Contents

1	Introduction: Spacing Whiteness in Improv — 1
1.1	Lacking object and discipline — 1
1.2	Barthes's punctum as methodology —— 5
1.3	White performance of Afro-pessimism —— 8
1.4	Material —— 13
1.5	Chapter survey —— 15
2	US Improv Comedy and Race – A Sketchy Report —— 23
2.1	Arresting improv —— 23
2.2	Introduction to Chicago improv —— 25
2.3	Talking race —— 34
3	Truths for Whiteness —— 64
3.1	Sylvia Wynter's conception of being hu/man — 64
3.2	The modern libidinal praxis of anti-Black abjection —— 76
3.3	Embodying anti-Black abjection —— 91
3.4	Modern popular culture as Blackness —— 111
4	Who Speaks? —— 151
4.1	Circulating aesthetics of vitalism —— 151
4.2	Intuition and abjection —— 170
5	Abjection in Play —— 186
5.1	Performing Humanism —— 186
5.2	Properties of play —— 188
5.3	Improvising property —— 197
6	Funny Matter —— 206
6.1	Humorous Humanity —— 206
6.2	Humor and the libidinal economy of anti-Black abjection — 208
6.3	Laughable Blackness —— 219
6.4	Incongruities —— 228
7	In lieu of a Conclusion —— 238
7.1	Original ending —— 238
7.2	Reality updates —— 239
7.3	Retrospective reflections on scholarship in whiteface — 244

XII — Contents

Works Cited — 248

Index —— 259