Contents

Cast Members ix
Cold Open: The Introduction 1

Part I  The Opening Monologue 3
1 Chase’s Ford vs. Belushi’s Samurai: Why Is it OK to Punch Up But Not Down? 5
   Ruth Tallman

2 Mr. Mike: The Dark, Existentialist Vision of Michael O’Donoghue 15
   Erich Christiansen

3 How Do They Get Away with It?: Pushing Boundaries with Offensive Material on Saturday Night Live 25
   Michael McGowan

4 SNL, Satire, and Socrates: Smart-Assery or Seriousness? 39
   Joshua J. Reynolds

Part II  Some Political Sketches 51
5 Saturday Night Live and the Political Bubble 53
   William Irwin

6 Saturday Night Live and the Production of Political Truth: Foucault Explains the Danger of Late Night Comedy 63
   Kimberly S. Engels

7 Word Associations, Black Jeopardy, and Mr. Robinson’s Neighborhood: SNL Tackles Race 75
   J. Jeremy Wisnewski
8 John Belushi, Chris Farley, and Stuart Smalley: Drugs and Recovery on *Saturday Night Live*  
*William Irwin and J.R. Lombardo*

**Part III  Some Sketches Featuring Your Favorite Recurring Characters**  
9 Dana Carvey vs. Darrell Hammond: What Does it Mean to be “Spot On,” and Does it Matter?  
*Tadd Ruetenik*  
10 SNL’s Blasphemy and Rippin’ up the Pope: “Well Isn’t That Special?”  
*David Kyle Johnson*  
11 “Wayne’s World” and the Philosophy of Play  
*Jason Holt*  
12 Bulls, Bears, and Beers: Da Philosophy of Super Fandom  
*Robin Barrett*

**Part IV  And Now for Our Musical Guest**  
13 Liveness and Lip-Synching: Andy Kaufman and Eminem  
*Theodore Gracyk*

**Part V  Weekend Update**  
14 I Hate Applause: Norm Macdonald and Laughter  
*Jeremy Fried*  
15 *Saturday Night Live’s* Citizen Journalists and the Nature of Democracy  
*Kati Sudnick and Erik Garrett*  
16 Fake News as Media Theory: SNL on TV Journalism  
*Gerald J. Erion*  
17 “Look, Children, It’s a Falling Star”: David Spade and SNL Family Disloyalty  
*Jason Southworth and Ruth Tallman*
## CONTENTS

**Part VI  The Absurd Stuff That Happens Near the End 209**

18  The Simulated Reality of *Saturday Night Live*  
*Edwardo Pérez*  
211

19  Deep Thoughts about Deep Thoughts: The Existentialism of Jack Handey  
*John Scott Gray*  
223

20  The Ladies Man and “President Bush”: Can Someone Be Too Stupid for Moral Responsibility?  
*Jason Southworth*  
231

Index  
239