

Self existence in Racial Inequality of Paul Beatty's Novel 'The White boy Shuffle'

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Abstract - Paul's first novel is *The White Boy Shuffle*, published in 1996. This is an ironic incident that happened in the life of Gunnar Kaufmann. The novel also reflects modern forms of African-American gender discrimination and sexuality in addition to racial discrimination. This is a fictional work, which is also satirical. By naming Gunnar Kaufmann as the 'Black Messiah', this story has been created around him. Written within new genres such as the New Black Aesthetic and the Post Soul Aesthetic, the novel attempts to expand cultural representations of Blackness. The novel also seeks to provide new legitimacy to the many possibilities of Black identity. However, racism sometimes produces negative consequences for the society. Due to this, differences, discrimination, general or directed enmity and prejudice etc. become a place in social life. It can have a wide impact on various functions of the society, on customs, on beliefs, on ideas, on political systems etc. It is only and only a division of approximate capabilities. Although today there is a difference between racism and casteism. Division of humans or groups of humans on the basis of qualities can be considered comfortable in social life, but it should not have a negative impact on the society.

Keywords - Racial Inequality, Racial Discrimination, Gender Discrimination, Sexuality, Black Racism, African-American Society.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the novel, the place where Gunnar and his family lived was known as Santa Monica. Gunnar's mother explains to her children that they are not like other black children. The citywide black (activist club) student union and SWAPO, or the Whiteies Against Political Obsessiveness, which has only one black member. On a basket ball team with Scoby, Gunnar begins to travel. He is sad and only Yoshiko can console him. After the basketball program ends, Gunnar is asked to give a speech at a rally protesting against corrupt African politicians. Gunnar initially does not understand, what to say about such a huge crowd? Then he gives an uncertain speech - "What we need is some new leaders. Leaders who won't apostate like cowards. Some niggers who are ready to die!" (200) The media believes that Gunnar is a supporter of people's freedom through suicide. Many people in America start committing suicide and send their death poems to Gunnar. When Gunnar is asked, will he also commit suicide? Gunnar replies that he is ready. Scoby, depressed one night, asks Gunnar on the beach, what is the tallest building in Boston? The next morning, Gunnar learns that Scoby has

committed suicide by jumping off the roof of BU Law School. On the same roof, Gunnar finds Scoby's suicide note, in which Scoby has written a poem about his own death. Gunnar and Yoshiko decide to return to Hillside. But a warrant for his arrest by the LAPD forces him into hiding. One night Gunnar goes to the beach with Yoshiko. Gunnar then goes to sea and, with thoughts of suicide, throws himself against the currents. But thinking of his unborn child, he comes out of the water to the shore.

The rest of his life seems to be spent hiding from the police. But one night, Gunnar gets caught in the searchlights of a police helicopter. Gunnar's mother acts as a midwife to deliver Yoshiko. Yoshiko gives birth to a girl in a small pool at the local park, who is named Naomi Katsu Kaufmann. They are protected by members of Gun Totin's hooligans. After this Gunnar starts organizing weekly outdoor open mics. He recites poems in front of a large crowd. At a meeting to mark the two years since Scoby's suicide, Gunnar cuts off the little finger on his right hand with a knife. Due to which the crowd is shocked. This sacrifice of his plays an important role in establishing him as the 'savior of the blacks'. Gunnar Still staying

at the motel with Yoshiko and Naomi. He tells his daughter stories of his family, which were told to her by her mother in her youth. The novel ends with a poem about Gunnar's death. Before the LAPD can reach the locker, he kills himself by swallowing his own gunshot. Gunnar had cultural values, but he often alternated between the white world and the black world. In fact he is unable to fit perfectly in either of the two worlds. In the white world he is very conscious of his blackness and in the black world he is constantly trying to live up to the expectations that are placed on him as the Messiah, the basketball player and the representative. He and his sisters were transferred by his mother so that they would not taste the bitter taste of the 'traditional black experience' and would not be subjected to any kind of torture. In a long line of genealogies that endure everything in despair, Gunnar becomes the first traitor to speak out against mistreatment and then becomes the black community's messiah. By not fitting into his lineage and breaking tradition. Also, becomes a true leader of the black community. He incites the black community to commit mass suicide, but is indifferent to his role as leader. Gunnar is an avid reader and a very intelligent person, as well as a very self-aware person. He has played two roles as a poet and a basketball player. He is highly respected for his use of poetry for the black community as the resident poet of Gun Totin' Hooligans. As a talented basketball player, he receives more praise. Although he does not interact with women and his tendencies are not aggressive or violent, his role is dominated by masculinity. Mark Anthony Neal (African-American studies scholar) has suggested that Beatty's protagonist (Gunnar Kaufmann) in this novel describes an American dilemma of black life. Gunnar embodies the progress that Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned with the Civil Rights Movement. Gunnar is an African-American male who grew up in a non-discriminating, Caucasian environment. He is accepted by the white community, but Gunnar struggles to be accepted by his native African-American community. They have an idea of what life should be like as an African-American. But they are too confused to live it. Gunnar like a chameleon, Smoothly fits into almost every environment. Although such an environment is shaping his personality, it does not suit him. Gunnar may not have wished to be accepted by the new community, but he was bound to retain some of the characteristics of the people around him. Gunnar's friendship can be best described as a white man among black friends.

Because he is addressing black people as 'cool black friends'. He tries to fit into Black Beauty with the help of Scoby and Psycho Loco, but doesn't really change his easy going personality. Forced by his father to return to the white school, he naturally does not see skin color as a handicap. Writing during the post-Civil Rights Movement and the Black Arts Movement, Paul created a character who transcended racial barriers. This is what many African-Americans at the time wanted to do. This character of Paul fits in the white community as well as in the black community. He

marries a Japanese woman and a daughter is born to him. The African-American community appoints him to the post of 'Negro Demagogue'. This novel proves that any person (male or female) can represent the African-American community. One who has the ability to speak well, who is well educated. This story is the story of a new black aesthetic. Scoby is a basketball player, he is a role model and a great player. Hence he is maligned as a pagan African demon with mystical powers. Gunnar is also a great player, but not as much as Scoby. He becomes a 'mercenary' of the white society. He lacked obvious blackness, due to which he is accepted by the white society. Here blacks are allowed to remain in the social hierarchy and limits are imposed on their achievements. Gunnar also enjoys playing basketball and writing poetry. He doesn't have a natural interest in playing basketball, but he loves writing poetry.

Eventually he becomes so famous for his masterpiece (Watermelonin), that he unintentionally becomes the 'Leader of the Black Community'. Racial discrimination is often done as a social or personal division based on culture or race. It can be concluded that the superiority provided on the basis of race may be morally normal, but scientifically it is wrong, socially it is also unjust and fatal for the society, its justification in principle It should not happen. By the way, casteism is a modern concept. This concept started since the beginning of the European era of imperialism and the development of capitalism, although the Atlantic slave trade gave it a wide form. Racism in Western culture is known to be particularly documented during the 19th and 20th centuries, when racism led to several massacres. (eg - genocide of Rwanda, genocide of Holocaust, genocide of Armenia, genocide of Croatia etc.) Racism played its part in not only in America or Africa, but also in Asia, the world's largest continent. By the way, many scientists supported the fact that mankind can be divided on the basis of species. The reason for this division must be capabilities and nature. However, earlier theories held that some races were actually inferior to others. However, this idea is also surrounded by differences. Because race cannot be the genetic classification of any human being, human genome research also points to the same fact. However, many sociologists, biologists and anthropologists also accept empirical classification based on geography and history. At present, many laws have also been made and passed in the context of racism in many countries. In fact, all human beings on this earth belong to the same species, so all human beings should get equal rights and respect. Thus, in this novel of Paul, there is a characterization of such a person, who is the main character of this novel and is confused about his own existence. He is neither from a completely black society nor from a completely white society. He does not believe in racial discrimination and becomes the leader of the black society in an effort to find a normal life. By privileging poetry as a necessary aspect of the novel's formal structure, Beatty illustrates the ways in which he as a post-soul

writer can manipulate form in order to express his ideas, and how the analysis of these forms produce a necessary evaluation of the novel's literary value as a post-soul text. It makes sense that a poet with two published volumes of poetry working on his first novel would prioritize poetry and poetic expression in the novel. In addition to disrupting the game of fiction—definitely a post-soul tendency in its execution—the poetry in the novel speaks on behalf of both narrator/protagonist and author. Gunnar expresses himself through poetry, which is displayed directly on the page, and the novel showcase a variety of modes of expression which work through the characteristics and tendencies of the post-soul aesthetic and disrupt the neighboring prose. Post-soul in nature, this disruption of prose also draws the audience's attention to the ways *The White Boy Shuffle* is arranged formally.

The phrase 'Racism' is not the voice of the past. But it prevails during the postmodern period. It is subtle perpetuated among humans. Beatty considers the complete unawareness of racism as the consequences of narrow minded thinking. As Beatty writes in the prologue of his novel *"The white Boy Shuffle"*. "In the quest for equality, black folks have tried everything. We've begged, revolted, entertained, intermarried, and are still treated like shit." (Prologue 1) Beatty explores mild modern racism in his novels. The journey of protagonist as an Afro-American among the white people is presented to instance on racism. The complex concept of racism is deepened in the novels of Paul Beatty. The presence of contemporary racism in his poetry is investigated by Francis Duggan .. "So many people still judged by their race for such there never ought to be place 'A fair go' those untruthful words I do recall There is no such thing as a 'fair go for all' (Duggan 9)

Beatty reveals the helplessness of black's struggling to free themselves from racial prejudice. Life demands a search for meaning in it. The blacks explore their blackness as motive behind their existence in the society. In Beatty's *the white boy shuffle*, A witty lecture on living in a color blind society to her pupils by Ms Cegeny such conversation gives a variety of image in the classroom. Ms Cegeny keep questioning.. "Does anyone have an example of color blind processes in American Society" (30) The student of the white race replies "justice", e.g. but the hero of the novel as an African Americans replied as " Dogs" Gunnar explains by saying that..... "I believe that dogs are truly color blind, but they've born that way. Class, it's important that we judge people for what? "The person should be judged by their sanity rather than race, the color blindness ideology is absolutely unaware of it adherents. In social inequality and social stratification in US society, Christopher writes down.... "Color blind racism" represents whites assertion that they are living in a world where racial privilege no longer exists, but their behavior supports racialized structure and practices"(6) In Gunnar kaufaman's humiliation, he is seen as tough black man suitable for whites in Sancta

Monica:... "I was the funny, cool black guy. In Sancta Monica, like most predominately white sanctuaries from urban blight, "cool black guy" is a versatile identifier used to distinguish the harmless black male from the Caucasian juvenile while maintaining politically correct semiotics. If someone was planning a birthday party, the potential invitees always asked, "who's going to be there?" The conversation would go: "shaun, lance, Gunnar... " "Gunnar? Who's that?" "You know, the funny, cool black guy. "(34) Gunnar has a gun to protect himself. He elaborates that "downtrodden ghetto youth to defend themselves against the oppression system". The phrase such as "downtrodden" and "ghetto" are the sign representation of power relation in the society.

When considering the conclusion, it is easy to leave the text feeling a sense of hopelessness, that Gunnar as a post-soul artist as well as the novel as a post-soul text believes that the only solution to these inherited racial issues is simply mass Black suicide. Natalie Kalich argues that "throughout the text, Gunnar embodies what Bambi Haggins calls, 'cynical hopefulness,' which she argues is endemic to artists of Beatty's generation" (86). Haggins defines cynical hopefulness as that which can "reflect a view of black cultural productions and sociopolitical discourses through rose-colored glasses; but more often than not it with jaundiced eyes". This idea illustrates the "fact" that this post-soul text aims to tell its readers: even though there are a multitude of issues to critique in contemporary America, there is always a way to deal with these issues. Though cynical sometimes, the post-soul aesthetic harbors a sense of hopefulness. In an interview with *Transatlantica*, Beatty reveals that the title of the novel comes from not only the name ascribed to a rhythm less black boy, but also from the idea of "doing something and not being able to do it". As a formal element of the text, the reader hopes that Gunnar achieves his goal of revising his family history, of breaking his familial ties to "Uncle Toms;" however, he does not achieve this. Understanding this fact about himself leaves Gunnar with this depressive, cynical mode of thinking and existing which taints his character in the latter portion of the novel. To claim that the only way to achieve racial equity is through self-annihilation is chilling and horrifying, and the novel's form illustrates this complexity through its comingling with the prose and other mediums. The death poems Gunnar eventually receives stand in as products of this formal complexity.

Nelson George's notion of the post-soul aesthetic defined as the artistic vision of black artists who come of age after the Civil Rights and Black Power/Arts Movements of the 1960s and 70s—provides many African American writers and Scholms with a vehicle for critically examining contemporary African American literature and culture. In his 1996 debut novel *The White Boy Shuffle*, poet Paul Beatty parodies and examines

many spheres of contemporary black culture, among them the facade of "white" multiculturalism, the queerness of black masculinity, and the globalization of black popular culture. I argue that the formal structure of the novel replicates Beatty's exploration and subversion of post-soul discourses on blackness. By simultaneously rejecting yet worlding within the category of "post-soul," *The White Boy Shuffle* evinces a post-soul sensibility that maintains the fluidity and playfulness inherent to the post-soul generation, illustrating Greg Tate's definition of post-soul as the "African American equivalent to postmodernism." Thus, in this novel of Paul, there is a characterization of such a person, who is the main character of this novel and is confused about his own existence. He is neither from a completely black society nor from a completely white society. He does not believe in racial discrimination and becomes the leader of the black society in an effort to find a normal life.

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