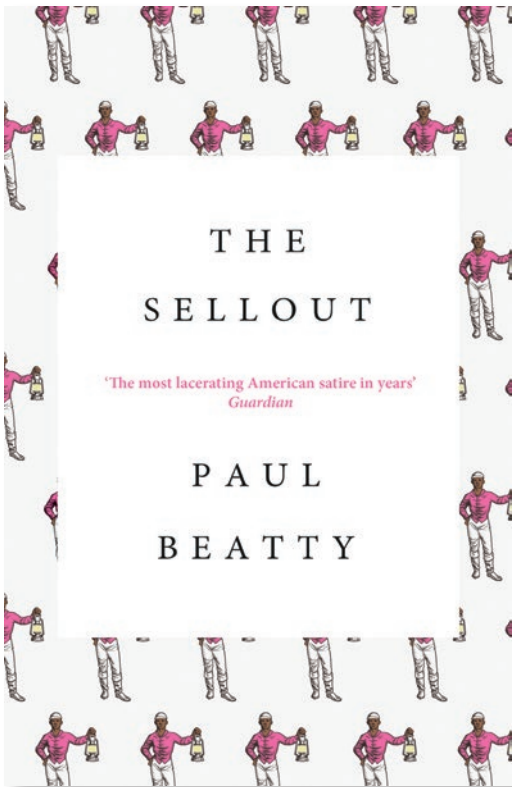


Reader's Guide



Other books by Paul Beatty
Tuff (1998)
Slumberland (2008)
The White Boy Shuffle (2013)

The Sellout Paul Beatty

Oneworld

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About the author	Paul Beatty is the author of three novels – <i>Slumberland</i> , <i>Tuff</i> and <i>The White Boy Shuffle</i> – and two books of poetry: <i>Big Bank Take Little Bank</i> and <i>Joker, Joker, Deuce</i> . He is the editor of <i>Hokum: An Anthology of African-American Humor</i> . He lives in New York City.
About the book	<p>Born in the ‘agrarian ghetto’ of Dickens on the southern outskirts of Los Angeles and raised by a single father, a controversial sociologist, the narrator of <i>The Sellout</i> spent his childhood as the subject in racially charged psychological studies. He is led to believe his father’s pioneering work will result in a memoir that will solve his family’s financial woes. But when his father is killed in a police shoot-out, he realises there never was a memoir. All that’s left is the bill for a drive-through funeral.</p> <p>Fuelled by this deceit and the general disrepair of his hometown, the narrator sets out to right another wrong: Dickens has literally been removed from the map to save California from further embarrassment. Enlisting the help of the town’s most famous resident – Hominy Jenkins – he initiates the most outrageous action conceivable: reinstating slavery and segregating the local high school which lands him in the Supreme Court.</p> <p>What follows is a remarkable journey that challenges the sacred tenets of the United States Constitution, urban life, the civil rights movement and the holy grail of racial equality – the black Chinese restaurant.</p>
Discussion points	<p>Did any aspects of the novel make you feel uncomfortable? If so, why do you think this was? Did you find Beatty’s language incendiary?</p> <p>‘Beatty’s wicked wit is the book’s chief source of momentum.’ (<i>Guardian</i>). In <i>The Sellout</i> every stereotype, rivalry and anxiety about race in the US is laid bare and satirised. How effective can wit and humour be when tackling issues of race? Are some points of attack more successful than others?</p> <p>How do the relationships between Bon Bon and his father, and Bon Bon and Hominy Jenkins differ? What do these relationships have to say about the nature of freedom?</p> <p>What is the purpose of instituting slavery in the novel? What does Bon Bon hope to accomplish by doing so?</p> <p>One reviewer suggested that <i>The Sellout</i> will ‘shock all of us into re-examining what we think we know about race.’ Did the book have that effect on you? Did it alter how you, personally, view black-white relations?</p>
Themed reading	<p>Ta-Nehisi Coates <i>Between the World and Me</i> James Hannaham <i>Delicious Foods</i> Paul Beatty <i>The White Boy Shuffle</i></p>
Useful links	<p>http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/05/07/our-thing-an-interview-with-paul-beatty</p> <p>https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/mar/10/paul-beatty-interview-the-sellout</p> <p>http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/paul-beatty-on-race-violence-and-his-scathing-new-novel-the-sellout-20150324</p> <p>http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/03/books/paul-beatty-author-of-the-sellout-on-finding-humor-in-issues-of-race.html?_r=0</p>