

**Elevating Social Status by Racial Passing and White Assimilation:  
in George Schuyler's *Black No More***

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**Abstract:**

This paper examines the legacy of the 1932 novel *Black No More* by George Schuyler with its message promoting assimilation. Racial divisions within the United States have a complex history, either insisting on separation or promoting unity, but advocates of assimilation have traditionally been viewed negatively. This paper aims to reconcile the assimilationist views of Schuyler against his larger purpose of empowerment through change. Schuyler focuses on issues of education, economy, and social status to demonstrate his thesis: meaningful change is possible if action is taken. Numerous theorists such as Jane Kuenz (1997), Hee-Jung Serenity Joo (2008), Jason Haslam (2002), and Ann Rayson (1978) have considered that Schuyler as an assimilationist. Schuyler's novel builds a case for assimilation of individuals into the dominant culture as the practical course for improvement on both a personal and social scale.

*Keywords:* assimilation, Black No More, empowerment, Harlem Renaissance, passing, race, Schuyler, whiteness

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## Introduction

George Schuyler's *Black No More* is a novel that carries great implications, particularly when the reader considers the time in which it was written. Although many critics consider *Black No More* a satire due to its apparent mockery of racist, Eurocentric ideology in the early twentieth century, Schuyler is arguably an assimilationist author who, through his work, encourages racial passing and assimilation into the dominant white culture. Internal evidence from the text and from Schuyler's autobiography suggests that the author sees whiteness as associated with privileges that African Americans cannot achieve without assimilating into white society. His justifications for assimilating into "whiteness" are deeply embedded in the fibers of the narrative; the ability to integrate oneself into white society is depicted as a desirable trait. Schuyler stresses the socioeconomic security that blacks cannot maintain due to their subordinate position in society. Therefore, his novel appears to characterize the desire of African Americans' to "pass" in hegemonic white America as a positive attitude.

This paper aims to identify how education, economy, and social status are crucial issues in George Schuyler's *Black No More* (1989). Three different approaches can be taken to examine this issue. First, Schuyler encourages the African American community during the Harlem Renaissance to assimilate and adopt white privilege. Theorists such as Jane Kuenz (1997), Hee-Jung Serenity Joo (2008), Jason Haslam (2002), and Ann Rayson (1978) have all considered that Schuyler is an assimilationist writer, and they use the term assimilationist to mean one who supports racial passing. The second approach applies Nickieann Fleener's (1984) reading of Schuyler's autobiography that uncovers how he assimilated into white society; only then was he able to climb the social ladder culminating in his own interracial marriage. The final approach depends on an original analysis of *Black No More* which indicates that Schuyler is writing from experience, providing his readers with an Afrofuturistic roadmap toward racial empowerment. The premise of this reading shows that although the assimilation of an oppressed individual into the dominant culture is usually considered a negative behavior by many critics, Schuyler's novel justifies assimilation as positive. In support of this assertion about Schuyler's intentions, the author's autobiography in *Zeitgeist* will provide additional evidence. These various approaches offer new insight into Schuyler and *Black No More* in particular, but they also provide ground for greater critical reflection on the wider topics of white privilege and the history of racial passing and assimilation.

When analyzing literature written during a time of immense social, cultural, and political change, a historicist approach may best infuse a reader's interpretation of the work in question. *Black No More* is one of the most significant novels to emerge from the Harlem Renaissance, a movement that glorified African American discourse during the Progressive Era. This essay is particularly concerned with three questions about Schuyler's life and work: Was the desire of African Americans to assimilate into white society positive or negative? How does *Black No More* critique the racism that African Americans confronted during the Harlem Renaissance? Finally, how does Schuyler's representation of assimilation relate to the connections he draws between race and economics? By examining the historical and biographical context of the period, as well

as addressing the above questions, the assimilationist messages embedded in Schuyler's *Black No More* becomes readily evident.

### Literature Review

Critic Norma R. Jones (1987) claims that George S. Schuyler was one of the most important African American authors during the Harlem Renaissance. Schuyler was an active member of a black socialist group, Friends of Negro Freedom, and publicly spoke about political and cultural issues. In reflecting on Schuyler's autobiography, Fleener (1984) mentions that Schuyler, as *Pittsburgh Courier* associate editor, columnist, and reporter, was one of the first black journalists to achieve national prominence in the twentieth century, a position he used to further his political aspirations (p.1). This last element is significant, and Schuyler's autobiography gives the reader a glimpse into the sociopolitical aspects of his life that would inspire him to write *Black No More* in 1931, the first satiric work on American racism by a black writer.

George Schuyler's *Black No More* presents a mythical solution to the race problem in the African American community: the ability to switch races to all appearances. The book also shows shifts in political power within contemporary black communities: Fleener (1984) mentions that the book chronicles the reaction of early twentieth century black leaders who saw their powers erode as more and more followers withdrew their support. Although Schuyler's characters in the novel have fictional names, the similarities to the major black leaders in his time are noticeably present. Fleener writes, "[f]ormer National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) director Henry Lee Moon said, 'I remember W.E.B. Du Bois laughing about recognizing himself in George's book'" (p.13). It is important to note that in some circles at the time, W.E.B. Du Bois was also considered assimilationist, particularly after he published the famous essay "The Talented Tenth." Based on this reaction, Schuyler might be interpreted as satirically criticizing Du Bois and the black community for assimilating into white culture. Some critics, therefore, believe that Schuyler's novel is not an assimilationist work. In order to understand their views, along with others who disagree, the concept of assimilation and the assimilationist novel needs further examination.

For many intellectuals, the assimilation of an oppressed group into a dominant culture is a negative thing because it means that the specific experiences and identities of the oppressed are submerged so that they can join a group that will never truly accept them. Joo (2008) reads *Black No More* through a lens critical of supposed white superiority. Joo uses the term "assimilation" in her article as a notion to be considered within contemporary contexts in relation to the idea of racial passing. In other words, Joo believes that "assimilation assumes a center-periphery power paradigm with a socioeconomically specific 'whiteness' at its core" (p.176). Joo sides with those who see Schuyler as pro-assimilation, where the author "imagines a society where miscegenation will eradicate racial differences" (p.181).

Similarly, Rayson (1978) argues that Schuyler is an assimilationist writer because she sees him denying the importance of race as a factor in his life and work as a journalist. Rayson refers to critics like Robert Bone, who classifies black writers as assimilationist. She quotes Bone as

defining assimilationism as “an attempt to abandon ethnic ties and identify with dominant majority” (p.102). Rayson claims that Schuyler’s *Black No More* should be read as an assimilationist novel, postulating that Schuyler’s political and social theories, as represented in the novel, are based on economics and class rather than on race. Examining Schuyler’s personal history, Rayson notes that while Schuyler’s political views changed as he got older, he remained consistent in his views against any form of race separation.

Up until the period of the Harlem Renaissance, the primary tactic of African American minorities for achieving a measure of privilege was simply to aim to appear white and thereby co-opt the inherent rights afforded to the majority. This became a central theme in writers of this era. Belluscio (2006) discusses the issue of racial passing in the novelistic discourses among African American authors. Belluscio refers to sociologist Gunnar Myrdal, St. Clair Drake, and Horace R. Cayton who define passing as a “means to conceal a unitary, essential, and ineffaceable racial identity and substitute it with a purportedly artificial one, as in the oft-discussed case of a light-skinned black person for white “for social, economic, or political reasons” (p.9). Belluscio refers to the realities of racial passing by many African Americans during the particular time in which Schuyler wrote the novel. Belluscio, (2006) mentions that “[b]y the 1910s, the trend was fully entrenched and pressured many African Americans in the South to choose escape and new beginnings. Between 1916 to 1930, some one million African Americans left the South for the urban North and Midwest” (p.41). In this sense, the idea of passing is tied to wide-scale shifts in economic progress and change within the industrialized US; people are remaking their lives wholesale, and passing is part of the pattern of change. On the other hand, Daniel (2002) takes a much more limited view of the practice, considering it within isolated social contexts, where individuals who happen to appear more white are able to co-opt the privileges afforded to that race at that time (p. 4).

Understanding the issue of assimilation through racial passing into whiteness by black minority assimilationists is important discussion. Considering this issue as a process of elevating social, educational, and economic class of the oppressed African Americans can help readers identifying how Schuyler’s novel reflects upon the reality of such crucial moments in his life.

## Discussion

Schuyler’s (1989) *Black No More* can be read as a satirical interpretation of the problems associated with race in America during the Harlem Renaissance. Schuyler introduces the protagonist, Max Disher, a young African American who is living in Harlem in the 1920s. Max is granted a lifetime opportunity to become a white man through a technological machine invented by a black scientist named Dr. Crookman. Max was oppressed by his identity as a black man and believes that adopting a new identity as a white man, Matthew Fisher, can help him achieve the elusive American dream much faster than he might as a black man. Furthermore, Max is unable to build a relationship with the white woman whom he likes because she rejects his color. As a result, he is one of the first volunteers to try the scientific breakthrough, the “Black-No-More” process. Schuyler shows the reader that this scientific technology can help members of the oppressed black community to achieve their goals and attain racial parity. As Max becomes a white man, ironically,

Schuyler depicts “whiteness” by illustrating Fisher’s ambition and brutal manipulation of the public. Fisher becomes the Grand Exalted Giraw of the Knights of Nordica, a white supremacist group. Then, he marries Helen, the white girl who rejected him as “Max Disher” because of his race and color.

*Black No More* draws strong connections between race and economics. Crookman and his partners ultimately market Black-No-More throughout the United States, demonstrating that racial transformation of the African American population will lead to the collapse of black business and other socially raised businesses. Fisher is able to earn more money as the advisor of the Knights of Nordica because he gets benefits out of the money made from racial fears. *Black No More* exposes racial divide as a social construction primarily motivated by business or economic interests. This is portrayed in the novel through the rise of the “crooked” African American scientist, Crookman, and his ever-increasing entrepreneurial influence in the nation. Readers can see how newly white individuals become corrupted by economics, especially through their manipulation of labor through racial prejudice.

Schuler’s depiction of race in *Black No More*’s can be problematic. Readers might wonder why Schuyler chose to represent a strong link between race and economics. The direct implication of the plot is an advocacy for the elimination of African American as a class of being. However, the extreme nature of this device is more properly understood as a means to critique not only racism, white ideology, but also the economic foundation for the each.

Schuyler’s novel begins with the oppression and racial discrimination that Max Disher confronts as he harbors an interest in yellow women, a term for African Americans of lighter complexion. This interest marks an element of prejudice within the black consciousness, favoring whiteness as a desirable commodity. Schuyler reveals that the two characters, Max Disher and Bunny Brown, have a specific predilection in common with their community: their preference for yellow women. Schuyler writes, (1989) “[t]he two had in common a weakness rather prevalent among Aframerican bucks: they preferred yellow women. Both swore there were three things essential to the happiness of a colored gentlemen: yellow money, yellow women and yellow taxis” (p.19). Max says, “It was so hard to hold them,” a comment which reflects not only on the economic realities imposed by racial divides, but the subsequent divides made within any given category of race. Schuyler is criticizing his own race here by showing how black people lacked many societal privileges because of racial discrimination. Later, as Disher becomes Fisher, he is able to have the privileges that he was unable to obtain because of his race. This plotline is Schuyler’s conceptualization of the black community as a secondary, inferior group within the context of a larger, hegemonic white culture where a black person such as Max is unable to be a part. It is only when he assimilates, or rather, physically transforms, that he is able to become a member of a dominant white political party; his black identity prohibits him from obtaining the privileges that white people have. Max’s experience closely mirrors that of Schuyler’s real-life as represented in his autobiography. Fleener (1984) mentions that George Schuyler married an artist, Josephine E. Lewis, the daughter of a prominent white Texas family in 1928 (p.5). Therefore, it could be argued here that Schuyler himself is an assimilationist with the same preferences for

“whiteness” as the measure of beauty. While he might be mocking the desire of African Americans in Harlem to assimilate into whiteness, Schuyler is also, in some ways, representing his own reality and, therefore, himself as assimilationist.

Schuyler presents Max Disher as stereotypically “black.” He wants to show the readers what it means for a black person to be isolated in public. Schuyler takes the reader to the streets of 1920s Harlem, as he wants the reader to feel the discrimination and oppression many black people suffered during that time. There are a handful of critical moments in the novel that help the reader understand the African American obsession with race and the compelling reasons for this focus. At the Honky Tonk Club in Harlem, New York in 1933, Schuyler gives the reader a glimpse into the heavily discriminatory environment of the period. As Max sits with his friend inside the club, he manages to ask a white woman to dance with him. Bunny is surprised by his intention to do that because he knows it is a faux pas for a black man to proposition a white woman in such a manner. Bunny is fully aware of the class hierarchy in his society, and his racial fixation renders him unable to take risks. Bunny warns, “[d]on’t do it, Max! ...[t]hem fellows are liable to start somethin” (p.22). Disregarding Bunny’s advice, Max takes charge and asks her to dance with him. She declines, replying: “[n]o, I never dance with niggers!” (p.23). This is a turning point for Max to rethink his identity and the status of his race. From the beginning, he assumes that the woman may reject his offer to dance as he tells Bunny, “Well, I’m gonna take a chance, anyhow” (p.22). Nonetheless, as he faces the reality of early twentieth-century race relations, he is angered by her rebuff and her words keep repeating in his mind. It is likely that Schuyler wants to show readers what it is like to be insulted for simply being black. Moments such as these incite the readers to feel sympathy towards African Americans for the racial discrimination they endure. Therefore, it could be argued that Schuyler wants to show readers that assimilation into whiteness has a positive impact because as long as black people are obsessed with their African American identity, their discrimination will worsen.

The technological discovery in *Black No More* and the consequent establishment of the Black-No-More sanitarium becomes a turning point for many African Americans because of its ability to transform black people into white. Reilly (1978) argues that assimilation can be an ideal thing because Schuyler’s book encourages assimilation and implies that it would be a reasonable response if it were possible (p.108). Thus Schuyler posits that Black-No-More is a groundbreaking, essential discovery for African Americans because it will facilitate not only their physical metamorphoses from black to white, but also from subaltern into superior. Readers can see the reaction of oppressed blacks in the novel as they read in the *New York Times* that Dr. Junius Crookman can turn blacks white. They view the scientific innovation as the opening of a door through which they can escape from the miseries of racial discrimination. For Max, this potential is immediately apparent when he reads all the advantages of passing:

No more jim crow. No more insults. As a white man could go anywhere, be anything he wanted to be, do most anything he wanted to do, be a free man at last ...and probably be able to meet the girl from Atlanta. What a Vision! (Schuyler, 1986, p.26)

This passage indicates that Schuyler is telling the black community the advantages that will be attained when one assimilates into white, dominant society. He shows the goal as rational, and has his character, Max, immediately agree and plan to undergo the procedure before anyone else. Schuyler is almost criticizing black people by showing that they, in a sense, choose their oppression by refusing to assimilate into the white community – just as Max would be choosing oppression by refusing to take advantage of Black-No-More.

As Max reads the advertised discourse in *The New York Times*, the advertisement itself reveals the reality of Schuyler's beliefs about racial passing and assimilation. He shows readers the rationality behind passing as Max accepts the procedure to escape from his primary obsession: his heritage and skin color. Schuyler appeals to the emotions of the readers to sympathize with Max, who sentimentally considers the permanence of his decision before deciding that it is worth it if it means that he will not have to tolerate discrimination any longer. When the procedure is complete, not only does Max's physical appearance change, but also his social status:

White at last! Gone was the smooth brown complexion. Gone were the slightly full lips and Ethiopian nose. Gone was the nappy hair that he had straightened as meticulously ever since the kink-no-more lotions first wrenched Afraericans from the tyranny and torture of the comb. There would be no more expenditures for skin whiteners; no more discrimination; no more obstacles in his path. He was free! The world was his oyster and he had the open sesame of a pork-colored skin! (p. 35)

In *Black No More*, Schuyler defines the experience of crossing from one race to the other. Belluscio (2006) argues that Schuyler's description of Max's status is a conventional, realistic description of passing due to the demanding process of cultural assimilation (p.165). Although Schuyler describes Max's status satirically, it can be argued that he intends to show the African American reader the privileges and supremacy to be achieved through embracing whiteness.

Schuyler illustrates Max as immediately feeling "superior" to his African American community upon his transformation. This portrayal of superiority can be taken in two ways. First, it may represent that Schuyler is criticizing the ineffectualness of African American leaders in the 1930s as mentioned in his autobiography. Radical action produces radical results for Max Fisher, and this may be the political lesson. Second, a practical demonstration is obvious. Schuyler is asserting that once African Americans assimilate to whiteness, they will be able to reach preeminence in society and have the economic privileges from which they were previously barred. For this reason, as Max journeys into the "great world of whiteness," he is given one thousand dollars just for telling his story, which demonstrates how easy it is to make money when one is white. Schuyler compares Max's life after becoming white by writing, "[w]hat an adventure! What a treat it would be to mingle with white people in places where as a youth he had never dared to enter. At last he felt like an American citizen" (p.48). This quote indicates that Schuyler is excluding the African American community from the American nation because of their black identity. In other words, he believes the black community should embrace whiteness and integrate itself into white society because without doing so, they are not real American citizens. Essentially, Schuyler believes that

the desire to be white is a good thing since assimilation into whiteness carries great economic implications for a black individual.

*Black No More* highlights the oppressiveness of American culture through the connection between race and economics and how they function together. Haslam (2002) contends that “Schuyler’s satire functions in part to highlight what he sees to be ways in which race and economics function together to create America’s oppressive cultural system” (p.16). Haslam claims that *Black No More* represents Schuyler’s reverse definition of what many critics focus on; that race is a subcategory of class structures that presents the inseparable nature of economic and racial oppression (p.25). Therefore, Schuyler wants to disseminate the message to the black community that when one is oppressed racially, the central means of oppression is an economic one. His novel proves that when it emphasizes the price of the Black-No-More procedure. Schuyler writes,

Johnson showed all his money gold teeth in a wide grin as he glanced out the window and saw the queue of Negroes already extending around the corner. “Man, Man, man!” he chuckled to Foster, “at fifty dollars a th’ow this thing’s gonna have th’ numbah business beat all hollow.” (p.33)

This passage exemplifies the way in which Schuyler underscores the economic issue in this novel. Fifty dollars, for many poor blacks in the 1930s, was quite the sum, though not entirely unmanageable. Fifty dollars in 1930 was equivalent to \$697 today (US Bureau of Labor Statistics). Although it does not seem like much, fifty dollars commanded greater purchasing power in the 1930s and wage inequality was more severe. In *Black No More*, the fact that African Americans flock to have the procedure done makes a strong statement; it is later revealed that within four months almost all blacks in the United States turn white. The speed at which everyone becomes white in itself implies that assimilating into whiteness is manageable, reachable, and beneficial. Summarily, if one chooses not to assimilate, one is electing to be oppressed and disenfranchised. Schuyler keeps developing his ideas about how privilege is associated with whiteness and how black people passing as whites can help them maintain that.

Yet, the movement to an all-white society has inherent issues when identity consciousness is centered on definitions of race. Haslam (2002) argues that Schuyler’s representation of 1930s America emphasizes whiteness’ performative reliance on the existence of blackness (p.19). This performative reliance indicates the privileges associated with the white class, which represents their superiority over the black race. Haslam describes how the novel allows “racism to take on a life of its own, beyond hegemonic concerns, to meet new social demands” (p.16). Schuyler seeks to show the African American community that they are a working class under the superiority of wealthy white people. The novel indicates that whiteness is constructed as a determinant of social and economic privilege in Harlem. Early in the novel, readers can observe how Max and Bunny watch a group of white people near the club. As they watch, a white man from the group asks them if they are familiar with a liquor store where they can buy a bottle. As he asks Max to find some for him, Max says:

Sure', heartily. What luck! Here was the very chance he'd been waiting for. These people might invite them over to their table. The man handed a ten dollar bill and Max went to bareheaded to get the liquor. In ten minutes he was back. He handed the men the quart and the change. The man gave back the change and thanked him. Max returned to his table and eyed the group wistfully. (Schuyler, 1989, p.21)

The passage displays Schuyler's perception of the black community and how they are seen as a comparatively minor class. The message Schuyler presents is that assimilating into whiteness is a good thing as long as the economical privileges in the society are associated with whiteness. Therefore, Schuyler's explanation for Max's motivation for turning white is part of his yearning for the economic privileges one is granted when he is a member of the white group. Max feels that joining the white ranks is the obvious goal which had otherwise been unavailable. Schuyler makes this overt as Max thinks: "here was the chance that chance he'd been waiting for" (Schuyler, 1989, p.21). At this point, Schuyler seems to highlight that the black race is holding back African Americans from the economic privileges that white people possess. Hence, he wants to prove that assimilating into whiteness is a positive approach as long as one gets benefits out of it.

Observing Max's desire for whiteness establishes Schuyler's theory of the positive impact of assimilation and racial passing. Readers can see in the novel how Max rushes to transform his skin color in order to satisfy his needs. Kuenz (1997) claims that Max's immediate decision to turn white represents his thirst to achieve "a level and kind of economic opportunity currently unavailable to him" (p.185). Kuenz says that being white in the contexts of *Black No More* "means wanting to be a free and democratic citizen of the nation, to be included in the conceptual realm of America" (p.185). Holding that to be true, Max's desire for whiteness both signifies his needs and supports the social construction of white privilege for American society. As Max turns into a white man, the novel shifts to portray the rewards that Max reaps with his new identity as Matthew Fisher. Schuyler shows readers that Fisher is bestowed a prominent position among the Knights of the Nordica and Rev. Givens introduces his daughter, Helen Givens, to him to be his wife. As Max becomes a white man, he initially critiques his "white life" as not the same life of which he dreamt; nevertheless, he is able to obtain the ideal life that Schuyler believes every black wants. Despite his initial reservations, Max is satisfied living as Matt, as represented when Bunny approaches him and Max asks, "Do you want a job?" to which Bunny replies, "No, I prefer a position." Matt says, "Will, I think I can fix you up here for about five grand to begin with" (Schuyler, 1989, p. 112). Max shows his economic superiority as a white man. Bunny agrees to his offer: "All right Max," which prompts Matt to say, "For Christ's sake don't call me Max ... Them days has gone forever. It's Matthew Fisher now" (Schuyler, 1989, p.113). Schuyler seems to be implying that Max, with his new identity as a dominant white man, is able to change his friend's life. His ability to do this depends on his remaining distant from his former self, his former blackness.

Reading Schuyler's *Black No More* as an encouragement for racial passing and assimilation to whiteness should not be considered a negative motivation for any ethnic group, especially for African Americans. Daniel (2002) comments on legal divisions incorporated into

US law and customs which demanded recognition of the separation of races, institutionalizing racism within society. He comments that

the purpose of the one-drop rule was to draw boundaries between black and white, assert the superiority of whiteness, and deny equality to African Americans. It also had the unintended consequence of encouraging group identity among those designated as black. (p. 5-6)

For Schuyler, this kind of community is a mixed blessing. Maintaining group cohesion with a black identity, essentially, creates a permanent foil for the white majority, and Schuyler advocates for American society as a whole as the real community to be sought by everyone.

Since Schuyler focuses on the economic dimension, he is encouraging the black community to believe that racial passing and assimilation can help them achieve their dreams and flee from the discrimination and boundaries they encounter based on their race, but it is not the sole possibility. *Black No More* introduces Dr. Junius Crookman, “the colored fellow that went to Germany to study about three years ago” (p.24). Crookman changes the whole nation and ultimately becomes one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the United States. He received his education from Germany and returned to the U.S. with his new invention in three days. By describing Crookman in this manner, Schuyler is implying that another aspect of whiteness involves educational attainment. Dr. Crookman is elevated to the upper class through his education, which is usually associated with white people. Interestingly, Crookman did not turn himself white; he did not abandon his race. However, it is unnecessary – his education and his discovery represents his assimilation into white academia. This interpretation can be read as a veiled message that Schuyler was trying to deliver to his readers: becoming an educated, white scholar will elevate your social status and help you gain the economic privileges to which many white people have access.

Schuyler’s urging for African Americans to have a better education, as implied through Dr. Crookman’s case in the novel, epitomizes a vision of the black community where they, like white people, can be elevated by their education and their scholarly works. History presents many African American leaders, who come after Schuyler’s novel, who were elevated by their education. One similar recent example proving this suggestion might be Barack Obama, the President of the United States, who was the first African American leader to hold this position. He received his education from Columbia University and Harvard Law School. After advancing himself through higher education, he was able to hold the highest position of his government. Looking at assimilation from this angle supports Schuyler’s argument in *Black No More* that power and success only comes to those who assimilate and make themselves palatable to white society.

## Conclusion

Education, economy, and social status are important issues for George Schuyler. Taking these elements into account, he encourages the African American community during the Harlem Renaissance to assimilate. Many critics such as Kuenz (1997), Joo (2008), Haslam (2002), and

Rayson (1978) argue that Schuyler is an assimilationist writer and they use the term assimilationist to mean one who supports racial passing. Additionally, as mentioned by Fleener (1984), reading Schuyler's autobiography reveals the extent to which the author assimilated into white society, and that he recommends his own experience as the course for others to follow. Although the assimilation of an oppressed individual into the dominant culture is typically perceived as a negative thing, Schuyler's novel justifies his reasons for believing that assimilation into white culture is positive. In examining the text, the *Zeitgeist* of the 1920s and 1930s, and Schuyler's autobiography, readers can interpret *Black No More* as an attempt by George Schuyler to inform the African American community that there is a way to overcome white hegemony: to become a part of it. Since privilege is associated with whiteness, racial passing and assimilation can help African Americans to obtain these privileges, both socially and economically. Many other less privileged nations and people with different colors today practice a similar racial passing and assimilation into white culture. Historically, this has been the case within the United States, but it remains the reality for the present in countless nations impacted by racial divisions.

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