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### Derek C. Maus and James J. Donahue. *Post-Soul Satire: Black Identity after Civil Rights*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2014.

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**Derek C. Maus and James J. Donahue. Post-Soul Satire: Black Identity after Civil Rights. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2014.**

**Abstract**

Review of Derek C. Maus and James J. Donahue. Post-Soul Satire: Black Identity After Civil Rights. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2014.

**Keywords**

Satire, humor, African American studies, comics, film, television, theater

Derek C. Maus and James J. Donahue, eds. *Post-Soul Satire: Black Identity after Civil Rights*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2014. 316 pp.

*Post-Soul Satire: Black Identity after Civil Rights* is comprised of twenty-one essays that address satire created by Black Americans. Particularly, as a blurb on the back of the book suggests, this collection focuses on how such satire contributes to “shaping what it means to be black.” Per the text’s introduction, there has been an ongoing development of satire by Black creators over the course of the past few decades, but the works have been largely unexplored and underappreciated. That is, of course, until now.

As with any edited collection, the perspectives and methodologies presented in the text are quite varied. That being said, across the collection, the focus is on Black satire created primarily from 1989 on. The timing is of particular importance because the text is interested in works created by artists during or following the Post-Soul/New Black Aesthetic Era. Although the nuances of these labels are myriad, all of the creators are less concerned with embodying, personally or in their work, some sort of “authentic” Blackness. Instead, individual experience has more credence, and individuals are provided with more space to challenge boundaries and identities. The creators examined here differ from some earlier Black satirists that have been studied in that the newer group not only satirizes externally but also intragroup. Choosing to do so, particularly in public amongst, as some might say, “mixed company,” has marked these works as especially controversial.

The collection’s introduction acknowledges that the majority of scholarship on Black satire has focused primarily on literature. Conversely, *Post-Soul Satire* explores examples from multiple media, including but not limited to film, television, and theatre, and covers everyone and everything from George C. Wolfe to Kara Walker to Dave Chapelle to Childish Gambino and beyond. For example, Terrence T. Tucker’s “Blackness We Can Believe In: Authentic Blackness and the Evolution of Aaron McGruder’s *The Boondocks*” analyzes *The Boondocks* through the lens of comic rage, while Thomas R. Britt’s “Knock, Knock the Hustle: Resisting Commercialism in the African American Family Film” considers how such films emphasize the importance of having more than monetary wealth. Additionally, Brandon Manning’s “‘I Felt Like I Was Part of the Troop’: Satire, Feminist Narratology, and Community” explores how Black women have carved out space in a satirist tradition that has typically been male-centered. The broad spectrum of examples allows the reader to get a sense of how Black satire takes shape in a variety of spaces as well as how it may or may not be interpreted and accepted differently, depending on the specific space and context. Additionally, the writers of the individual essays often provide their own ruminations on the meaning(s) of satire and what it means for these creators to be marked as Post-Soul/New Black Aesthetic.

Ultimately, this text will be useful to anyone who is particularly interested in satire, its inner workings, and its social and political impact. It is also going to be useful to anyone researching Black humor as well as those working with the complex methods by which some Black Americans negotiate complicated positions in contemporary society. Furthermore, given recent discussions in the public sphere regarding what does and does not count as satire and who should or should not be the targets of satire, the text seems especially relevant. Notably, towards the end of the collection, Black comedians Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele become the focus of this scholarly conversation. And though the collection was released a few years before Peele's hit film *Get Out* (2017), pairing the film with this collection would be an effective means by which one could begin to engage with the state of Black satire today.

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