The Dangers of White Blacks: mulatto culture, class, and eugenic beauty in the post-emancipation (USA, 1900-1920)[1]

Os perigos dos Negros Brancos: cultura mulata, classe e beleza eugênica no pós-emancipação (EUA, 1900-1920)

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Resumo

Por meio da articulação entre história social da cultura e do trabalho, o artigo discute o processo de fortalecimento da "cultura mulata" promovido por intelectuais afro-americanos das classes alta e média no período pós-emancipação. Ao analisar o "problema da liberdade" com base nos referenciais de beleza construídos por esses "novos negros", trago à cena textos e fotografias coletados das revistas *The Half Century Magazine*, de Boston, e *The Crisis: a record of the darker races*, de New York. Os magazines e outros títulos evidenciam que, entre 1900 e 1930, o sistema de segregação intrarracial baseado na tonalidade da pele ("colorismo") trouxe como consequência a "pigmentocracia". Ou seja, o privilégio da pele clara (*light skin*) em relação à escura (*dark skin*) no tocante às oportunidades de mobilidade social.

Palavras-chave: raça, respeitabilidade; pós-emancipação.

Abstract

By linking the social history of culture and labor, this article discusses the process of strengthening the 'mulatto culture' promoted by upper and middle class African-American intellectuals in the post-emancipation period. In analyzing the 'problem of freedom' based on references to beauty constructed by these 'New Blacks,' texts and photographs collected from *The Half Century Magazine*, from Boston and *The Crisis: a Record of the Darker Races*, from New York, are looked at. The magazines and other evidence show that between 1900 and 1930, the intra-racial segregation system based on skin tone (colorism) caused as a consequence 'pigmentocracy,' in other words, the privilege of having light skin rather than dark skin in relation to opportunities for social mobility.

Keywords: race; respectability; post-emancipation.

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In 1907, an "obvious colored woman" was forced to get off a "bus for whites." Despite "protests" and "visible proofs," the young woman, member of an "influential Southern family," was obliged to sit in the "Jim Crow" transport. "Honed" to always "detect African blood," the people of the South could do this even when "hair straightening" or "clear skin" disguised descent. Even in the North, where the "lines" (of color) were not so "rigidly defined," the question of "mistaken identity" concerned the population. There, both men and women, "close to the age of marriage," were counselled to deeply investigate the *pedigree* of their loves to remove any possibility of their lives being linked to "disguised Africans." Notwithstanding "social and family complications" in the post-emancipation North and South, cases of "men and women of color" who "passed for whites" when they could became a "growing tendency."

Figure 1 – "Jim Crow carriage [train]"
Source: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, General Research and Reference Division. Printed with the permission of the Board of Directors, The Good Life Center. (Nearing, 1929).

Presented by *The Colored American Magazine*, the text "Dangers of the White Black" (Williams, 1907, p.423) presents us with a complex plot concerning the uses and meanings which Afro-Americans attributed to their bodies in

the first decades of the twentieth century, when the manipulation of hair and skin in search of good appearance became a routine practice in the *Negro* community. A little known universe in Brazil, the case – of panic and rejection for some and hope and relief for others –, helps us to narrate part of the historic process of the construction of new images intermediated by black people in the free world. This process was directly influenced by eugenic policies and by the values of white supremacy, which stimulated black colorism,[2] a system of ranking subjects based on lighter or darker skin (Du Bois, 1903). To understand this system, it is worth emphasizing that during the years of Reconstruction, many mulattos became figures of great prestige and political influence in the US. Known as the 'new blacks,' they were part of a segment that called itself the 'aristocracy of color.' A society of classes apart from the United States, a "parallel social structure" (Kronus, 1971, p.4) which Du Bois called the "talented tenth" of the black race (Du Bois, 1903).

Restricted in size, but large in terms of cultural and economic capital, the aristocratic ranks were filled by new blacks such as Booker T. Washington, a former slave, son of an unknown white father, who founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama at the end of the nineteenth century; the sociologist and historian William E. B. Du Bois, the first Afro-American to do a doctorate in Harvard University and also one of the first blacks to become a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP);[3] Fannie Williams, the distinct orator who in one of her biographies stated that she had never experienced "discrimination due to color" (Williams, 1904), and the writer Paulina Hopkins, who we will meet again further below, amongst other characters. To continue narrating our history, a history which refers to the Afro-American saga of the search for respectability[4] in the free world, I will work with images published between 1900 and 1920 selected from two magazines: *The Colored American Magazine* (TCAM), published in Boston, and *The Crisis*, from New York and still published today.

Both periodicals are part of the vast Afro-American press, which first emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century. TCAM is a magazine created in 1900 which circulated until 1909, first in Boston, afterwards moving to New York in 1904. Subsidized by the Colored Co-operative Publishing Company, it was one of the first black publications at the beginning of the twentieth century. Circulating nationally with a print run of 15,000 copies, the monthly magazine published articles which celebrated the 'highest culture' in the areas of religion, science, culture, and literature of the lettered Afro-American world. One of its principal editors was the notable Afro-American

writer Paulina Hopkins, author of the novel *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life, North and South*. *The Crisis* dates from 1910 and was a magazine created an subsidized by the NAACP. With the prominent Afro-American intellectual Du Bois as editor, in addition to publicizing names, photographs, books and articles about history, culture, literature, and politics produced by intellectuals from the *darker races*, the magazine was notable for both raising discussions about the struggle for civil rights and denouncing the problems of the 'American Negro,' amongst which was the constant threat of lynching. In addition, it differentiated itself from many others by publishing the reflections of white intellectuals about the "problem of the Black Race." It also circulated nationally. In 1918, for example, *The Crisis* had a print run of 100,000 copies.[5]

Figure 2 – The Social Life of *America Colored*:
a meeting in Winter in Baltimore, MD.
Source: *The Crisis: a record of the darker races*, Feb. 1912, v.4, n.2, s.p.

Figure 2 and those following are composed of mulattos with impeccable clothing and serious penetrating faces. Owners of intense social lives expressed in soirees, recitals, lunches, and beneficent dinners, but above all due to policies of racial isolation, the aristocracy of color guaranteed their maintenance as a group with privileges since the seventeenth century, as suggested by Du Bois' observations:

> The mulattos we see on the streets are invariably descendants of one, two, or three generations of mulattos, [in whom] the infusion of white blood comes from the seventeenth century, [since in New York] in only 3% of weddings of people was color was one of the parties 'white.' (in Green, 1978, p.151)

Table 1 – Total population of Whites and Negroes, USA, 1850-1920 [6]

Year	Total Population	Number of *Whites*	Percentage of *Whites*	Number of *Negroes*	Percentage of *Negroes*
1850	23,191,876	19,553,068	84.3%	3,638,808	15.7%
1860	31,443,321	26,922,537	85.6%	4,441,830	14.1%
1870	38,558,371	33,589,377	87.1%	4,880,009	12.7%
1880	50,155,783	43,402,970	86.5%	6,580,793	13.1%
1890	62,947,714	55,101,258	87.8%	7,488,676	11.9%
1900	75,994,575	66,809,196	87.9%	8,833,994	11.6%
1910	91,972,266	81,731,957	88.9%	9,827,763	10.7%
1920	105,710,620	94,820,915	89.7%	10,463,131	9.9%

Source: Table adapted from "Color, or Race...", 1910, Table 3, Vol.1, p.127, 129.[7]

Table 2 – Total *Negro* population, divided into *Black* and *Mulatto*, USA, 1850-1920

Year	*Negro*	*Black*	*Mulatto*
1850	3,638,808	3,233,057	405,751
1860	4,441,830	3,853,467	588,363
1870	4,880,009	4,295,960	584,049
1880	6,580,793	–	–
1890	7,488,676	6,337,980	1,132,060
1900	8,833,994	–	–
1910	9,827,763	7,777,077	2,050,686
1920	10,463,131	8,802,557	1,660,554

Source: Table adapted from "Color, or Race...", 1910, Table 6, Vol.1, p.129.

Table 3 – *Negro* and *Mulatto* population in relation to the total population of the USA

Year	Total population of the USA	*Negro* Population	Percentage of *Negroes*	*Mulatto* Population	Percentage of *Mulattos*
1850	23,191,876	3,638,808	15.69%	405,751	1.75%
1860	31,433,321	4,441,830	14.13%	588,363	1.87%
1870	38,558,371	4,880,009	12.66%	584,049	1.51%
1880	50,155,783	6,580,793	13.12%	–	–
1890	62,947,714	7,488,676	11.9%	1,132,060	1.8%
1900	75,994,575	8,883,994	11.62%	–	–
1910	91,972,266	9,827,763	10.69%	2,050,686	2.23%
1920	105,710,620	10,463,131	9.9%	1,660,554	1.57%

Source: Table adapted from "Color, or Race...", 1910, Table 6, Vol. 1, p.129.

Tables 2 and 3 show that *Mulattoes* represented a minority of the Afro-American population, a situation unaltered since the times of English colonization due to a series of policies encouraging racial endogamy started by slaves with *light skin* and perpetuated by their descendants in the post-emancipation period. Owners of elevated cultural and economic capital, blacks with clear skin were a group apart, as the data in the following tables suggest. During the 70 years covered, this segment reached its peak of growth in 1910, when it represented 2,050,686 people (2.23%). Meanwhile, *Negroes* totaled 9,827,763 or 97.77% of the *Black* population. Chart 1 allows a better comprehension of the history of racial categories by which the *Negro* group was classified in the Census.

With Chart 1 in mind, it can be seen that whilst Jim Crow laws were in force, the images shown here, carefully orchestrated by photographers in the cities of Boston and New York, indicate that sectors of the mulatto elite constructed a eugenic model of beauty to represent the new negritude. Fed by pigmentocracy[10] – the valorization of pale skin to the detriment of darkness within the interior of the Afro-American community, this model assumed the superiority of mulattos in relation to their darker 'brothers.' This was materialized in texts and distinctive expressions such as 'black mass,' used by *light-skin* blacks to differentiate themselves from those with *dark-skin*.

Chart 1 – Evolution of color categories to *Negroes* in the US Census, 1850-1960

Year	Categories
1850	*Black* and *Mulatto*
1860	*Black* and *Mulatto*
1870	*Black* and *Mulatto*
1880	*Black* and *Mulatto*
1890	*Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon*
1900	*Black*
1910	*Black* and *Mulatto*
1920	*Black* and *Mulatto*
1930-1960	*Negro*

Source: United States Bureau of the Census, 1790-1990.[8] [9]

Figure 3 – Miss M. A. Winnar, Lestern A. Walton, Capt W. Il. Butler, Miss Anna K. Russele, Saint Louis, Missouri.
Source: *The Colored American Magazine*, Vol. 2, no.?, Mar. 1901, p.381.

In relation to the production of photographs, similar to what happened with white people, representations of Afro-Americans also involved prior preparation before facing the cameras.[11] Rather than a simple concern with appearance, this investment in poses and lights demarcated a printed black culture, with the pedagogical purpose of educating male and female readers from their race about the publication of images of people connected to success stories of "progressive businessmen," such as the "politician" William P. Moore, "Professor" B. H. Hawkins, "owner of the *New National Hotel and Restaurant*" and William Pope, "president of *Square Cafe*" (Moore, 1904, p.305-307), amongst other aristocrats of color.

In *The Colored American*, for example, this political and pedagogical project of 'improving the race' was illustrated by photos, achievements, and aristocratic fortunes, added to the publication of stories, poetry, novels, the announcement of events such as soirees held by women's clubs and, no less important, the construction of myths and heroes in specific spaces. This was the case of 'Famous Women of the Race,' a column dedicated to paying tribute with small biographies to prestigious black women, such as the former slaves Harriet Tubmann and Soujorner Truth. Both were described as "educators responsible for the struggle for independence and for respect for the masculinity of their race" (Hopkins, 1902, p.42). Despite the summonsing of the warriors of the color of the night, anyone who thought that the battle for the valorization of black women was won was wrong. After all, modern times demanded other feminine representations which could definitely challenge the memory of slavery.

In the present pasts, the representation of dark-skinned women had to be excluded. They were incongruent with the project of respectable femininity (where eugenic beauty was included) that the colored elite was building with its hundreds of portraits of new women. Refined, educated, and sophisticated mulatto women, such as the representatives of the "specimen of *Amtour Work,*" recorded by the camera of W. W. Holland in a text where "teachers" and "leaders" can learn to choose "good photographs" and to disseminate the same practice amongst the rest of their race (Holland, 1902, p.6).

To observe the mediation of the image conflicts between the old and new black woman, we used one of the editions of the *The Colored American Magazine*. Covering the months of January and February 1902, the publication narrated the saga of Harriet Tubman in the Famous Women of the Negro Race column. Looking attentively, we can note during the text the

presence of three mulatto women, including the Haitian Miss Theodora Holly, "author of the book Haytian Girl" (Holland, 1902, p.214-215). Since the order of images and texts in a publication is not chosen by chance, there can be noted in the Thursday edition 13 pages reserved for the narration of the deeds of the former slave, where we are presented to Frances Wells and Olivia Hasaalum. Pretty and well-dressed, the girls from Oregon contrasted with the subsequent image. Probably a representation of Tubman, who was known as Moses, the image portrayed a *black* woman using a cloth on her head, wearing simple clothes, and holding a musket in one of her hands (Holland, 1902, p.212).

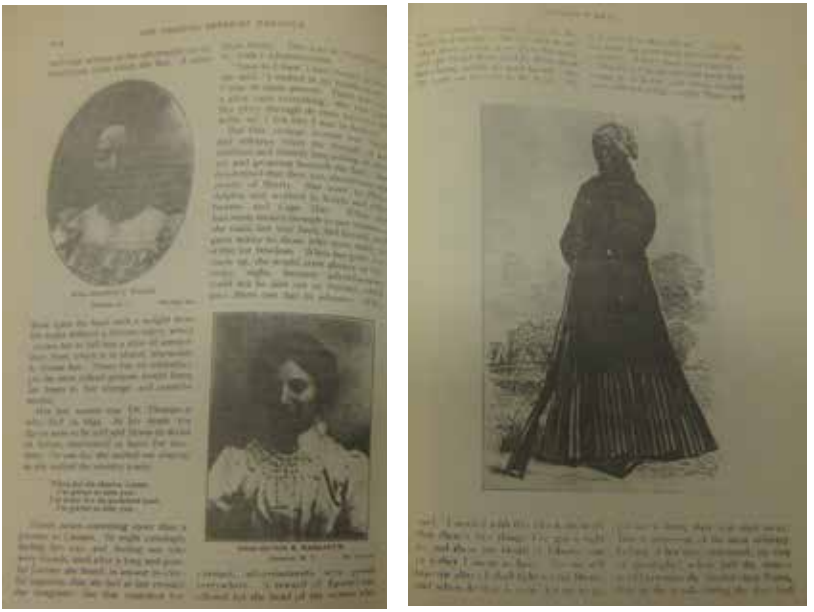

Figure 4 – On the left, "Mrs. Frances Wells and Miss Olivia B. Hassalum," two prototypes of the new black woman; on the right, a representation of Harriet Tubman.

The position of the images in question induces a 'natural' comparison between the lightness and darkness of the contrasted characters. Based on this comparison, the public would automatically conclude that the stage of primitivism of *blacks* had been surpassed by racial intermixing and the refinement of *mulattos*. Although the text exalts the "courage," "strength," and "heroism of a nature rarely encountered" (Holland, 1902, p.212) of the totally

dark-skinned Tubman, its iconographic representation in comparison with the two previous images highlights the abyss between modernity and primitivism, an abyss symbolized by color. The periodical thus invested in images consistent with a young black woman who, in the condition of "sex of the house" (Holland, 1902, p.7), was awarded with various texts and notes with indications of how to decorate an environment or which new clothes to use in weekend strolls.

If we consider the authorship of the text that pays tribute to Harriet Tubman, in the hands of Paulina Hopkins we can see that this counterpoint acquires even more meaning. Extremely engaged in the anti-racist struggle, this writer and editor of the magazine is considered as a pioneer of Afro-American literature and in this position became an arduous fighter against the "stigma which degraded [her] Race" (Hopkins, 1988, p.13). Hopkins, who needs to be understood in the context of her time, used a series of eugenics conceptions in her writings.

In her fourth novel, *Contending Forces*, published in 1900, for example, she emphasized how blacks had progressed in terms of clothing, appearance, and manners. Echoing other Afro-American intellectuals that education was the principal solution for fighting the marginalization of descendants of slaves, she sought remedies for the ailments that afflicted them. Adapting the eugenic premises of racial improvement to the black world, she preached that the improvement of *blacks* would principally occur through inter-racial marriages with whites. This is announced by the character Dora Smith, a woman of mixed race, considered by her mother as someone of "superior intelligence" thanks to her white ancestry. Not by chance Mrs. Smith is the same mother who pages earlier stated that in the United States "the black race had become a race of Mulattos" (Hopkins, 1988, p.152).

With the defense of a specific eugenics for blacks, Hopkins determined that the progress of 'Race' was not only cultural, but rather, and above all, biological. Her perception is a fortunate example which elucidates the interactions between gender, class, and color in the black community – inter-sectional interactions that gave birth to a reference to eugenics beauty which, also reflected in cosmetics advertisements and internalized by many subjects of color, fed the climate of panic of whites faced with the spread of "disguised Africans" [12] as Misses Lila Morse and Carrie Oliver, from Virginia, and Madame Elizabeth Williams, from New York could well have been.

As we have seen, the research in *The Colored American Magazine* leads to the conclusion that, from the behavioral point of view, good manners, religious devotion, and prestige were indispensable pre-requisites for a black to be considered 'new,' in other words a *persona grata*, someone respectable. Nevertheless, elegant clothes, well-looked after hair, serious faces, and penetrating poses had a much less important meaning, if analyzed in isolation. The reading of images together with texts suggests that to appear well in the photo it was necessary, above all, to study, qualify oneself – prepare oneself – for the new world, the universe of liberty, the urban, the industrial. And in this way

Figure 5 – Miss Lila Morse and Miss Carrie M. Oliver, students of the class of the *Boydton Institute*, Virginia, 1901.
Source: *The Colored American Magazine*, Nov. 1900, p.37.[13]

Figure 6 – Mme. Elizabeth R. Williams, New York,
"professional tutor for many years in various parts of the South."
Source: *The Colored American Magazine*, Vol. 2, no. 2, Dec. 1900, p.135.

constructing a community of color, recognized for their talent, intelligence, and versatility was as primordial as having money.

In economics, to be middle class it was necessary to have fixed employment, goods such as real estate and cars, small businesses such as beauty salons, boarding houses, barbers, and print-shops. In the case of those who were richer, it was expected that they would have land or businesses such as banks, supermarkets, funeral homes, jewelers, insurance agencies, medical consultancies, dental practices, lawyers' officers, schools or universities, and that they would hold directors' positions or positions which demanded higher education.

To construct an analysis which can compare the homogenization of the black population in the post-emancipation period as one of a multitude of degraded poor, with a restricted insertion in the domestic services sector and small trades,[14] it is important to connect the social history of work and of

Figure 7 – Colored head surgeon, interns, and nurses,
General City Hospital, Kansas City, Missouri.
Source: *The Crisis: a record of the darker races*,
Sept. 1914, Vol. 8, no.5, p.231.

culture. Also necessary is observing how specific groups of descendants of slaves won for themselves social mobility, becoming small, mid-sized, and large entrepreneurs in the face of racism and segregation. Here it is important to prioritize the study of the formation of the black middle class, a pioneering study carried out by Franklin Frazier in the 1950.

To historicize the process of social mobility of the group in question, the Afro-American anthropologist highlighted the founding of 134 black banks between 1888 and 1934 (Frazier, 1997, p.39). Financial institutions arising out of the *Freedmen's Savings Bank*, they were fundamental for this social ascension by offering "racial support" (Frazier, 1997, p.41). A racial support in the form of consigned credit and start-up capital to allow blacks buy land and build hotels, shops, churches, barber shops, cabarets, theaters, beauty salons, funeral homes, pool halls, and other commercial establishments until then monopolized by whites.

Another no less important factor for the rise of black businessmen[15] was the great migration to the north of the country from the 1890s onwards. While until 1900, 90% of this population lived in the South, in subsequent years the picture changed significantly. Their *en masse* arrival in cities such as Chicago and New York was translated into the entry of individuals into the large urban

labor market which stimulated the formation of a professional elite. Although in the middle of the transformations a large part of the occupations available were concerned with unskilled labor, it is estimated that 3% of blacks were employed in clerical positions, such as typists, secretaries, clerks, administrative assistants, etc. (Frazier, 1997, p.44).

Figure 8 – Two Afro-American dentists and a female hygienist in the *New York Tuberculosis and Health Association*, Inc., 1926.
Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Divisions, Washington, D.C.

In the case of the North, where educational opportunities were greater,[16] this occurred above all in the public sector. In the South, it occurred basically in schools and companies owned by *Black Business*. Table 4 shows various professions held by black people at the turn of the century.

Although the majority of the black population presented in the table were concentrated in rural activities (agricultural workers, 1,344,125, and farmers, planters, and foremen, 757,822), more daring conclusions can be drawn from the data, which are more in line with historiographic perspectives which highlight the diverse experiences of free labor in the Americas (Cooper et al., 2005). In fact, not by chance, the nomenclature *worker* was one of the obstacles mentioned by Willcox, who prepared the tables, that the enumerators had in quantifying the occupations held by blacks (Willcox, 1904, p.57).

Table 4 – *Negro* population with an minimum engagement of 10 years in specific occupations: 1900

OCCUPATION	*Negro* population with a minimum engagement of 10 years in paid occupations: 1900	
	Negro Population (in numbers)	People with specific occupations (percentage)
Continental US: all occupations	3,992,337	–
Occupations in which a minimum of 10,000 *Negroes* were employed in 1900	3,807,008	–
Agricultural workers	1,344,125	33.7
Farmers, planters, and foremen	757,822	52.7
Workers (unspecified)	545,935	66.4
Servants and waiters	465,734	78.1
Ironing ladies and washerwomen	220,104	83.6
Coachmen, lumbermen, truckers, etc.	67,585	85.3
Steam train railway employees	55,327	86.7
Miners and bricklayers	36,561	87.6
Sawyers and woodworkers	33,266	88.4
Porters and assistants (in shops etc.)	28,977	89.1
Teachers and professionals in faculties, etc.	21,267	89.6
Carpenters	21,113	90.1
Farmers and turpentine production workers	20,744	90.6
Barbers and hairdressers	19,942	91.1
Nurses and midwives	19,431	91.6
Clerks	15,528	92.0
Tabaco and cigarette factory workers	15,349	92.4
Workers in hostel	14,496	92.8
Bricklayers (stone and tile)	14,386	93.2
Seamstresses	12,569	93.5
Iron and steel workers	12,327	93.8
Professional seamstresses	11,537	94.1
Janitors and sextons	11,536	94.4
Governesses and butlers	10,590	94.7
Fishermen and oyster collectors	10,427	95.0
Engineer officers and stokers (do not work in locomotives)	10,224	95.2
Blacksmiths	10,100	95.4
Other occupations	185,329	

Source: Table adapted from Willcox, 1904, Table LXII, p.57.

Willcox says that usually the Census worked with five "professional classes": "agriculture, personal and domestic services, commerce and transport, manufacturing and mechanics." However, the indices of male and female Afro-Americans in "unqualified positions" and who declared themselves to be only "workers" was very high, forcing those administering the census to advise the enumerators, in this specific case, to ask in a more direct manner what was the "livelihood" of each of the interviewees (Willcox, 1904). Considering this context, it should be highlighted that the debates about the 'problem of liberty' in post-emancipation societies underline the persistence of descendants of slaves of calling themselves workers, an affirmation which shows the construction of a new language of work related to the struggle to obtain full citizenship.

To explore further the information contained in the table published in the 1904 Census table, I will take as a parameter the 3,807,008 workers quantified in "occupations which employ a minimum of 10,000 *negroes* in 1900". Based on these absolute numbers, I calculated the percentages referring to determined groups of *negro* workers. The percentages show even more clearly that only a select monitory of the workers in question were in professions which required any prior specialization or education, namely "teachers and professionals in universities" (21,267, 0.55% of *negroes*) and clergy (15,528, 0.4% of *negroes*), two of the principal occupations of these aristocrats.

Also in relation to the division of labor and continuing the conversion of absolute numbers into percentages, although in numerical terms the middle class was much more representative than the upper class, becoming part of the former was an exception. The percentages of blacksmiths (0.26%), carpenters (0.55%), hairdressers and barbers (0.52%), and nurses and midwives (0.51%) highlight this exceptionality. The low indices of professional seamstresses (0.3%), engineer officers and stokers (0.26%) invite us to make similar conclusions.

In terms of connections between race and image, the above figure also shows the tiny amount of Afro-Americans employed in professions historically related to "good appearance,"[17] such as doormen and janitors (0.76%), or governesses and butlers (0.27%). Another factor which reinforced the rarity of social mobility, an aspect vehemently denounced by Frazier, was supported by the persistence of its members in exercising occupations linked to the history of domestic work: servants, waiters (12.2%) and washerwomen (5.78%), as well as the 14.3% gathered together under the label of 'non-specified workers.'

In the turmoil of class structure, respectability, education, refinement, fair skin, white descent, and material goods perpetuated themselves as some of the

principal marks which distinguished mulattos, with all their success, money, and education, from *blacks.* This context, present in cities such as Philadelphia, Savana, Atlanta, New York, Saint Louis, Boston and New Orleans, was fed by a 'colorist' logic. An "economy of color" (Harris, 2009, p.1-5) which reallocated subjects in a new and ever more racialized reality, with the reference being the contrast between being light and dark-skinned.

Considering the photographs in line with the spread of eugenic education practice, it can be seen that the ideal of whitening was simultaneously, but differently, fed by white racism and black colorism, the latter valorizing being a mulatto as "social capital" (Glenn, 2009). Used by Afro-Americans to construct their internal class relations, this fair-skinned social capital which saw this as the best, most beautiful, and modern was present in most periodicals until the 1920s at least, when Garvey's conceptions began to question the colorism and pigmentocracy of the black press. Also contributing to the re-signification of dark complexion was the acceptance of tanning for white women. The obtaining of an "exotic" color (ibid., p.183) came to be associated with the better economic condition expressed, for example, by the possibility of spending holidays in tropical countries.[18]

Notwithstanding this scenario of changes, the history recounted here refers to a process of the racialization of blacks themselves. Through differentiated experiences and perceptions of color, these subjects constituted a racialized notion of beauty emphasized by the valorization of the mulatto appearance (visually white), young, urban, modern, successful. Nevertheless, before incurring simplifications, value judgements, or deceptions fed by the romantic illusion of a genetic inter-racial solidarity,[19] or what Bayard Rustin calls "the sentimental notion of black solidarity,"[20] it is pertinent to bear in mind that the practice of colorism derived from values created and reinforced by white supremacy.

Having shown the range of affirmations and understandings that the existence of mulattoes help to generate, no one better to bring the conversation to a close than the following characters. Rigorously chosen, the models who posed for *The Colored American Magazine* were the owners of their own projects for the reconstruction of femininity (Wolcott, 2001, p.3). A reconstruction which recognized them as educated women. Icons of reinvigorated *negritude*, as well as concern with elegance, our black madams, 'posing,' troubled with the future of their people of color, but this is another story...

Figure 9 – Cover, *The Colored American Magazine*, Aug. 1901.

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NOTES

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[2] In relation to colorism, see: GLENN, 2009.

[3] The NAACP was founded on 12 February 1909 by white liberals, such Mary White Ovington and Oswald Garrison Villard (both descendants of abolitionists) during a meeting to discuss 'racial justice,' given the harsh reality of daily lynchings of blacks in the United States. Of the sixty participants, only seven were Afro-Americans, amongst them the historian and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, journalist, teacher, and civil rights activist. The initial objective of the organization was to have the rights of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Constitutional Amendments enforced, which were about the end of slavery, equal protection before the law, and universal male suffrage, respectively. In 1910, the Association established its national head office in New York City, having nominated Moorfield Storey, a white lawyer, as its president and chosen a team of directors. At that time the only Afro--American member who participated in the executive of the NAACP was W. E. B. Du Bois. In his position of Director of Publications and Research, he founded in 1910 *The Crisis*, the organization's official publication which is still in circulation today. In 1913 the organization created local offices in Boston, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; Kansas City, Missouri; Washington, D.C.; Detroit, Michigan, and St. Louis, Missouri. Between 1917 and 1919 it membership grew from 9000 to 90,000. In 1919, the organization published an important report, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the US.* In 1920, James Weldon Johnson became its first black secretary. Even today, the principal objective of the NAACP is to "assure the political, educational, social, and economic equity of citizens from minority groups in the United States and to eliminate racial prejudice." Available at: www.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history; Accessed on 1 Aug. 2011.

[4] A primordial discussion about the reconstruction of black feminity in the post-emancipation period can be found in: WOLCOTT, 2001.

[5] For greater information about the history of the black press in the United States, see, amongst others: JOYCE, 1991.

[6] For all the tables, the numbers referring to other groups (indigenous, Asiatic, foreigners) were ignored.

[7] Due to difficulties of access, the information referring to the 1920 Census presented in the tables is based on "United States – Race and Hispanic Origin: 1790 to 1990". Available at: www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/tab01.pdf; Accessed on 11 Oct. 2011.

[8] Although *mulatto* had been used to classify *negroes*, the results of the quantification were not made available for the 1880 Census. In the cells referring to this group, the initials NA (Not Available) appear. "Population by color", in Tenth United States Census Taken in the Year 1880, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington Government Print Office, Population, General Report and Analysis.

[9] For greater information about the construction of racial endogamy policies among the mulatto population in slavery, see, amongst others: GATEWOOD, 2000, and XAVIER, 2012.

[10] It is worth noting that Afro-American intellectuals maintained a long tradition of studies about pigmentocracy, in which there stand out pioneering works such as: CALIVER, 1933; WOODSON, 1934; REUTER, 1918. A more recent analysis, concerned with the connections between gender, racial policies, and pigmentocracy, can be seen in CRAIG, 2002. On the impacts of pigmentocracy on the Caribbean, what stands out is the work by: JAMES; HARRIS, 1993.

[11] From the second half of the nineteen century onwards, prior preparation for the taking of photographs became a very common practice, present in all social classes. In relation to this, see: KOUTSOUKOS, 2010.

[12] In relation to the role of eugenics in the work of Paulina Hopkins see: NICKEL, 2003.

[13] Although the magazine is the November 1900 issue, the text mentions the 1901 student class, probably the next one in the institute.

[14] For problematization of this idea, see: WALKER, 2009.

[15] It is estimated that in the 1920s there were approximately 75,000 black businessmen in the United States. Cf. "Opportunities...", s.d.

[16] In the North of the country, children, for example, had more educational opportunities, since the local legislation prohibited child labor.

[17] For relations between color, gender, and good appearance in the first half of the twentieth century, see: DAMASCENO, 2011.

[18] In relation to the meanings of tanning, see: BARICKMAN, 2009.

[19] Using distinct cases, Grooms desconstructs this romanticism demonstrating that, when liberated, blacks, in most cases, became slave owners in the south of the country. Based on the 1860 Census Data, of the 4.5 million Afro-Americans, approximately four million were slaves there, while 261,988 were free. Taking as a reference the case of New Orleans, in which 10,689 of this population of former slaves lived (in which there was an important contingent of people with fair skin, descendants of Creoles) three thousand free black slave owners were registered. This meant that around 28% of the local free colored population had slaves. See: GROOMS, s.d.

[20] For the activist this 'idea' was responsible for perpetuating the idea that before emancipation black culture was illiterate and the experiences of its subjects homogenous, since slavery homogenized all blacks, preventing any other type of privilege or distinction based on class, behavior, or strength be shown amongst them. See: DANKY; WIEGAND, 1998, p.151.

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