in all domains, doubting of their capacity to contribute to the development of the nation. This means that despite the economic crisis caused by Dr. Crookman's discovery, the latter has placed Blacks in a considerably accepted position. If they were accepted as equal citizens to Whites, Crookman would have perhaps gone further in inventing other objects capable of boosting the American economy. With his invention which has made Blacks' integration possible, he becomes an icon in the history of Blacks' struggle for acceptance in the United States. For, his successful efforts make all Americans feel satisfied for a while, as the narrator voices it out: "The country breathed easier". Here again, the author raises the question of white American authorities' imprudence in accepting once more the bleaching of their babies' dark skin color, ignoring that they will continue to have trouble to distinguish a whitened American from a pure-white one. Consequently, this lack of distinction will not only bring about racial confusion, but will also lead white women to continue giving birth to black or mulatto babies. However, some years later, pure-white Americans finally become strong opponents to Dr. Crookman's bleaching activities. For, they realize that turning their babies' black skin color into white is far from being a solution to the racial confusion they are victim of in the United States. They find it better to fight for the existence of both races which are about to collapse in this part of the world. For them, bleaching an American's dark skin color is a byword for violating the laws established by God on earth. This conception urges them to burn Dr. Crookman's sanitariums as a way to avoid racial confusion, especially when it comes to making a choice of a partner to get married with:

Finally, emboldened and inflamed by fiery editorials, radio addresses, pamphlets, and platform speeches, a mob seeking to protect white womanhood in Cincinnati attacked a Crookman hospital, drove several women into the streets and set a fire to the building. A dozen babies were burned to death and others, hastily removed by their mothers, were recognized as mulattoes. The newspapers published names and addresses. Many of the women were very prominent socially either in their own right or because of their husbands. The nation was shocked as never before (BNM, p. 133).

As it can be seen, one of the main reasons for which black babies are burned to death instead of turning their black skin color into white is the fear pure-white Americans have to face racial confusion and mistrusts among all Americans. The other reason is linked to the desire they have to free all pure-white American women from the burden of looking after their black babies who will end up giving birth to black or mulatto babies in the future. These two reasons finally lead them to arrest even innocent people and burn Dr. Crookman's sanitariums including himself, because he is responsible for racial confusion that gangrenes the American society:

Dr. Crookman was burned a hundred times in effigy. Several lying-in hospitals were attacked. Two hundred citizens who knew nothing about either candidate were arrested for fighting over which was the better man. The air was electric with expectancy. People stood around in knots. Small boys scattered leaflets on ten million door steps. Police were on the alert to suppress disorder, except

what they created (BNM, p. 142).

This passage attests of pure-white Americans' hate for Dr. Crookman's invention. This hate is visibly manifested through characters' attacks against Dr. Crookman and his patients. These attacks and burnings that create a great disorder in the country push the American Police to intervene immediately, as the narrator voices it out: "Police were on the alert to suppress disorder". What makes pure-white Americans attack even innocent Americans rather than attacking those who are involved in the bleaching activities is the trouble they have to distinguish bleached Americans from pure-white ones, as they now all look alike.

Schuyler's efforts to account for racial confusion among Americans in the United States are nowhere more evident than in the passage where he tells of Max Disher who is surprised to find out that his neighbor Mrs. Blandish no longer recognizes him because of his new physical appearance. Consequently, she looks at him as a pure-white thief who wants to steal in Max Disher's apartment, ignoring that the man she calls thief is Max Disher. Despite the latter's arguments to convince her that he is Max, the owner of the house, Mrs. Blandish does not believe him, because, for her, Max Disher is not white. It is only after looking carefully at his eyes that she recognizes him. This recognition makes her wonder how he has done to become white like a pure-white American:

As he entered the hallway, the mountainous form of his landlady loomed up. She jumped back as she saw his face. "What you doing in here?" She almost shouted. "where'd you get a key to this house?" "It's me, Max Disher," he assured her with a grin at her astonishment. "Don't know me do you? She gazed incredulously into his face. "Is that you sure enough Max? How in the devil did you get so white?" (BNM, p. 27).

As it can be noticed, what the author demonstrates here is the consequences of the bleaching undergone by black characters for their full integration in the American society. This bleaching brings about racial confusion and mistrusts not only between bleached characters and pure-white ones, but also among all Americans, because none of them is capable of telling the exact-racial belonging of the other. Mrs. Blandish's interrogations "Is that you sure enough Max?" and "How in the devil did you get so white?" are illustrations of these racial confusions and mistrusts which inhabit all Americans' spirits. For, she demonstrates that she no longer recognizes her neighbor who, she thinks, was black a few days ago. What is worth knowing is that Blacks' attempt to integrate the American society through the bleaching process appears as a nightmare, for they are still "*victim of social abuses such as euthanasia and discrimination which are viewed as the obstacles to the achievement of the American Dream*" (Massala & Mitati: 2019, 17).

CONCLUSION

At the term of this analysis, I have discovered two main impacts of black characters' bleaching in George Schuyler's *Black No More*. The first is the disappearance of the black skin color on the Americans soil, especially in the South where Dr. Crookman has settled several bleaching sanitariums. The second is linked to racial confusion observed between pure-white characters and whitened ones which has resulted in the mistrusts among all Americans, as they have trouble to identify the exact race of their counterparts. The presence of black and mulatto babies mothered by whitened American women and pure-white ones are not only illustrations of this racial confusion, but more of Americans' social facts incorporated by the author into his work of fiction. I finally dare

say that Schuyler's novel and the American society mirror each other.

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