

Tribhuvan University

**Voice of Protest in Paul Beatty's *The Sellout***

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by

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled  
"Voice of Protest in Paul Beatty's *The Sellout*"  
is my own original work carried out as a Master's  
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August 2018

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "Voice of Protest in Paul Beatty's *The Sellout*" submitted to the Department of English, Ratna RajyaLaxmi Campus, Tribhuvan University, by Bhanu Bhakta Jaishi has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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## Abstract

This research is a study on voice of protest against racial discrimination in American society. In Paul Beatty's novel, *The Sellout*, at first the characters face the discrimination because of their race and color. They have faced discrimination from roads to the social institutions. Later they revolt against that discrimination. They use different kinds of tools to raise their voice against that discrimination. The narrator and another character Hominy Jerkins protest against the removal of their native city, Dickens from the official map. After their protest Dickens is restored in the map. Hominy becomes a slave of the narrator. It is his revolt because he became slave by his own desire to satire post slavery American society.

To conduct this research I used descriptive method. I have used books, newspaper articles and research articles to collect data. To analyze the text I used racial theory and concept of Stuart Hall. After analyzing the text I reached in the conclusion that Beatty's novel, *The Sellout*, is about racial relation in American society and It shows whites' discrimination against blacks and indicates that blacks are raising their voices.

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## **Introduction: Race and Racism in *The Sellout***

The present study seeks to analyze *The Sellout* (2015) in the light of racism. *The Sellout*, Paul Beatty's Man Booker Prize winning novel, is a strong example of racial discrimination in contemporary American society and its protagonist raises voice against that racism.

The never-named narrator is an African-American male of an undetermined age who lives and works as a farmer in Dickens, California. He thinks racism in America is an arbitrary thing when his father tells him about it. But, one day, police shoot his father in an intersection and after five years of his fathers' death, his city removed from the map of California. After losing his father and city, the narrator feels that he has lost his identity. Then he changes his prior thinking about racism because American establishment is continuing discrimination against the black.

The removal of Dickens from the map of California hurts another character, Hominy Jenkins – the last surviving member of the Little Rascals Television serial. Learning about the removal of Dickens, Hominy feels the same as the narrator; identity devoid. In the reaction of Dickens' removal, he becomes the narrator's slave.

*The Sellout* tells the story of these two characters' struggle to bring back their city Dickens in the map of California. For Dickens' restoration, they paint city's whole boarder line, keep flyer about their missing city, and segregate the school and hospital. For them, it is not a matter of restoring a physical city; it is an issue of bringing back their racial identity.

Race plays a significant role behind the struggle of these characters. Narrator's father killed by police because he was black and Dickens removed from the map of California because it is a ghetto city.

Race is an ambiguous term and has numerous meanings. Commonly, race is a term for the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups. *Longman Dictionary* defines race as "one of the main group that human can be divided into according to the color of their skin and other physical features" (1161). The notion of race assumes firstly that humanity is divided into unchanging natural types, recognizable by physical features that are transmitted through blood. The *Columbia Encyclopedia* writes "the differences among the races are essentially biological and are marked by the hereditary transmission of physical characteristics" (2265).

In all over the world people belong different races because it is biological and it comes from your parents. Obviously, these physical characteristics make one person different from another but it doesn't mean that one race is the superior to others.

When someone behaves differently to others according their color and other physical features that is racism. *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines racism as "the practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions and faculties on the basis of race or alleged race" (880).

In the American context there is a practice of restriction to the black people by the whites and not giving them the chances and opportunities in every sectors of the society. Sometimes that discrimination becomes life threatening to the black. In one hand, they are trying to get their identity and rights, in other hand their right of live is always in the danger.

It is by seeing this practice of restriction that Beatty writes the novel. In his interview with *Guernica Magazine*, Beatty opines:

*The Sellout* is about friends and relatives who have touched me in real ways. I throw those things in, code them, and then fuse them together.

Even though I made most of it up, there's a kernel-okay, maybe more than a kernel-of real stuff in there. Sometimes I highjack memories. Sometimes I switch them around. Sometimes they're just in the background, like some little bass note. Those things have carried me through, especially when I first started writing. They're still there, but more in the distance these days. (n.p)

Beatty argues that American constitution abolished slavery, and racial biasness is unlawful but even after 150 years, blacks are facing racism. Their identity is always in dilemma.

From outside we see that America treats equally, fairly and gives equal opportunities to all its citizens. The same thing is not seen from the point of view of an African-American. In an interview with *The Guardian*, Beatty says:

I started with the idea of rendering segregation in a contemporary context. I was asking myself: how do you segregate something without having any power? I was intrigued to try to figure it out. I have a pretty good sense of direction, although I don't know how I'm going to get there. But the real seed for the book was the character of Hominy [former child actor and latter-day, self-appointed slave]. I tend to like underappreciated characters: you think you see one thing, you might be seeing something else. (n.p)

*The Sellout* shows us the real image of postmodern American society. While there is black president in the White House, the police shot a black guy in the intersection. And ghetto city like Dickens removed from the map of the state. In constitution, all Americans are equal, but in reality American establishment treats non-whites

(African, Asian and Latin Americans) as second class citizens. The novel tells the story of contradiction of racial American society and a Blacks' struggle to get identity.

The novel is about the attempts to reintroduce slavery and segregation in Californian coastal ghetto city, Dickens. These attempts lead the narrator to a case in the Supreme Court. The narrator has no proper name. His last name is Me. Hominy calls him Massa. His ex-girlfriend, Marpessa calls him Bonbon.

The plot of novel is about his journey from Dickens to Supreme Court in Washington DC. The novel is divided in six parts. The first part, "The Shit You Shovel", tells the story of the narrator's upbringing and his relation with his father. The narrator is brought up by a single parent. His father is a practitioner of the field of Liberation Psychology. And he makes his son a sample for his laboratory. Later, he is killed by police. His neighbor, Hominy Jerkin, an old black man becomes narrator's slave when he learns that Dickens is removed from the map.

The second part, "Dum Dum Donut Intellectual", describes about a group of black intellectuals that gathers for discussing about issues of black community. Narrator's father founded this group, but later other people use this platform to promote their vested interests.

The third part, "Exact Change" deals with keeping sign in the bus. Narrator's ex-girlfriend; Marpessa rides a public bus and there are reserved seats for white and old people. But with the consent of Marpessa, they keep new signs on the bus. The narrator also attempts to find out a sister city to reestablish Dickens presentation in the map of California. But famous cities of the world reject proposal of being Dickens' sister city.

In part four, "Too Many Mexicans", the narrator segregates Chaff Middle School. Only black children get chance to study in the school. The part five, "Orange

and Apples", tells the narrator's love story with Marpessa and his father's comic quality. They segregate Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital too. Later, police catch him and learn about his activities about segregation and slavery, which turn into a court case.

The sixth part, "Unmitigated Blackness" is the ending of the novel, where Homey makes himself free from slavery and television forecasts Dickens' weather.

### **Reviews on *The Sellout***

Paul Beatty in his novel, *The Sellout*, reflects the bad situation of Obama era and satires the American establishment. His characters protest against the never ending racial discrimination. The novel has lots of critical analysis and it has been studied from different point of view.

In the review of *The sellout* in *Financial Times*, Simon Schama writes, "Beatty plays for very high stakes- but he wins. His brilliant, beautiful and weirdly poignant book knocks the stuffing out of right-thinking solemnities and he delivers droll wisdoms besides which the most elevated rants (if you'll forgive the expression) pale into ponderous sententiousness"(n.p).

Her point is Beatty uses the tools of comedy but gives serious messages. This novel is a social farce. Beatty has created such characters who satire the system of American society and its bitter reality too.

In her review, published in *The Guardian*, Reni Eddo Lodge writes:

Me thinks that the way to reinstate Dickens is to segregate the city's schools. So, a slave-owning black man working hard to bring back racial segregation. If *The Sellout* does anything, it successfully points not only to the problem, but all the complexities and nuances of the

problem, proving that it's not as simple as (I hate myself for this) black and white. This book doesn't shy away from anything. (n.p)

In Lodge's views, Beatty shows the racial problem of American society, but he doesn't leave them as they appear. Rather, he tries to show the multiple dimensions of such problems. The division between black and white is not as simple as we think. It has multiple dimensions and is very deep-rooted. And the liberal agenda of American establishment is only the showcase. In *New York Times'* review Dwight Garner writes:

Almost the entirety of black American culture and stereotypes are carved up under this novel's microscope: Tiger Woods, Clarence Thomas (given a memorable line), Oreo cookies, fairy tales ("Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your weave!"), Bill Cosby, cotton picking, penis size, Saturday morning cartoons, George Washington Carver, lawn jockeys, Mike Tyson. The "do-gooder condescension" of Dave Eggers comes in for a hazing. The American liberal agenda is folded into origami. (n.p)

In Garner's views Beatty includes different aspects of black American culture and some renowned people who are from black community. There are people like Dave Eggers, who has "do-gooder condescension" but that doesn't work because of American liberal agenda is in the showcase not in the practice.

In this research, I have analyzed it from the point of racism. Beatty gives the image of racial discrimination in contemporary American society. He also shows the double standards of American establishment in the case of liberalism. His characters protest against such discrimination and raise the voice for equal rights. Finally, Beatty satires the American establishment and tells how their liberal agenda is being dysfunctional.

## Racism

Racism is generally known as the prediction of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over it. "Race has been cause of misunderstanding and human suffering than anything else that can be associated with a single word in language" (Brace 116). It is in fact a prejudice conditioned by perceptions. The term and concept was vitalized in colonial period when people of different places encountered each other. Aschroft defines racism as "a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be links in a direct, casual way to psychological or intellectual characteristics, and which in this basis distinguishes between superior and inferior racial groups"(199). According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* racism is "the unfair treatment of people who belongs to a different race" (1248).

In his essay, *New Ethnicities*, Stuart Hall says, "Racism, of course operates by constructing impassible symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize the difference between belongness and otherness." Halls' argument is that the binary system of representation creates difference between belongness and otherness.

America has been facing racism since its founding. The history of racism is as old as the history of America. In 1492 Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus discovered America as a new world, and the Europeans started to move to this new land. America was the virgin meadow then. Basic infrastructure, like road, building, drinking water etc. had to be built. For the purpose of labor to make these infrastructures, the Europeans brought the Africans to America as slaves. The discrimination between whites and blacks constructed at that time is continuing in the

post-modern America. Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton say, "Racist assumptions of white superiority have been so deeply engrained in to the fiber of the society that they infuse the entire functioning of the national subconscious... " (31).

The world changed. Scientific inventions and modern technology made human life easier. Philosophers, politicians, writers and civil right activists raised voice of equality. They demanded equal rights in every sectors of American society. Their voice took a shape of a movement. Their protest continued. Sometime it became violent and sometimes they used other peaceful means.

Racism has existed in America since its founding. In the past, there were white superiors and black inferiors, after modernism some other group –South Asians, Muslims, Chinese and Korean – have been added to the inferior list. And the conflict between different races is ongoing in the postmodern America too. Walter R. Allen, says: "For America race and race relations have been eternal problematic. From the moment European arrived to discover territory that was already inhabited by the Indians to April 29, 1992 when Los Angeles exploded in to apocalyptic violence, this country has been defined by racial conflict"(345).

America faced the civil war in the 1861 to 1865. The main reason behind the civil war was slavery. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment of American Constitution formally abolished slavery in America, passed the Senate on April 8, 1864, and the House on January 31, 1865, by a vote of 119-56. President Lincoln approved the proposed amendment and the number of states necessary for ratification signed it by 6 December 1865.

Hence, slavery was abolished from constitution, but white people could not abolish their thinking of being superior in terms of race, culture and civilization to



black and others. And that feeling of white is playing a significant role to continue racial discrimination. In 1963, Martin Luther King in his Speech noted that:

One hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination still sadly cripple the life of the Negro. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. (1)

King's point is that different form of slavery is continuing in America, and due to this African-Americans are living in poverty. They are not getting opportunities to use resources, and always remain in the bottom of society. It is like being in exile in their own land.

After abolition of the slavery, the constitution, law and rhetoric in America treat everyone equally and without prejudice. But in reality, American society continues to be biased on the basis of race, color and religion. Sometimes such biasness seems to be institutional.

In his article, "What is Racism", published in *American Renaissance*, Thomas Jackson says, "Even if today's whites can find in their hearts no desire to oppress blacks, yesterday's whites must have oppressed them. If whites do not consciously oppress blacks, they must oppress them *unconsciously*. If no obviously racist individuals can be identified, then *institutions* must be racist" (1).

He argues that since blacks are failing so terribly in America, there simply must be millions of white people who are not visible but are working day and night to keep blacks in misery. In other words, the reason behind black misery is racism.

In post modern era, the race relation is becoming more complicated in America. People from all over the world migrate to the United States of America in search of better opportunity. America itself is called the genius of the world by different scholarship program. Many people from the countries in conflict like Syria, Afghanistan have reached America asking for asylum. Contemporary form of racism i.e. new racism attaches to the concepts like patriotism, nationalism, gender differences, xenophobia, etc. These concepts give a way to a definition of race in terms of culture and identity. And it creates more racial prejudice. George W. Ellis says about racial prejudice in American society:

In the United State race prejudice is predicted upon the belief that the colored race is naturally inferior to the white race, physically, intellectually, religiously, socially and morally. As a matter of fact it is an actually based upon the advantages, temporary and imaginary, which the white groups believe they derive from this superior attitude to the colored groups economically, politically and socially. A historical study of these beliefs discloses that two powerful factors have contributed above others to the abnormal American situation and that in their broadest sense they are ethnological and sociological.

(299)

Ellis's argument is that in modern time the racial prejudice not created only in the basis of race. There are political, social and economical factors behind such prejudice. The practice of racism is seen in two levels; individual and institutional. The first is related to injury, death or the violent destruction of property whereas the latter is less destructive of human life and originates in the operation of established respected forces in society, and this receives far less public condemnation than the first. When

the black family moves into a home in the white neighborhood and is stoned, burned or routed out, they are the victim's of individual racism. But when hundreds of babies die each year because of lack of proper food, shelter and medical facilities, and thousands more are destroyed and maimed physically, emotionally and intellectually because of the conditions of poverty and discrimination in the black community, they are the victim of institutional racism.

Moreover, institutional racism relies on the active and pervasive operation of anti-black attitudes and practices to maintain superiority. The statement whites are better than the blacks therefore black should be subordinated is a racist attitude, and it permeates the American society on both the individual and institutional level. Consequently, many social problems like exclusion of an individual and some group, violent attacks and different types of conflicts occur in the society.

Such kinds of racist behaviors of state's institutions make black life very complicated in America. In constitutional's articles all citizens are equal but in practice blacks are facing discriminations everywhere. Thomas Jackson writes: "Dictionaries are not much help in understanding what is meant by the word. They usually define it as the belief that one's own ethnic stock is superior to others, or as the belief that culture and behavior are rooted in race. When Americans speak of racism they mean a great deal more than this" (1). Here Jackson's point is for American context, race is not only biological and physical differences between two persons as dictionaries define it. But it is a significant factor to determine one's social, economical and political status. So the dictionaries' definition can not include the whole emotions, feelings and experiences of the black community in the American society. It also unable to include the hatred, feeling of superior and prejudices of Whites towards the Blacks.

### **Voice of Protest Against Racial Discrimination**

The opening line of novel, "This may be hard to believe, coming from a black man, but I've never stolen anything," indicates how it is difficult to be black in America. The prejudices about black make them confess publically that they have never stolen anything.

At the first *The sellout* presents, the racial discrimination in the United State of America, the discrimination is by the American establishment rather any single characters. The narrator's father is killed by the police and his city Dickens is removed from the map of California. Both these events affect narrator's life. The other character Hominy Jerkins feels devoid of identity when Dickens is removed from the map.

The narrator is at the Supreme Court of America with two charges – reintroducing slavery and segregation of society. Narrator accepts both charges. He says, "I did what worked, and since when did a little slavery and segregation ever hurt anybody, and if so, so fucking be it" (23).

He wants to bring back his removed city in the map of California. Dickens is not only city for him. It is his identity. Dickens is his history as well as future. The narrator says, "Like the entire town of Dickens, I was my father's child, a product of my environment, and nothing more. Dickens was me. And I was my father. Problem is, they both disappeared from my life, first my dad, and then my home town, and suddenly I had no idea who I was, and no clue how to become myself" (40).

The first example of racial discrimination is his fathers' death. His father is a social scientist of some renowned institution. He does not have any criminal background. But police kills him when he gets into some discussion with them. According to the police officer, his father pulled up behind plainclothes officers

Orosco and Medina, who had stopped at a traffic light and were talking to a homeless woman. After the light changed from green to red a couple of times, his father zipped around them and while making a Louie, yelled something due to which Officer Orosco issued a traffic ticket and stern warning. His father told them, "either give me the ticket or the lecture, but you can't give me both". Then the officers took exception and pulled their guns. His father ran like any sensible person would, and they fired four shots into his back and left him dead in the intersection. The narrator is used to such incidents. So he doesn't complain more, but he asks would the police officer get punished for killing the innocent. The answer is no. He tells:

I asked Captain Flores a question my father had asked me many times: "In the history of the Los Angeles Police Department, do you know how many officers have been convicted of murder while in the line of duty?"

"No."

"The answer is none, so there is no accountability. I am taking him." (51)

Hence, police kills narrator's father in the simple case of traffic ticket. Such killing of black is normal in the USA. For police, his father is only a black guy whom they just killed. But for narrator, his father was his world. Suddenly he lost his father and becomes clueless about what to do.

The second example of discrimination is removal of the Dickens from the map of California. The Dickens is the city of Chinamen, Spanish of all shades, dialects, and hats, Frenchmen, redheads, city slickers, and unskilled Jews. It is not city of white, so officials removed it from the map without any reason. Even they didn't give notice of removal. All of the town's signs are removed overnight. Dickens is no longer

included on maps or even in the nightly weather reports. Narrator argues Dickens is removed just like the Nagasaki. He says:

You won't find Dickens, California, on the map, because about five years after my father died, and a year after I graduated college, it too perished. There was no loud send-off. Dickens didn't go out with a bang like Nagasaki, Sodom and Gomorrah, and my dad. It was quietly removed like those towns that vanished from maps of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, atomic accident by atomic accident. But the city of Dickens disappearance was no accident. (57)

The removal of Dickens hurts more to Hominy Jenkins. Hominy is an actor. The narrator's generation grew up watching his "The Little Rascals" television serial in which Hominy plays the role of Afro-American. He starts career from theater and plays the role of African-American in several movies. In the old age, he is happy reading letters from his fans and sometimes they come to meet him. After Dickens' removal from the map, his fans cannot send him any letter because there is no zip code for Dickens. He thinks he has become irrelevant with the removal of Dickens. At first, he is about to commit suicide. But the narrator and other neighbors save him. He tells the narrator, "Why, massa? Because when Dickens disappeared, I disappeared. I don't get fan mail anymore. I haven't had a visitor in ten years, 'couse don't nobody know where to find me. I just want to feel relevant. Is that too much for an old coon to ask massa? To feel relevant" (77).

The old man has no other option to resist the decision of removing Dickens so he chooses the only way he can. Sometime later on a Wednesday, Hominy declares he is the slave of the narrator. The narrator asks him why he chose Wednesday? Hominy replies that the vast majority of slave revolts took place on Wednesdays because

traditionally Thursday was whippin' day. The New York Slave Revolt, the L.A. riots, the Amistad, all took place on Wednesday. It was Hominy's protest against the decision of removal of Dickens.

Narrator tries to convince Hominy by saying; "you are not a slave and I'm definitely not your master." But he doesn't agree with the narrator. Hominy says in a pitiful manner:

Sometimes we just have to accept who we are and act accordingly. I'm a slave. That's who I am. It's the role I was born to play. A slave who just also happens to be an actor. But being black ain't method acting. Lee Strasberg could teach you how to be a tree, but he couldn't teach you how to be a nigger. This is the ultimate nexus between craft and purpose, and we won't be discussing this again. I'm your nigger for life, and that's it. (77)

Hominy spends his whole life as an actor. He cannot make a lot of money. In the old age, he is living in his home town happily, but the authority doesn't care about his happiness. They erase the city from the map, making him without any identity and irrelevant. It raises a question would they do it if Hominy was a white actor? Hominy cannot do much against this discrimination because of his old age. So he begs the narrator to beat him as a slave. It means that he wants to say once he was an actor but now the state treats him as a slave. Narrator asks him, "Isn't there another way? Isn't there something else that would make you happy?" "Bring back Dickens." "You know that's impossible. When cities disappear, they don't come back." "Then you know what to do" (78).

After that, voice of protest begins. Both these characters have the same mission to bring back Dickens on the map, and they are ready to do everything that

they think is suitable and possible. The narrator uses every tool he can. First of all, the narrator keeps Entry and Exit signs for driver in Dickens. He hopes these signs will show presence of Dickens. Drivers, who come Dickens, will notice his city.

Then he asks the help of the local intellectual institution, Dum Dum Donut Intellectuals, founded by his father to raise the issues of black. The black intellectuals gather bi-monthly to discuss about the issues and black welfare. Some people like Foy Cheshire are using this platform to fulfill their petty personal interests. Cheshire, a prominent archetype, who hosts a dying cable show focusing on black issues, has become successful by stealing ideas from the narrator's father as he has no original thoughts of his own. Foy laughs when narrator tells his purpose for Dickens's restoration. Foy is the character that benefits from the issues of black. He sells the establishment's agenda of everything being good, that racial discrimination is decreasing. By working in favor of establishment he earns money. He tells he is working for the welfare of black but never works for their uplift. Even in case of Dickens' restoration, he takes the side of establishment and laughs with narrator's plan. He says:

I explained that the boundary labels were to be spray-painted onto the sidewalks and that the lines of demarcation would be denoted by a configuration of mirrors and high powered green pinpoint lasers, or if that proved to be cost prohibitive, I could simply circumnavigate the twelve miles of boarder with a three-inch strip of white paint. Hearing the word "circumnavigate" and "lines of demarcation" come out of my mouth made me realize that even though I was making this shit up on the spot, I was more serious about this than I thought I was. And yes, I'm bringing back the city of Dickens. (100)



The narrator has some hope of getting help from Dum Dum Donut Intellectuals for restoring Dickens, but people like Foy make joke after listening to his plan. Yet he continues his work. Some people mock him, thinking he is doing silly things. Once, Officer Mendez asks him what he is doing. "I'm looking for the lost city of Dickens." "By painting a white line down the middle of street that already has two yellow lines down the middle of it?" (107)

Officer Mendez suggests him that using flyer works more effectively than painting. Accordingly, the narrator keeps a flyer near the telephone post. He hopes more people will see flyer when they come to there. He writes in the flyers:

MISSING: HOMETOWN

Have you seen my city?

Description: Mostly Black and Brown. Some Samoan. Friendly.

Answers to the name of Dickens.

Reward earned in Heaven.

If you have any information, please call this number 1-(800)

DICKENS. (108)

He paints the whole boarder lines of Dickens. He says, "it took about six weeks to finish painting the boarder and labels, and in the end I wasn't sure what I'd accomplished, but it was fun to see kids spend their Saturdays circumnavigating the city by carefully tracing their steps, walking, heel-to-toe on the line, making sure they'd left not even an inch untrod upon" (108).

The narrator is in search of his identity, and he can recover this lost identity by restoring his native city. He wants to be noticed. He wants to show his presence. He wants to be relevant. For all these, Dickens should be restored in the map.

Then the narrator uses another tool to become noticeable. He attempts to make a sister city for Dickens, hoping that having a sister city relation will give recognition to Dickens as a city. But the famous city rejects the purpose of becoming Dickens' sister city. Only some low profile cities show some interest. He says:

In the end I decided on three sister cities, each like Dickens, a real municipality that disappeared under dubious circumstances. The first was Thebes. Not the ancient Egyptian city, but the immense silent movie set from Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*. Built to scale and since 1923 buried under the massive Nipomo Dunes along the beaches of Guadalupe, California, its massive wooden gates, hypostyle temples, and papier-mâché sphinxes served as home to Ramses and a phalanx of centurion and legionnaire extras. Maybe one day an offshore storm will uncover it and dust it off, so that Moses can lead the Israelites back into Egypt and Dickens into the future. (148)

Their forms of protest—painting, keeping signs and flyer – don't get more attention for restoration of Dickens. So the narrator reaches conclusion to do some form of strong protest. He chooses Chaff Middle School for segregation. Principle Charisma agrees for the segregation because her school is not getting enough resource from the government for some years and the result is poor. It is very important protest of the narrator and the other black characters because in the past white used to segregate school, restricting black children from attending schools. In some schools only white child got admission. In this school, only black children are allowed. Narrator tells:

"Segregate the School." As soon as I said it, I realized that segregation would be the key to bringing Dickens back. The communal feeling of the bus would spread to the school and the permeate the rest of the city.

Apartheid united black South Africa, why couldn't it do the same for Dickens. I decided to give my new career as City Planner in Charge of Restoration and Segregation another six months. If things didn't work out, I could always fall back on being black. (167-68).

They hope if there is segregation at the local School; it will be a unique characteristic of Dickens. Hominy tells to the narrator:

That like Paris has the Eiffel Tower, St. Louis the arch, and New York an insanely huge income disparity, Dickens would have segregated schools. If nothing else, the Chamber of Commerce brochure would look attractive. *Welcome to the Glorious City of Dickens: The Urban Paradise in the bank of Los Angeles River. Home to Roving Bands of Youth Groups, a Retired Movie Star, and Segregated Schools!* (170)

After segregating school, they also segregate the Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital. The director, who was narrator's father's friend, agrees to support them. They do not ban the white from getting treatment, but allocate different place for black and white.

The Director of Martin Luther "Killer" King Jr., Hospital, Dr. Wilberforce Mingo, was an old friend of my father's and had given me permission to segregate the place when I explained to him that it'd been me who painted the boarder lines, put up the exist sign, and conceived the Wheaton Academy. He leaned back in his chair and said that for two pounds of cherries I could segregate his hospital in any way I saw fit. (229)

Hominy and the narrator paint a sign in the hospital that reads, "WHITE OWNED AMBULANCE UNITS ONLY" (229).

The narrator becomes wounded in a local theater. In the novel, it is not clear who shot him, but we can guess Foy is behind this because he was there with gun. Sometime later, police arrive in the theater. They ask about the incident. The narrator tells that he is the whispered 'Racism' in the post- racial world. "I told her about my efforts to restore Dickens and how I thought building the school would give town a sense of identity" (262). The police officer also gets the information that Hominy is narrator's slave. Then his case goes to the court.

In the district court, Judge Nguyen cannot reach any conclusion. In the courtroom, there is not a single white man. There are a female state's attorney generals of black and Asian lineage, a black defendant, a black defense counselor, a Latina bailiff, and judge himself is a Vietnamese-American. For them, it is difficult to set the parameters for what is essentially a judicial argument about the applicability, the efficacy, and the very existence of white supremacy as expressed through their system of law. The Judge Nguyen says:

While no one in this room would deny the basic premise of 'civil rights' we'd argue forever and a day about what constitutes 'equal treatment under the law' as defined by the very articles of the Constitution this defendant is accused of violating. In attempting to restore his community through reintroducing precepts, namely segregation and slavery, that, given his cultural history, have come to define his community despite the supposed unconstitutionality and nonexistence of these concepts, he's pointed out a fundamental flaw in how we as American claim we see equality. (266)

The court can't decide about narrator – is he really violating the constitution of America by keeping slave, painting the border line, keeping flyer in town and making segregation in school and hospital. The Judge argues:

'I don't care if you're black, white, brown, yellow, red, green, or purple.' We've all said it. Poised as proof of our non-prejudicial ways, but if you painted any one of us purple or green, we'd be mad as hell. And that's what he's doing. He's painting everybody over, painting this community purple and green, and seeing who still believes in equality. I don't know if what he's done is legal or not, but one civil right I can guarantee this defendants is the right to due process, the right to speedy trial. (266)

At the end, the novel does not mention what decision the Supreme Court takes about the narrator. It tells that they fulfill the objective of their protest. Hominy quits slavery and television starts to forecast Dickens weather too. "I run outside. The frog thermometer hanging from the back porch reads exactly 88 degrees. I can't stop crying. Dickens is back on the map" (284). The narrator returns back from the Supreme Court to his ghetto city. Suddenly, television starts to show weather forecast of Dickens and it is restored in the map of California.

### **Conclusion: Black's Voice of Protest Brings Back Their Native City**

The thesis has concluded that in Paul Beatty's novel *The Sellout*, the narrator and other characters are facing racial discrimination and they raise the voice of protest. The discrimination is not in the personal level; it is in the institutional level. The reason behind the killing of the narrator's father in the road intersection is his blackness. American people think that the blacks are violent, criminal and dangerous for them. This prejudice leads them to quick decision to shoot the black guy when

they feel he is suspicious. There is another discrimination in the removal of Dickens from the map. Dickens is the ghetto city of African, Mexican and Spanish. It is not the city of white Americans, so the authority removes it easily.

By analyzing the text, we can say the ghetto city like Dickens has no importance for American establishment. There are two-car-garage communities behind the removal of Dickens from the map. They want to fulfill their interests, to keep their property values up. The local authority agrees to remove Dickens for the interest of some wealthy person but ignores the identity of the migrant African, Mexican, Spanish and others.

In 2008, Barack Obama became the first black president in the history of America. He served two tenures (2008-2016). By electing Obama as the president, many African-American had a dream that the issues of racial discrimination would slow down. But their dream couldn't change in reality. There was a black president at the White House, but the police was killing black guys in the road even when they were not committing any crime.

To sum up, the characters of *The Sellout* raise their voice against this racial discrimination by American establishment. For protest, they don't rely on the traditional ways like rally, protest march and vandalism. Instead, they use some symbolic and creative ways like reintroduction of slavery, painting road sign and segregating between whites and blacks in school and hospital.