Every Exchange Embodies Some Coefficient of Sociability

This chapter and the next undertake an exploration of the productivity of Simpson's fan mail and hate mail. In particular, Simpson's utilisation (exploitation, rationalisation) of the letters published in his defense fundraising memoir as cultural and economic capital. *I Want to Tell You* reproduces an economy of the gift. An ethos of reciprocity drives and governs the textual scene. In its enactments, this ethos of reciprocity, derived from epistolary practice, replicates the giving-taking-giving exchanges of a gift economy. Simpson's textual ethos of courtesy and thanksgiving has a rhetorical function. His attitude to his reading audience and his situation, conveyed by his speech and behaviour, establishes his character and the tenor of his (emotional, financial, affecting) appeal. Simpson's "primary" objective as author is, he states: "to respond to the more than 300,000 people who wrote to me. I want to say thank you" (3). His commercial objectives are "secondary" (Simpson 10-11). The momentum of the gift, its intimate engagement and scheme of gratitude, displaces the affective accountability of Simpson's mercenary mercantile interests. He is not reticent about the motives of his textual enterprise, openly declaring the remunerative intent and purpose of his publishing scheme. But it is the non-commercial function, the requital possibility (or potential) of his incarceration narrative Simpson foregrounds as his "[f]irst and foremost" consideration (3). The play of generosities, gratitude and returns, that marks Simpson's text, its inclusive, collaborative production and its design as a commodity, is dependent on the spirit of the gift, on a non-commercial, pre-market contractual system of voluntary-obligatory *prestation* and counter-*prestation*. Simpson activates an intratextual and intertextual trading practice in his

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1 In the "Translator's Note" to Mauss' *The Gift*, Ian Cunnison states: "There is no convenient English word to translate the French *prestation* so this word itself is used to mean any thing or
memoir that reassembles the formulations, behaviours and affects anthropologist Mauss outlines in his essay on the social and economic phenomena of gift exchange, The Gift. Theoretically and morally, prestation is a threefold circuitous program which entails the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to make a repayment for what has been given and received (Mauss 10-11). Symptomatically and politically, prestation involves persons as individuals and as social beings. It constructs them as autonomous components in a complex series of de-centralised connections, according to Mauss and the logic of I Want to Tell You.

As 300,000 epistolic offerings are made in the form of fan mail, obligatory charges ensue for Simpson as the recipient, "the obligation to accept, and the obligation to reciprocate" the gift (Hyde xv). Receptive, grateful and thankful for what he is given, even his hate mail, Simpson returns this generous, giving regard with a textual response - I Want to Tell You. However, in between his acceptance and his reciprocation is an approach that complicates the process of exchange. Simpson makes a request that contracts the social contact. By asking a selection of the writers to "contribute their letters" for inclusion in his defense fundraising memoir (Simpson 11), in effect, Simpson asks each published letter writer to donate not only their useful object but themselves and their name (their reputation) to his righteous cause. What is given is a representative manifestation of its giver. It is this connection between person and property that generates an interpersonal link between those who participate in the act of giving and taking. Mauss explains "the bond created by the transfer of a possession" (10), using Maori custom as an example: the "bond created by things is in fact a bond between persons, since the thing itself is a person or pertains to a person.

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series of things given freely or obligatorily as a gift or in exchange; and includes services, entertainments, etc., as well as material things" (xi).

Hyde cites the "three related obligations" (xv) theorised by Mauss in The Gift.
Hence it follows that to give something is to give a part of oneself" (10). Giving their words textually, the letter writers give themselves textually, to Simpson, his text and his readers. Likewise, through his narrative, Simpson gives himself textually, to the letter writers and his readers. It is a form of social contact that contracts by the pact of a gentleman's agreement. We have the word of Simpson and the letter writers, and we must take them at their word.

Simpson's request challenges the non-commercial efficacy of the letters he received while on remand, written in response to his perceived emotional need or culpability. Simpson's commercial necessity exacts a moral obligation and a deliberation of conscience from each donor. Acquiescence to Simpson's request postulates the vow: in "giving you I give myself" (Mauss 57), it commits the self to the other in the "act of transfer" (Mauss 57), and it activates a more generous but dangerous form of social contact as a social contract. As Mauss notes:

> The gift is thus something that must be given, that must be received and that is, at the same time, dangerous to accept. The gift itself constitutes an irrevocable link especially when it is a gift of food [nourishment or sustenance]. The recipient depends upon the temper of the donor, in fact each depends upon the other. Thus a man does not eat with his enemy. (58)

A consideration of the gift as bad, dangerous or poisonous, is especially relevant to the function of Simpson's hate mail. There is also a danger for the fan mail donor who gives their epistolic gift to Simpson for public proclamation; for Simpson's public use and public distribution. Allowing their intimate epistolary confessions to be laid open to public scrutiny is a risk. Agreeing to be outed as

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3 What I have called "the vow" is part of a line from a Hindu epic cited by Mauss, which demonstrates the rituals and "rules relating to gifts of cattle," and stresses the spiritual connection between property and owner or donor in the giving process (Mauss 57).
the benefactor of an alleged murderer makes the giver vulnerable. Giving may bring respect and
virtuous reward, but in this context, giving hazards exposure, the possibility of ridicule and
humiliation. What may be intended as a generous, selfless act, could be perceived as immoral,
wrongful, even criminal, if such support contributes financially to the acquittal of a man who did
commit double murder. Simpson may have unjustifiably killed two innocents, one his "beloved" ex-
wife, the mother of his children, in a fit of brutal uncontrollable rage. At the time of donation, at the
point of contract, Simpson's guilt has not been disproved in a court of law. The prosecution has
not yet exhibited the evidence mounted against Simpson, the defendant, on behalf of the people of
the State of California. The defense has not yet argued the legal case for Simpson's innocence.
To support Simpson at this juncture is an act of trust and faith, a presumption of innocence.
Willingly, in the act of giving, a sacrifice of self (of self-interest) is made, must be made, for
Simpson. He is the beneficiary and the trustee of not only what is given, but how it is given and
why. Compelled to meet the obligations and challenges of this potential potlatch, commemorating
his notoriety, his fame and his legal circumstance, Simpson willingly enters into a textual self-
reification, an unabashed appropriation, cannibalisation and fetishisation of his own pseudo-iconic
status as both "O.J." and Los Angeles County Jail inmate 4013970. He responds not as one who
has sinned or fallen from grace but as one who has been sinned against, tragically. And he draws
strength from the crowd he animates accordingly.

Mauss' main concern in *The Gift* is the nature of reciprocity, what he calls the spirit of the

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4 "Potlatch," a customary practice of gift exchange amongst North American Native-American
tribes, is defined by Mauss as a Chinook word which "meant originally 'to nourish' or 'to
consume'" (4). Performed in a festival setting, the giving, consumption and reciprocation of gifts
is conducted in a competitive "spirit of rivalry and antagonism" (Mauss 4). It is an "agonistic type
of total prestation" (Mauss 5).
gift: "the principle whereby the gift received has to be repaid" and the force "in the thing given which compels the recipient to make a return" (1). He "isolates" as his focus prestation which are in theory voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous, but are in fact obligatory and interested. The form usually taken is that of the gift generously offered; but the accompanying behaviour is formal pretence and social deception, while the transaction itself is based on obligation and economic self-interest.

(Mauss 1)

As Mauss understands it, the gift as a phenomenon operates within and organises a complex network of ritualised arrangements which position and bind individuals socially. The performance of the customary practices of gift exchange articulates honour, prestige and power, and accords merit. Whilst not denying the possibility of altruism, Mauss suggests that giving, as a social transaction between individuals, is impossible without an engagement of self, without a concern for self-interest. What may seem gratuitous is not, it cannot be, for the gift has a social inclination. Social contact and social interaction are necessary conditions of the gift as a phenomenon; and the gift is, unavoidably, an expression of social contact and social interaction. Like the process of linguistic communication, for a gift to be a gift, it must be given to another and received by another. This is a modal requirement of its determination. The process of exchange encodes the thing. It does not need to be reciprocated to be a gift. Reciprocation is an optional yet customary social practice involving the gift once it has been perceived to be a gift and accepted as such. Giving is an active social contract that simultaneously affirms self and other, that invests a self-concerned and an other-concerned interest. It is this principle and force, the reticular connection of self to others, that establishes the relations that cohere social groups morally, religiously, legally, economically (Mauss 1).
Inversely, "[t]o refuse to give, or to fail to invite, is - like refusing to accept - the equivalent of a declaration of war; it is a refusal of friendship and intercourse" (Mauss 11). Historically a panacea to conflict, the conciliatory spirit of the gift and its scheme of gratitude resists the xenophobic tendencies of "war, isolation and stagnation" (Mauss 80), the fearful threat of the strange and unknown other. Giving is a tactical movement from thanatos (death, destruction and warfare) to eros (life, harmony and survival). The display of generosity, courtesy and kindness in giving generates "friendship and intercourse" (Mauss 11), "alliance, solidarity, communion - in brief, peace," through gratitude (Sahlins 169). The seventeenth century philosopher, Thomas Hobbes explains gratitude as a form of civil obedience, a fundamental law of human conduct:

As Justice dependeth on Antecedent Convenant; so does GRATITUDE depend on Antecedent Grace; that is to say, Antecedent Free-gift: and is the fourth Law of Nature; which may be conceived in this Forme, That a man which receiveth Benefit from another of meer Grace, Endeavour that he which giveth it, have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will. For no man giveth, but with intention of Good to himselfe; because Gift is Voluntary; and of all Voluntary Acts, the Object is to every man his own Good; of which if men see they shall be frustrated, there will be no beginning of benevolelence, or trust; nor consequently of mutuall help; nor of reconciliation of one man to another; and therefore they are to remain still in the condition of War; which is contrary to the first and Fundamentall Law of Nature, which commandeth men to Seek Peace. (105)

Mauss concludes it is the mutual satisfaction of interests through "alliance, gift and commerce" that establishes peaceful relations between clans, tribes, nations and individuals (80). Mauss' triad
suggests that the alliances generated by the gratitude of gift exchange foster the development of economic trading partnerships. It is a calculated system of alliance and diplomacy.

Mauss' study concerns pre-market societies he terms "primitive," or "archaic" (1). The contemporary relevance of his ethnographic work is it reveals that the strategies of the customary social practice of *prestation* and counter-*prestation* operating in these "early societies" (Mauss 1) are not obsolete within more complex, modern or Westernised societies. Subverted within cultures that operate under the governance of a rational market economics, these pre-capitalist, pre-industrial strategies have become tactics, useful and figurative everyday social practices that countermand, complement and contradict institutional imperatives, drives and desires. Particularly, the dominant systemic neglect enforced by a budgetary movement towards economic reform, economic rationalism, privatisation, corporatisation, mergers, acquisitions, and minority, regional and community disenfranchisement, or disregard. Today, in the passed-postmodern (or passed-late-capitalist) moment, it is in the social contracts between individuals, in spoken and unspoken agreements, expectations and arrangements that we find the expression of a "religious, legal, moral, and economic" legacy of *prestation* and an inheritance of its "aesthetic aspect" and "morphological types" (Mauss 1). As Mauss observes: "The theme of the gift, of freedom and obligation in the gift, of generosity and self-interest in giving, reappear in our own society like the resurrection of a dominant motif long forgotten" (66). Today, the theme of the gift is recognised as an economic necessity and promoted as a social investment. Giving is a contributive labour, a social responsibility. Philanthropy is no longer the purview of the wealthy or the elite. The discursive appeals for financial contributions to non-government funded aid projects, national disaster relief, medical research and benefits for the arts, signal a kind of everyday philanthropy, a
reliance on the generosity of the average citizen. It is a self-supporting, consumer-pays public sphere, a modern-day tithing sustained by the incentive of the tax-deductible donation; and "mingled with other, purer sentiments: charity, social service and solidarity" (Mauss 66). In *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*, Carol Stack explains a gift exchange network as a condition of economic poverty in which the poor must take care of their own. The ambivalence of the gift, of freedom and obligation, of generosity and self-interest in giving, makes such a system of exchange ripe for the manipulation of sentiment, for emotional, moral, financial and discursive improvisation. It is from this perspective that the theoretical frame of Mauss' work is pertinent to the relations of reciprocity executed in Simpson's text. In this guise, *The Gift* is useful for my reading of the giving-taking-giving exchanges, the active and interactive engagements of Simpson and his fans. Simpson's reception of the letters he received in gaol as gifts involves *I Want to Tell You*, in its assembled entirety and as a commodity, in a textual system of *prestation* and counter-*prestation*.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau acknowledges the persistence of the spirit of the gift as "generosities for which one expects a return" (26), and as "the *potlatch* described by Mauss, an interplay of voluntary allowances that counts on reciprocity and organizes a social network articulated by the 'obligation to give'" (27). Operating "illegitimately" in contemporary society, "on [the] margins or in [the] interstices" (Certeau 27) of a modern market economy, these "styles of social exchange, technical invention, and moral resistance" (Certeau 26) are a "diversionary tactic" (Certeau 27). "[T]he loss that was voluntary in a gift economy is transformed into a transgression

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in a profit economy: it appears as an excess (a waste), a challenge (a rejection of profit), or a crime (an attack on property)” (Certeau 27). For Certeau, gift economy practice signals the "return of a sociopolitical ethics into an economic system" (27). An expression of the "popular" at work, labouring within the "free market system" (Certeau 27), the gift and its potlatch operation diverts the logos of disinterested institutional systems through eros, the enactment of life-affirming social practice. “[U]nlike the sale of a commodity, the giving of a gift tends to establish a relationship between the parties involved” (Hyde xiv). Because of this connecting faculty, Hyde considers "gift exchange as an 'erotic' commerce, opposing eros (the principle of attraction, union, involvement which binds together) to logos (reason and logic in general, the principle of differentiation in particular). A market economy is an emanation of logos" (xiv). Obligated, interested and self-interested, perhaps the gift is what we may now call an emanation of a survivalist politics of kindness or humanitarianism, no longer simply a moral code or sentiment. The investment of self-interest is what generates and articulates the power of a gift economy as a private force, strengthened by phatic social networks of mutually beneficial voluntary-obligatory alliances between individuals who give and take.

Marshall Sahlins, in "The Spirit of the Gift," explains a gift economy as an egalitarian network of relations of "private force" as opposed to a unifying, comprehensive "Public Power":

The gift, however, would not organize society in a corporate sense, only in a segmentary sense. Reciprocity is a 'between' relation. It does not dissolve the separate parties within a higher unity, but on the contrary, in correlating their opposition, perpetuates it. Neither does the gift specify a third party standing over and above the separate interests of those who contract. Most important, it does not
withdraw their force, for the gift affects only will and not right. Thus the condition of peace as understood by Mauss - and as in fact it exists in the primitive societies - has to differ politically from that envisioned by the classic contract, which is always a structure of submission, and sometimes of terror. Except for the honor accorded to generosity, the gift is no sacrifice of equality and never of liberty. The groups allied by exchange each retain their strength, if not the inclination to use it. (170)

It is the will of such a narrative force (decentralised, democratised, egalitarian, private and collective) that produces and organises Simpson's memoir. Simpson's fame, and his arrest and remand for the murder of his ex-wife and Goldman, mobilises the agency of a willful epistolary force. *I Want to Tell You* is cohered, rather than unified, by Simpson's requital narrative and by the cultural crisis of the double murder charge as a significant historical event. Structurally and thematically, as a text, *I Want to Tell You* is not comprehensive or definitive: it is segmentary, fugitive, errant, a kind of refuge. It is not literature but it is literary. *I Want to Tell You* is not a work of art or a challenge to read. It is infotainment produced for consumption and distraction. However, the distraction or diversion it generates does not separate or displace, it disrupts and interrupts the site into which it is inserted – the discursive site of the official commodified version of the Simpson story. *I Want to Tell You* is a cultural artefact. The cultural narrative enunciated by its various narrators is a prosaic record of the individual experience of social history, a specific moment in time, captured by its participants. Its worth or value in a secondary cultural marketplace is that it registers a refusal to be silent or submit to the confines of the "official story" of the "national narrative" (Morrison, "Official Story" xv). The linguistic and social activity of the letter writers and Simpson demonstrates a liberating enunciative praxis. It is an assertion of the American constitutional right to free speech. Perhaps the "third party [not specified by the gift,] standing over
and above the separate interests of those who contract" (Sahlins 170), is the reader of Simpson's text. The third party is activated at the point when the spirit of the gift moves into the commercial sphere, when Simpson offers *I Want to Tell You* as a published commodity available for purchase within a primary marketplace. This is when and where the reader is called into being, motivated out of fascination or desire to take, to view, to judge, to critique, to relate; and to pay the recommended retail price to do so.

As Sahlins notes: "Reciprocity is a 'between' relation" (170). And like the reciprocity that guides it, Simpson's text reproduces the momentum of "between" configurations of spatial, temporal and interpersonal trajectories that, in their figurative geometry, generate corridors, vestibules, anterooms and *entrepôts*; virtual, symbolic and real. For example, a letter constructs a relation between two parties. The words it carries are shared between the sender and the recipient. The sociable logic of a letter intimates reciprocity or correspondence will ensue. The shared ownership of and responsibility for a letter imbue the device with an ambivalent custodial status. Both the sender and the recipient have a proprietory claim. When we speak of a letter, we say Howie Alford's letter to Simpson or Simpson's letter from Howie Alford (Simpson 5-6), it can be either and it is also both. It passes. A letter has momentum, it moves in between and it connects two points, one of departure and one of arrival. The visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail, the authorial site in which Schiller records Simpson's narrative, is an intermediate vestibular space, where the incarcerated (Simpson) and the free (Schiller) may meet, periodically, before returning to

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6 *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines *entrepôt* as: "1. Temporary deposit of goods, provisions, etc.; chiefly concr. a storehouse or assemblage of storehouses for temporary deposit. [...] 2. A commercial centre; a place to which goods are brought for distribution to various parts of the world. [...] 3. A mart or place where goods are received and deposited, free of duty, for exportation to another port or country" (*Entrepôt*, def. 1, 2, 3). This is a fitting description for Simpson's text.
their respective sectors of containment and security. When we read Simpson's text we visit, virtually and temporarily, that authorial space and time under the same conditions as Schiller, as an official and approved visitor. We are free to enter and exit at will, textually. We do so from the comfort of our textual safety zone. As his narrative is written while he is in custody awaiting trial, Simpson speaks from the indeterminate position of his alleged criminal status. He is neither convicted nor acquitted; his guilt or his innocence is not yet proved or decided, legally. I Want to Tell You was published after Simpson's arrest and before the official findings and the decisive juridical verdict of the criminal trial. The visiting room, the remand period, these are also idle spaces that Simpson puts to good use. Within the text, the passages of Simpson's narrative are intercalated, placed in-between the letters, or reciprocally, the letters appear in-between the passages of Simpson's narrative. In fact, in-between spatial arrangements and relations precede Simpson's memoir. The murder of Brown Simpson and Goldman was committed in a vestibular space, on the walkway between the front door and the front security gate of Brown Simpson's Bundy Drive condominium; but closer to the front gate. When the two bodies were discovered post-mortem on June 13, 1994, the security gate was ajar and the front door to Brown Simpson's condominium was "nearly wide open" (Lange and Vannatter 6). The rear gate to the Bundy Drive property was open (Fuhrman 15). That same day, just before dawn, at Simpson's Rockingham Avenue estate, then Detective Mark Fuhrman discovered a bloodstained leather glove "on a narrow cement pathway, partially covered in foliage" (Lange and Vannatter 30). This walkway was located between two gates and framed by the walls of the garage and the guest bungalows on one side and the property fence on the other. Both gates were open when the glove was discovered (Lange and Vannatter 30). As places designed and constructed for coming and going, entries and
exits, these crime scene entrepôts are reconfigured as legal, narrative, textual and memorial points of departure.

A photograph taken by Francine Orr published in *In Pursuit of Justice* (see fig. 2), shows large florist-wrapped bouquets of flowers on the footpath outside the closed front security gate of Brown Simpson's Bundy Drive condominium (the crime scene) (*Los Angeles Times* Staff 18). The caption reads: "Flowers and placards pile up outside Nicole Simpson's condo as well-wishers create a small shrine in her memory" (*Los Angeles Times* Staff 18). This public shrine denotes the grief of strangers. Unknown to the family and friends of the victims, these mourners are denied access to the exact site of the murder. Their physical distance indicates their social or personal distance. A handwritten placard appears on the gate, street side. Its words are indecipherable in the photograph. Its crooked placement and the duct tape that precariously secures the sign suggest a harried marking of the public memorial site. It is unofficial and temporary. The position from which the photograph is taken, from outside the crime scene proper, indicates an inability to gain access or intrude physically on the private, domestic space. We can only glimpse the shadowy shapes of the stairs (the exact crime scene) behind the wire mesh security gate (*Los Angeles Times* Staff 18). Damp marks on the private tiled pathway, running out from behind the gate onto the concrete pedestrian footpath, are a reminder that the blood has been recently washed away (*Los Angeles Times* Staff 18). Bloodstains remain lodged in the tile grout. The security signage which appears in the shot, outside the gate and above the flowers, makes a mockery of its ability to protect or safeguard with its deterrent warnings: "SECURITY westec" and "ARMED RESPONSE" (*Los Angeles Times* Staff 18). The photograph itself is a memorial sight, an official record of the public effect of Brown Simpson's senseless and shocking death.
Fig. 2. "Flowers and placards pile up outside Nicole Simpson's condo as well-wishers create a small shrine in her memory" (Los Angeles Times Staff 18). Photographer: Francine Orr.
In his novel *Dead Famous*, a critique of the *Big Brother* reality television concept and the use of the mass media as a vehicle for the construction and perpetuation of celebrity, Ben Elton labels the on-screen rhetoric of the participants as a "new language of pious self-justification" (270). A cultural code designed to "disguise" a narcissistic impulse for fame (270). Elton's hostility toward this behaviour stems from his reception of such secular piety as sanctimonious and obsequious, transparently dishonest. The external masking of ambition and conceit with humility and modesty is generated not by shame but by an obvious tactical manipulation of appearances. Enacted in order to gain audience favour and trust whilst being entertaining and interesting, this mode of performance is a form of self-deception or self-censorship, but not self-denial. To be popular and, so, marketable you cannot appear to be too self-absorbed or too mercenary.⁷ Perhaps, what Elton actually finds distasteful, certainly disgraceful, is the audience acceptance of such a display. In his definition of "rhetoric," David Macey notes:

> The noun 'rhetoric' is often used to mean artificial or insincere language, and criticisms of rhetoric are as old as the art itself. In Classical Antiquity its most forceful critic was Plato who, especially in the *Gorgias*, argues that rhetoric means pandering to the prejudices of the audience and flattering it with a standard repertoire of verbal tricks. (330)

*Big Brother* as a game and a commercial enterprise is dependent on audience opinion. Audience votes register the success of each participant's rhetorical performance and determine the winner (the most popular); who, as Australian audiences have articulated, is not necessarily the most entertaining but is the most acceptable to the "prejudices of the audience" (Macey 330).

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⁷ The name of the "inmate" who is murdered in *Dead Famous* (Elton's fictional reality television program is called *House Arrest*) is Kelly Simpson. Surely too much of a coincidence to be parapraxis, an unconscious slip of the pen or an accident, or perhaps it is a gruesome concatenation of the housemate stabbing that occurred in the American version of *Big Brother.*
*I Want to Tell You* may be fuelled by a calculated self-interest and a "pious self-justification" (Elton 270), but it is forged out of gratitude and a sense of indebtedness. The experience of the generosity of the letter writers is foregrounded by Simpson in his narrative and in the textual reproduction of a selection of the letters he received in gaol. Simpson's expression of gratitude reveals his appreciation and indebtedness to the letter writers for their moral and emotional support. While not all his letters were from fans, twelve of the published letters (including four from children) express an indebtedness to Simpson, gratitude for the unforgettable "pleasure" he has given them, by way of his entertaining performances, his sports achievements and sports commentary, his television commercials and film roles. For years, Simpson has touched many of these people in a very personal public way, in private spaces that are familiar and domestic. They have welcomed him regularly into their homes and he has entered their lives and their hearts through the television set in their lounge rooms, their family rooms. For fans, the thrill of watching Simpson is requited with the thrill of writing to Simpson. A particular ardour sanctifies the dyadic relationship between fan and celebrity, between people who have never met, who do not really know each other and yet feel instinctively bound to each other; emotionally and psychologically comforted by and reliant on each other's virtual presence. Instinctive, ardorous, eroticised, this

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8 See Carole Proudfoot's letter: "Please know that your life has brought years of pleasure to millions of us - that cannot be wiped away" (Simpson 128). For Proudfoot, her past experience of Simpson will always have a pronounced effect her present opinion. She cannot forget what he has done for her. Her use of "wiped away" suggests an intuitive understanding of the media's erasure of Simpson's good guy persona, its impetus to reveal what lies beneath the smiling, friendly surface, as essentially dark, menacing and strangely unfamiliar. Yet, "wiped away" is also an unconscious collocational choice. It is a reference to guilty criminal behaviour, as in the wiping of blood or evidence from the murder weapon, one's clothing, the crime scene, one's hands, if one is a murderer. The opposition of the two interpretations, that wiping away both cleanses and sullies, is an uncanny discursive counterpoint. For further examples of the expression of an indebtedness to Simpson as an entertainer, see the letters written by Linda Keifer, Howie Alford, Jamie B. Brown, the 7/8 grade class of Trinity Lutheran School, Justin Caudill, James Sanford, Fred Young, Jeanne Gould, Kenneth Thrun, Paul Tomasello and Kenya Shoffner (Simpson 5-6, 5-6, 45-46, 47, 48, 52-53, 113, 153, 153-54, 159, 192).
association is essentially a remunerative one. Marshall traces the etymology of the word "celebrity," in order to establish "a genealogy of the use and position of the term" (4), and argues:

celebrity status invokes the message of possibility of a democratic age. The restrictions of a former hierarchy are no longer valid in the new order that is determined by merit and/or the acquisition of wealth. This democratic sense of the term is drawn from the original Latin celebrem, which had not only the connotation of famous but also that of ‘thronged.’ The celebrity, in this sense, is not distant but attainable - touchable by the multitude. The greatness of the celebrity is something that can be shared and, in essence, celebrated loudly and with a touch of vulgar pride.

It is the ideal representation of the triumph of the masses. Concomitantly, celebrity is the potential of capitalism, a celebration of new kinds of values and orders [. . .]. Furthermore, celebrity acknowledges a new sense of the public sphere. Celebrity is derived from the French célèbre, which expresses something ‘well-known, public.’ (6)

What allows or enables a celebrity to be a thronged personage is the virtual access provided to the multitude by the ubiquity of the mass media. However, the media allows more than access. The mass media is responsible for the construction and perpetuation of the value of celebrity, the public's interest in celebrity and the public's desire for celebrity. Susan Hopkins contends: "With the rise of the mass media we all live our lives in the shadow of famous others. These celebrities occupy privileged social and economic positions not through merit, but through media attention" (5). What I add to Hopkins' observation, an important distinction suggested by her article in its entirety, is the ability to attract and secure media attention is considered to be a commendable, meritorious achievement, deserving recognition and reward. A celebrity is a celebrated person who attracts public attention, fame and notoriety, through performance. They do or can do
something that is of note (exceptional, entertaining, compelling), something that makes them fascinating or able to be scripted as fascinating by the media. Through the display of their "talent" for public consumption, they give themselves to their audience and are reimbursed monetarily for being themselves. Celebrities are cultural commodities, marketable items of exchange, who enter into networks of production that trade on the currency of their name. Celebrity is their profession. Their fame becomes a way of life and a conception of self, a condition of their subjectivity and identity. In his article exploring the law pertaining to the commercial value of the celebrity persona, "The Reification of Celebrity: Persona as Property," George M. Armstrong states: "Celebrity persona has become a heritable, alienable 'thing' from which the owner may arbitrarily exclude others. In other words, it has become property" (444). From a public and legal point of view, Simpson's identity is indistinguishable from the attributes of his celebrity persona, his physical likeness, his name and his personal style. It is access to "O.J." as property that Simpson trades in *I Want to Tell You*.

Publishing *I Want to Tell You* in order to accrue the "income" (Simpson 11) requisite for his legal defense, Simpson capitalises on his fame, and he commodifies his misfortune (his wrongful arrest and incarceration) and his alleged misdeed (his alleged perpetration of double murder); his alleged innocence and alleged guilt. Manipulating the apparent causal relations of this publishing equation, we could also say that Simpson's misfortune or his alleged misdeed justifies and necessitates a self-imposed, self-exploitative commodification and capitalisation, a self-reification. This extreme and morally ambiguous measure is his only option under the circumstances. Which is exactly what Simpson says. Whether guilty or innocent, it is the precedent of Simpson's established fame that makes this option possible. The commercial value of his celebrity status
allows Simpson the advantage of such an opportunity. He works the system of commodity 
fetishism, the magic of his celebrity as a cultural commodity, in an attempt to salvage his reputation 
and regain his liberty. Operating according to the logic of his profession, of self as product, 
Simpson speculates on the public's conspicuous consumption of celebrity activity, on his own god-
like secularity. He seems to make no distinction between the triumvirate manifestations of his 
private self, his public-private self and his public self. Simpson's private self is who he is internally, 
with family and friends, a self to which the public is not privy. His public-private self is the semi-
private, intimate self that the public is allowed to see in order to pacify their inquisitive, prying 
desire. It includes his familial roles as father, son, husband, friend and brother. His public self is 
his professional self, who he is in the public domain, on television, in airports, at events, as an 
athlete, a commentator, an actor and an entertainer. His celebrity persona encompasses his 
private-public self and his public (professional) self. In *I Want to Tell You*, Simpson claims, 
thoughtlessly and without guile: "I'm the same guy on and off the screen. I don't play O.J. when I'm 
on TV. I'm always me" (89). It is as if Simpson wants us to believe he holds nothing back from his 
audience, that he is honest, sincere and true, that he has no secrets or no real, private self. 
Simpson denies the splitting or compartmentalisation of self that is a protective mechanism for not 
only the famous paparazzi-prey and the media scrutinised, but for the ordinary person. He seems 
unaware that we all perform ourselves at variance, in differing roles, in differing contexts, with 
family, friends, strangers. We have social, public, domestic, familial and professional selves. The 
nonsense contained in Simpson's misreading or mis-diagnosis of his condition is that he seeks to 
convince us that he is ordinary from an existential position and a textual position that clearly refutes 
he could possibly be like us - one of the multitude.

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9 See "O.J. Simpson Chronology" in *I Want to Tell You* for a list of Simpson's career highlights (Simpson 205-08). Simpson's Hertz contract was still intact at the time of publication (Simpson 206).

10 *Evidence Dismissed* claims "Simpson's success on the gridiron and attractive appearance led to roles in motion pictures" (Lange and Vannatter 115).

11 A comprehensive list of Simpson's film and television credits is provided online on *The Internet Movie Database*. While not all of Simpson's acting work is listed in the "O.J. Simpson Chronology" (Simpson 205-08), the failure to include *Roots* is an obvious and significant oversight.
Puerto Rico in April 1994, just months before Simpson was arrested.\textsuperscript{12} The episode never went to air. Casting Simpson in film and television roles would have been a strategic marketing decision made by the production companies or studios responsible for each project. In the United States, ticket sales and audience share would have been supplemented by Simpson's sports fame. His entertainment crossover would have attracted a crossover audience from his loyal fan base and curious sports fans. Throughout his career, Simpson's public reputation was bolstered by awards for his sports achievements, the coveted Heisman Trophy (1968), The National Football League Most Valuable Player (1975), \textit{The Advertising Age} "Presenter of the Year" (1976), and his induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame (1985). Prior to Brown Simpson's murder, media attention and media coverage in the form of interviews, articles, feature stories and photographs, would have ensured a continued moderate public profile for Simpson. When he was taken into custody on June 17, 1994, Simpson was asked a series of questions as per standard booking procedure (Lange and Vannatter 183). "When asked for his occupation, Simpson replie[d], 'Entertainer'" (Lange and Vannatter 183). It would seem that prosecutor Marcia Clark seriously underestimated Simpson's public profile, his cultural currency, and the effect it would have on the criminal trial. When detective Vannatter informed Clark that Simpson was a suspect in the double murder case, the Deputy District Attorney referred to Simpson, "rather sarcastically," as "'just a has-been football player'" (Lange and Vannatter 42).

As an entertaining object, as spectacle, the celebrity gives and the spectator, the fan, receives. In this sense, the celebrity is the creditor and the spectator is the debtor. A celebrity

\textsuperscript{12} For details regarding \textit{The Frogmen} pilot see \textit{O.J.: The Last Word} (Spence 196-209, 262). See also \textit{Nicole Brown Simpson} (Resnick 143-44, 159).
does not give (perform, appear) without the expectation of a financial return, payment for their services, not unless the transaction is for charity (goodwill) or they attend a social event such as an awards ceremony or a film premiere as a guest. However, in social and charitable instances there are self-promoting benefits for the celebrity – the publicity increases their profile. As the reciprocal rites of the exchange between celebrity and spectator enter the commercial sphere, the giving-taking relation is reversed and the creditor-debtor relation is rectified. The spectator gives financially and the celebrity receives financially, the commercial debt is cleared. Yet theoretically, the pleasure, the joy and emotional rewards generated for the fan by the celebrity can never be repaid. There can be no equivalence in the social transaction. The market value of the abstract, spiritual or qualitative element is impossible to determine or quantify. Surely, the celebrity must get more or take more than money from the social transaction with their fans, such as emotional reinforcement, pride, honour, devotion, attention, recognition, the achievement of fame, itself. In *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, Lewis Hyde claims it is the "[e]motion[al] connection [which] tends to preclude quantitative evaluation" (66). A surplus of willful, uncontainable demand and desire, which can be satisfied but never satiated, perpetuates the circuit of reciprocal co-dependent interactivity between performer (entertainer, spectacle, celebrity) and audience (spectator, fan). What transpires in the fusion of emotional commerce and market economics is that the celebrity will always be, simultaneously, ambivalently, giver and taker, creditor and debtor, aggressive and passive; and the spectator will always be, simultaneously, ambivalently, giver and taker, creditor and debtor, aggressive and passive.

In *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, Jacques Derrida argues that "this equivalence or this ambivalence" of giving-taking challenges the logic of the gift and proves an "extreme difficulty": "If
giving is not simply the contrary or something other than taking, if the gift is not totally foreign to taking, if it is not even contrary to it, then we have no take on the gift” (81). When we give, we receive and take something. When we receive, we give something. There is expectation and obligation. It is the between relation of reciprocity and obligation, the recording of an indebtedness, that "annuls" or "destroy[s]" the nature of the gift, its truth, essence, purity for Derrida (Given Time 14). Claiming the gift to be an impossibility or a paradox, Derrida seeks or yearns for an untainted phenomenality of the gift as altruistic, voluntary and spontaneous, the gift as an idea and a faith rather than a practice of everyday life. We should give what we cannot afford and when we cannot afford to do so. But, as Sahlins observes, "every exchange, as it embodies some coefficient of sociability, cannot be understood in its material terms apart from its social terms" (183).

The sphere of celebrity is cohered by the ambivalent interdependence of commercial operations and social relations, by what Hyde refers to as logos-trade and eros-trade: logos-trade marks the boundary that separates a gift from a commodity, the social sphere from the commercial sphere, and eros-trade erases the boundary (61). Celebrity as an industry, a profession, a practice, a cultural commodity and a cultural condition is reliant on the symbiotic indivisibility of material and social terms. It is my contention that celebrity is a state of consensual prestidigitation. A collusion of the celebrity and the consumer with the market system whereby the logic of consumption, the logos-trade that differentiates and separates individuals commercially, is disguised by the irrational logic of fantasy and illusion, an eros-trade that unites, involves, attracts and binds individuals non-commercially. It is a ploy of proximity and engagement, of intimacy and distance. As the boundaries of the market economy of logos are marked in order for the system of
celebrity-commodity to survive, they are simultaneously erased by an emanation of the imagination and the social, by *eros*, in order for the system of celebrity-commodity to be maintained.

Fan mail and hate mail are a by-product of the celebrity-commodity economy. Fan mail has use value, but as a social phenomenon it does not operate according to the fiscal rules of commodity exchange. It is administered by etiquette, by the voluntary-obligatory spirit of a gift economy. A fan letter is gift-like. It is given as a token of admiration, respect and affection. To write it and send it is a phatic gesture that encourages alliance, "friendship and intercourse" (Mauss 11). Hate mail is a poisonous gift, a sign of anger, disrespect, disaffection, danger. It establishes an adversarial relation. The writer identifies themselves as an enemy, positioning the addressee as an enemy. In the writing and sending, the giving of such a gift, the giver acquires a certain power over the recipient – the power to wound them emotionally and spiritually. A celebrity has an obligation to accept, read and respond to their fan mail. As a public figure, it is part of their role to reciprocate the attentions of their fans with a formal, written reply. In response, they should express their thanks and gratitude, answer questions and comply with requests for favours, where possible, such as a letter, an autograph, autographed merchandise, a signed photograph, an appearance or attendance at a charity, school or sporting club event. A reply to a fan letter is a gift given in return. To show courtesy and good manners, the written response must demonstrate a certain respect for the initial giver and their epistolary gift, and a respect for the spirit in which the response is given in return. It must honour the system of *prestation* and counter-*prestation*. Mauss advises, in accordance with the spirit of the gift: "In the distinctive sphere of our social life we can never remain at rest. We must always return more than we receive; the return is always bigger and

\[13\] See chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis for a discussion of how Simpson deals with his hate mail.
more costly” (Mauss 63). Or, the return should at least appear to be so. For gift exchange is about appearances. Its social, moral and economic implications regulate the formal rights and duties of the practice. The transaction must be mutually beneficial (Mauss 80). Honour and prestige (a self-interested gain) is awarded by the show of a magnanimous, unselfish care and concern for others. Each step in the process of exchange has meaning and significance. It is calculated.

A celebrity is expected to meet their fan mail obligations without charging a fee for the transaction; but that does not mean it is an altruistic or a gratuitous practice. As most celebrities could not possibly read and answer all their fan mail, someone must be employed and paid to do it for them, to take care of it or to at least assist them with it. So, in a way, the management of their fan mail costs them, it consumes their money, their valuable time and energy, but it is an investment. In light of this "spirit," or this political economy, a response to a fan that seems personalised and individualised pays. It displays a great courtesy and respect for the recipient; it pays a great courtesy and respect to the recipient; and it increases the worth of the letter, especially if it carries the authentic signature of the celebrity. To give something greater in return also reflects on the honour and character of the celebrity. It registers their degree of commitment to their job and their fans. It confirms they care and are willing to devote their valuable time and energy in service to their public. Inversely, to refuse to reciprocate is an act of defiance, of hostility and illwill that dishonours and disrespects those involved. More than neglect, it shows a disregard for the fan and for the bond they share. It dishonours the celebrity, the system of exchange, the initial giver and their gift. It disappoints the fan. It may even sever their connection. As fan mail

14 Depending on the celebrity’s affiliations, their fan mail will be processed by the television network, their sporting association, their management company, their record company, their agent, their publicist, their family, a personal assistant or a staff of assistants.
symbolises a system and a scheme that supports the celebrity emotionally and financially, to refuse to reciprocate is bad business. A response to a fan letter is a direct marketing tool. It must fulfill social and emotional desire, and economic demands in order to ensure one's good repute, the spirit of the gift, and its scheme of gratitude remain in circulation and are perpetuated. A word-processed form letter with a scanned authentic signature and variable fields, to allow the epistle to be relatively personalised and individualised, is the most effective and efficient way to meet these criteria. As letters from celebrities are memorabilia, a handwritten note is rare and especially prized. A letter signed by an assistant on a celebrity's behalf is a let down, bad manners. Despite their job, they are a nobody. It suggests a blocking or a refusal of access, acknowledgement, connection. It can provoke anger and a sense of alienation.

The obligations and obligatory practices of fan mail adhere to a form of social contract. They are the standard operating procedures of a system of social contact and exchange. A code of conduct, this is what is expected of a celebrity by their fans and of fans by their celebrity. It is also what society expects of celebrities and fans, morally and economically. A celebrity is a non-government appointed public servant and they serve at the pleasure and discretion of the public. There is a morality and a politics to the general maintenance of fan mail and hate mail. Reciprocity by a celebrity cannot escape being determined in part by an element of self-interest. As Raymond Firth observes: "'The main emphasis of the fulfillment of obligation lies, as the work of Mauss himself has suggested, in the social sanctions - the desire to continue useful economic relations, the maintenance of prestige and power'" (qtd. in Sahlins 155).15 And while fan mail may seem

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15 Sahlins cites Raymond Firth, Economics of the New Zealand Maori, 2nd ed. (Wellington: R.E. Owen, Government Printer, 1959) 421.
voluntary rather than obligatory, there is a decided self-interest in its production - the hope and desire that their idol, someone famous and important, will take the time to notice them and return the interest with interest. From the point of view of the fan, what they receive in return will always seem much more significant than what they give.

The management and processing of Simpson's fan mail and hate mail would have been delegated to his trusted and loyal personal assistant, Cathy Randa. A comment made by Simpson in *I Want to Tell You* confirms this responsibility: "[t]wo years ago if somebody wrote me a racist letter, my assistant, Cathy, would not have even shown it to me" (112). In a section of his narrative in which he explains his attempt to answer the mail he received in gaol, Simpson highlights the fact that Randa has been with him for twenty years (9). This detail indicates Simpson's reliance on Randa's expertise in this area, the strength of their relationship and his complete faith in her ability. Her previous censoring of Simpson's mail suggests her protective role as a sentinel, a contamination filter and a discriminating *entrepôt* for the famous man who is her employer. It is Randa who, on Simpson's behalf, "recruits" the help of a group of volunteers when she and Simpson are logistically overwhelmed by the unprecedented influx of his mail (Simpson 9). The "Mail Volunteers" included members of Simpson's family, his friends and employees, as well as members of Randa's family, amongst others. An end section of *I Want to Tell You* is dedicated to the seventy-six "Mail Volunteers" who "sorted, categorized and read the 300,000 letters that were sent to O.J." (Simpson 201). The name of each volunteer is listed and forty-three of the volunteers appear in a group photograph taken on the front lawn of Simpson's Rockingham home (see fig. 3)
Fig. 3. The "Mail Volunteers" (Simpson 202-03).
(Simpson 201-04). This verbal and visual record is a textual acknowledgement in recognition of
their labour and their loyalty. As a tribute, it registers Simpson's debt of gratitude and articulates
his thanks for their voluntary labour and voluntary loyalty. The very real and vital support of these
"Mail Volunteers" is dependent upon a social economy. This group represents an interconnected
network of family, friends and colleagues, relations, regulated by the generosities and alliances of
social exchange. The moral obligation to help is based on their personal ties to Simpson; and this
voluntary-obligatory practice, an emotional commerce, reinforces and strengthens the relations that
bind them to Simpson, bind Simpson to them and bind them to each other.

As they volunteer their assistance, the presence and work of the "Mail Volunteers" operates
within a gift economy. Because it is voluntary and unpaid, their labour has significance and worth.
In the spirit of the gift, they are esteemed as individuals, their contribution is highly prized and the
bond it generates and celebrates is sanctified. Their time and energy is given to Simpson as a gift.
It is a mark of courtesy, respect and affection. Simpson reciprocates with a ceremonious and
public denotation that credits their invaluable individual role in the production of his fundraising
memoir. The identification of each volunteer by name and by their physical appearance signifies
their individualism, control and freedom of will as a donor. As a memento, this receipt enables the
voluntary-obligatory giver to say unashamedly, proudly, publicly, unselfishly: "I gave that" (Hyde
79). Hyde notes: "In communities drawn together by gift exchange, 'status,' 'prestige,' or 'esteem'
take the place of cash renumeration (sic)" (78). It is Simpson's lack of available cash resources,
his financial need that makes him reliant on the generosity of these volunteers and the spirit of a

16 Although the names of forty-five "Mail Volunteers" are listed as being in the photograph, two
denote babies held by their parents.

17 "A gift economy allows its own form of individualism: to be able to say 'I gave that'" (Hyde 79).
gift economy. He cannot afford to pay them money for their services. To do so would defeat the purpose of his book business, his authorial labour. A reciprocal giving gesture, the textual acknowledgement of the "Mail Volunteers," what they have done, what they have given, is a thank you and a form of payment that in place of cash remuneration confers upon them the status and prestige of Simpson's esteem for their kindness and courageous commitment. As the value of the return, the repayment, must seem to be greater, more costly, this tribute is performed officially, formally and publicly. At the time of publication, it may have been the only possible way Simpson could have thanked each of them. A private thank you, made in person, would have to wait until his acquittal and release. However, Simpson's acquittal and release, the result of a well-funded defense and the goal of their team effort, would have been considered reward enough for their voluntary mail-handling industriousness.

Simpson's "recruits" are not so many in number as to seem an amorphous, impersonal front, but there is enough of them to present a force. Amassed visually and verbally, the textual presence of the "Mail Volunteers" asserts Simpson's commitment to ensure each letter sent to him would be read by him or someone close to him. That each letter would receive the attention, time, care, courtesy and respect, it so deserved. The quantity of assistance required demonstrates the extremity of the challenge, the almost impossibility of the task, and reinforces Simpson's understatement: "I soon discovered that it was just about impossible to personally answer the tens of thousands of letters I was receiving" (9). The restricted size of the group of "Mail Volunteers" keeps it personal, close, busy, confidential, relatively private, yet substantial enough to be effective. According to Hyde, this limitation is a necessary condition of a gift economy: "gift exchange is an economy of small groups. When emotional ties are the glue that holds a community together, its
size has an upper limit" (89). Simpson is the nucleus of this exchange network, labouring for him, in his name, for his honour and in his honour. Simpson not only utilises the postal services of the "Mail Volunteers," their textual presence is a character reference that attests to Simpson's virtue and his innocence. This spatial dedication in honour of the "Mail Volunteers" is a testament to Simpson's esteem for them and their commitment. However, as it is Schiller who narrates these pages, naming each volunteer and captioning the photograph, it is also a testament to the mail volunteers' esteem for Simpson. Their dedication is in his honour.

Contextualising the photograph of the "Mail Volunteers," Schiller states: "O.J. suggested that this picture be taken outside his home in Brentwood, California" (Simpson 201). The exact location of this shot is the front lawn of Simpson's Rockingham residence or "estate." The subjects are positioned in front of the house facing Rockingham Avenue. The exterior detail of Simpson's Tudor-style house can be seen in the background, above the heads of the volunteers in the back

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18 Citing Stack, *All Our Kin*, Hyde notes:

The kinship network Carol Stack describes in the Flats numbered about a hundred people. A group formed on ties of affection could, perhaps, be as large as a thousand people, but one thousand must begin to approach the limit. Our feelings close down when the numbers get too big. Strangers passing on the street in big cities avoid each other's eyes not to show disdain but to keep from being overwhelmed by excessive human contact. When we speak of communities developed and maintained through an emotional commerce like that of gifts, we are therefore speaking of something of limited size. (89)

Totaling seventy-six, the number of "Mail Volunteers" comes in just below one hundred. Simpson's text includes 108 letters and features 111 first person narratives. The additional three narrative voices belong to Simpson, Schiller and Simpson's son, Justin, whose Father's Day message of 1993 is reproduced in *I Want to Tell You*. Hyde adds: "The exceptions to this rule are those communities which, like the community of science, are organized around quite specific concerns. The group that does not pretend to support the wider social life of its members - feeding them, healing them, getting them married, and so forth - can be connected through gift exchange and still be quite large" (Hyde 89). Such an exception is the more than 300,000-strong community of letter writers organised by a specific concern for Simpson.

19 I have used a crime scene evidence map included in *In Pursuit of Justice* to determine the coordinating features of this photograph (Los Angeles Times Staff 18).
row. Part of the paved driveway and the garage appear to the right hand side of the frame. The subjects smile as they pose to commemorate their active support of Simpson. But there is something deeply disturbing at work here. This is a haunted space. On June 13, 1994, Detective Vannatter pronounced this location the second crime scene, "an extension of the Bundy crime scene," and his partner, Detective Lange concurred (Lange and Vannatter 31). Where these people sit, stand, smile and scatter samples of Simpson's mail, Vannatter found a trail of suspicious blood drops; evidence samples he believed would convict Simpson of double murder (Lange and Vannatter 32). This location is where on June 17, 1994, following the "Bronco Chase," a fugitive Simpson, armed, frightened, exhausted and suicidal, was besieged in a white Ford Bronco, by a SWAT team, Los Angeles Police Department officers, police vehicles, helicopters and the media. This is where Simpson finally surrendered, in this vestibular space between his front door and his front gate, in this in-between space connecting the public and the private, serving as both an entrance and an exit. For Simpson, it is a place in which the familiar was made terrifyingly strange and incomprehensible on that day and forever after in memory. Taken after these aforementioned events and before the criminal trial, the photograph of the "Mail Volunteers" reproduced in *I Want to Tell You* is staged in-between, during a vestibular temporality, while everyone is awaiting. This image is a palimpsest. It writes over bad memories with the love, affection and hope that these faces symbolise; and yet, this new, shiny surface will never mask and can never erase what lies beneath it, behind it, and before it, historically. It is an attempt -

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20 As mentioned in the "Introduction" to this thesis, the "assault" on Simpson's residence included the deployment of "twenty-three SWAT officers and four sergeants" (Lange and Vannatter 166), a "vehicle assault team," four snipers, a "two-man negotiating team [. . .] and 'one full element' of well-trained Metro officers" (Lange and Vannatter 167). It is also noted, anecdotally by Lange and Vannatter, that the number of media and Los Angeles Police Department helicopters monitoring Simpson's movements from the air resembled "a film clip from *Apocalypse Now*" (166).
Simpson's attempt - to rehabilitate the site, to decriminalise it and rememorise it as one of harmony instead of one of conflict and chaos. In a strange and impossible twist of crime scene investigative practice, Simpson's photographic "suggestion" is an anti-preservation order designed not to protect the scene from contamination and compromise, but to erase its contamination and compromise. An anti-preservationist rewriting is foregrounded in the reanchoring caption which does not name the site as Simpson's "Rockingham estate" as it was denoted during the police investigation and the criminal trial by the media and in common parlance. Instead the location is inscribed with a personal and domestic appellation as "outside his home in Brentwood, California" (Simpson 201). This photographic reclamation scene is what Simpson looks forward to, what he hopes to return to, his beloved Rockingham home and the friendly, comforting familiar faces of those he loves and those who love him. It could almost be a homecoming tableau, a projected ideal of what he will see, be greeted and welcomed by, the next time he enters the drive. Subsequently razed in 1998 by a new owner, Simpson's Rockingham estate is a place that now only exists in dreams or nightmares as a non-existent, non-corporeal memorial site ("Hot Property" 9).

Simpson's home at 360 North Rockingham Avenue, Brentwood, had a history of happy times and deeply sad times. Simpson purchased the house in 1977 when he was married to his first wife, Marquerite (Simpson 206). Simpson's daughter, Aaren, his third child with Marquerite, drowned in the back yard swimming pool in 1979, just over one month before her second birthday (Simpson 206-07). Simpson retained the house in the divorce settlement with Marquerite in 1980. He and Brown Simpson were married in the back yard on February 2, 1985 (Simpson 207). The Rockingham estate was the venue for numerous planned and impromptu gatherings of family and friends, as the photographs included in I Want to Tell You attest. A double page feature spread of
Fig. 4. The Simpsons' Fourth of July party (Simpson 172-73).
messy amateur shots shows a Fourth of July celebration at the Simpsons (Simpson 172-73). Their convivial party guests drink, swim, tan, talk, eat and laugh, unaware of the camera. Only Simpson and Brown Simpson pose and smile for the photographer (see fig. 4). Simpson's explanatory narration conveys his pride and joy as the host of the annual event:

Every year I had a Fourth of July party at my home. We never invited fewer than 300 of our friends and family, kids and adults alike. Everyone who was invited was thrown into the swimming pool as part of the yearly ritual. That's Nicole on my back some years ago. It was an all-day and all-night affair, with lots of food and music. (172)

Simpson retained the house in the divorce settlement with Brown Simpson in 1992. While in gaol, Simpson dreams his youngest daughter, Sydney is "grown up and getting married" in the back yard of his Rockingham Avenue home where he and Brown Simpson were married (Simpson 20).

Brown Simpson and Simpson are reunited and Sydney wears her mother's wedding dress in the wish fulfillment dream (Simpson 20). Unable to meet mortgage repayments, Simpson was forced to sell the property in 1997 ("Hot Property" 9). Asked how he felt about the demolition of the Rockingham property, his home for twenty years, Simpson reportedly said, "It's not my house, and I could care less. It's part of my past" ("Hot Property" 9).

The textual reiteration of the quantity of mail Simpson received in gaol, more than 300,000 letters from June 18, 1994, to December 1994, emphasises the amount of work involved in its tending and reading. Processing Simpson's fan mail and hate mail is a laborious obligatory practice. It is a labour-intensive form of industriousness, demanding physical, mental and emotional exertion. It requires time, attention, stamina and endurance. And while incarcerated,
Simpson is happy to devote himself, his abundant spare time and idle energy to his mail. In the act of receiving and reading his mail, Simpson cares for the letters and their writers; and through the composition of *I Want to Tell You* he makes a heartfelt written response. Simpson graciously gives what he can of his physical, mental and emotional resources. The self-interested gain of the task, the abstract (spiritual) reward of his obligatory good deed, is that Simpson's epistolic activity is a respite, a welcome, beneficial and consolatory time-consuming, energy-consuming diversion for him. The letters oppose the reality of his daily existence in custody as Los Angeles County inmate 4013970, his demonised, criminalised, despised, reviled, worthless, anonymous status. Charged and enriched with a phatic affect, feeling and warmth, his fan mail and hate mail not only encourages Simpson to respond, it dares him to speak out. Foregrounding the number of volunteers required to meet the epistolic demands of his mail, like the repetitive foregrounding of the excessive amount of letters Simpson received, also works to highlight the enormity of Simpson's popularity and prestige. Not only the effect of the attraction of his need or his fame-turned-to-infamy, the more than 300,000 letters received by Simpson are a sign of his mythological status within a market society, in which "getting rather than giving is the mark of a substantial person" (Hyde xiii). What Simpson gets is a validation of his value and worth within a public sphere. His substance is demonstrated and articulated by an adjudicating audience who vote overwhelmingly in his favour, in and for Simpson's honour. In his "Foreword," Schiller foregrounds the extent of Simpson's popularity and prestige as a geographical and demographic claim (vii). He stakes out the vast range of Simpson's renown as a democratic, ubiquitous, all encompassing cross-cultural terrain: "This book began with 300,000 letters from men, women, and children of all ages, occupations, national and ethnic backgrounds, from all fifty states and many countries of the world, who chose to write to a man they had never met (Schiller, "Foreword" vii). That this one
sentence paragraph, four lines long, stands alone, first and foremost, suggests the importance of what it states. It is a solemn observance of the impact and effect of a generous flurry of epistolic deliverance. Its priority is reflective of an eucharistic utterance, a short prayer registering vocally that for which we should be truly thankful. Schiller officiates over this rite. He says grace for what Simpson has received and for what we are about to receive. On the first page of his narrative, in the second paragraph, Simpson repeats, lines outs, the geographical claim made by Schiller on his behalf: "People wrote not only in the United States but from all over the world" (3).

Abundant fan mail is not only a measure of a celebrity's fame. Its receipt is also connoted as a marker of what they deserve. It is symbolic restitution for what the celebrity has given to society. The revenue-raising rhetoric of the television evangelist preaches that in order to receive we must first give, and that the abstract returns of our giving will save us, the sinful and the repentant. This charitable self-interest is a holy pact, the law of God's work, which is why Simpson keeps score. Woven into the "social fabric" of the giving-taking-giving exchange is the simultaneous expression of "religious, legal, moral, and economic" concerns or "threads" (Mauss 1). Simpson calculates that "[o]ver ninety-six percent of the letters [he received] were positive in nature" (9), and admits: "[t]here was obviously a small minority of racist letters" (9). Given these figures, it does not necessarily equate that less than 4% percent of Simpson's mail was negative. Simpson received mail that was "good, bad, and indifferent" (Simpson 10). However, it does mean that of the "more than 300,000" letters Simpson received, approximately 288,000 were positive and twelve thousand
were not positive (Simpson 3). Although the number of positive letters far outweighs the twelve thousand "bad, and indifferent" (Simpson 9), twelve thousand letters is still a substantial amount. Simpson correlates these public opinion figures to the truth of his innocence or guilt. The number of positive letters (288,000) is indicative of Simpson's good-repute, representative of his friends and supporters. The much lesser amount (twelve thousand) is indicative of non-committal indifference or his ill repute, representative of his enemies and detractors. Of the 108 sample letters published in *I Want to Tell You*, ninety-five are "positive in nature" (Simpson 9), eight are defamatory, five are racist, one is indifferent. Statistically, Simpson's guilt is a long shot. There is a less than 4% chance he is guilty or will be convicted as guilty in the criminal trial. Although the latter, the legal ramifications should be of greater concern for Simpson, what the public thinks of him is of great importance to him. For Simpson, and certainly in the maelstrom of the "great Simpson conversation" (Thaler xvi), conjecture replaced truth. Belief based on faith rather than evidence generated an instance of what Hardie calls "a false kind of knowing: one based on presumption" (Hardie 45), a statistical probability and panic. The incoherence or ambiguity of this logic is the result of a "tension between authentic and false cultural value" (Marshall xi), a theoretical condition of the "exchange value cleaved from use value" of the celebrity sign (Marshall xi). Simpson claims the false value of his mail as authentic and true, because it suits his purposes and supports his case; it has a discursive and textual exchange value. Rhetorically, Simpson’s positive fan mail resounds with the praise of an epideictic oratorical reasoning, his nobility and virtue. Conversely, Simpson’s hate mail resounds with the blame of an epideictic oratorical

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21 I have used a round figure of 300,000 letters, although Simpson did claim to have received "more than 300,000" (3).

22 Baldick notes that epideictic oratory is "intended for display at public occasions" (71).
reasoning. It decries his vice, the vicious, base and evil nature of his crime. Textually, reciprocally, Simpson praises his positive and supportive fan mail. He presents it as noble and virtuous. In contrast, his hate mail is seen as vituperative, vicious, evil and base, deserving of blame and contrition.

Simpson's mail is resonant. Its sympathetic presence, individually and collectively, amplifies and re-sounds Simpson's narrative utterance. It also has resonance of the kind Stephen Greenblatt defines in another context as: “the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand” (42). This phatic power is felt and registered by Simpson as emotionally and commercially potent. The framing display of letters in *I Want to Tell You* exhibits this resonant force for us to experience as readers; to contemplate and interrogate not as voyeurs but as cultural anthropologists or ethnographers, interested and curious viewers. Simpson's exposed and precarious existential position makes his literary practice a risky business, a hazardous proposition. His uncensored narrative willingness, unprotected textual openness and emotional fragility only heightens his vulnerability, laying him open to attack. Simpson dreads censure and yet he risks it. And this may be what generates the resonance of the letters and Simpson's text, and our subsequent fascination. For, as Greenblatt notes, "precariousness is a rich source of resonance. Thomas Greene, who has written a sensitive book on what he calls the ‘vulnerable text,’ suggests that the symbolic wounding to which literature is prone may confer upon it power and fecundity" (43). Simpson's wounding, symbolic and actual,

is his source of narrative power. The bearing and baring of his pseudo-tragic vilification has the potential of an archetypal heroics.

As possessions, collected and displayed by Simpson, his mail also has the power to elicit wonder, as Greenblatt describes it: "the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention" (42). As readers, we can see and intellectualise the letters to Simpson as curios, surprising and strange objects. But we cannot feel the effects of *thaumasmus* (a wonder worth exclaiming) directly by reading each letter. We need Simpson's mediating rapture to glimpse the exultation and its evocation. For exultation and arrest is dependent on the conditions of the moment, on Simpson's fragile and vulnerable emotional state, on the time and place of reception as it occurs, the contextual present tense. His autobiographical and curatorial function is critical to our reception of his mail. It is Simpson's accompanying narrative report that arranges the letters and places them within a realm of wonder, within a "cult of wonder" (Greenblatt 50). Simpson's rhetoric foregrounds the overwhelming, unexpected and delightful occurrence of his mail, its diversity, beauty, absurdity, oddity; the uniqueness of each individual utterance, the excessive abundance and textual "superfluity" (Greenblatt 50) of the letters *en masse*. As Simpson includes 108 of the more than 300,000 letters, an approximate 0.036% of Simpson's epistolary collection is on display in *I Want to Tell You*. Simpson revels in the reflection of such "prestigious property" (Greenblatt 50) on his sense of worth, the admiration, the greatness, conferred upon him as the possessor of such "excessive," "surprising," "literally outlandish," "prodigious," "rare and precious things" (Greenblatt

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24 Lanham defines "*thaumasmus*" as "Admiratio. Exclamation of wonder" (*Rhetorical Terms* 150). The online scholarly project, *Silva Rhetoricae* defines "*thaumasmus*" as: "To marvel at something rather than to state it in a matter of fact way."
50). We may even consider his text akin, symbolically, to a wonder-cabinet, for as Greenblatt notes,

[the wonder-cabinets of the Renaissance were at least as much about possession as display. The wonder derived not only from what could be seen but from the sense that the shelves and cases were filled with unseen wonders, all the prestigious property of the collector. In this sense, the cult of wonder originated in close conjunction with a certain type of resonance, a resonance bound up with the evocation not of an absent culture but of the great man's superfluity of rare and precious things. Those things were not necessarily admired for their beauty; the marvelous was bound up with the excessive, the surprising, the literally outlandish, the prodigious. (50)

Simpson's verbal report is as important as our sighting of the wondrous objects, if not more so, for we do not really see the physical letters, or even reproductions of them. We see only the words reprinted on the pages of Simpson's text, arranged, organised, tidied up, sanitised, possibly censored; and yet they still generate a sense of wonder. Simpson relies heavily on, "invests" heavily in, an archaic method of "textual transmission" (Greenblatt 51) to convey the affective and effective wonder derived from the letters. According to Greenblatt,

[The experience of wonder was not initially regarded as essentially or even primarily visual; reports of marvels had a force equal to the seeing of them. Seeing was important and desirable, of course, but precisely in order to make possible reports, which then circulated as virtual equivalents of the marvels themselves. (50)
Their particular textual arrangement within Simpson's memoir encases them as acquisitions, trophies. Each letter is mounted separately and protectively on the page. It is literally framed by an elongated dash above and below, and by the vertical edges of the page leaf. Each letter has a formal border: it is indented from the left and right justified layout of Simpson's narrative, and justified to the left of the page. The letters are not merchandised but their decorative display merchandises Simpson's narrative, markets and sells *I Want to Tell You* as a destination site of sights, a galleria. Simpson himself circulates amongst the items, his items, as a guide, responding to them, interacting with them and interpreting them. He mediates between us and what we are able to see or what he allows us to see. Simpson's text opens his mail to display and gives it the "power […] to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world" (Greenblatt 42). But it is Simpson's narrative that entices it "to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged" (Greenblatt 42). Simpson's narrative presence determines whether this openness offers an access that is revelatory or insightful. As both curator and cultural artefact, it is Simpson who packages and commodifies the textual exhibit.

On a pragmatic level, *I Want to Tell You* is a linguistic response to the questioning content of the letters. On a more intuitive, visceral or abstract level, Simpson's narrative and the composition of his text as a whole, in fact its very existence as a textual object, is an arousal response to the wonder excited in him by the letters. It is Simpson's narrative exclamation of wonder and his textual display of collected epistolic artefacts that makes me understand the letters to be gifts given to Simpson in a spirit of generosity, rather than products or commodities with remunerative benefits. Although what they eventually are is exactly that. It is only after their literal reproduction, their syntactic transposition within Simpson's text that they signify as articles of
commerce within a network of textual functions. Placing each letter in his text with thanks and
gratitude, Simpson accepts each letter as a gift. He receives his mail, individually and collectively,
as the beneficiary of the generosity it represents. This complex and contradictory classification of
Simpson's letters as gifts, as textual donations to his cause, is contingent on the conditions of the
textual moment, on Simpson's precariousness and the resonant circumstances of time and place,
the context in which the letters as favours are consumed and utilised by Simpson. As he
acknowledges, Simpson is only too aware that he is the beneficiary of the text's economy. He is
the one who stands to profit most from the giving-taking exchange of texts, artefacts and money,
and from what is essentially a fraudulent and fallacious intimate arrangement, the giving and taking
of counterfeit candour. The intricate steps of this productive process of emotional commerce are
traced in the next chapter.
Something Other than Taking

*I Want to Tell You* demonstrates a hybrid fusion of gift and market economics. Simpson's commodification of his emotional labour is an agonistic and pragmatic "making do" (*bricolage*) (Certeau xv) that utilises the marketing structures of his celebrity. As phatic objects with phatic objectives, Simpson's fan mail mobilises the practices and arrangements of a threefold giving-taking-giving exchange. However, it is Simpson's consideration for the customary transfers of social reciprocity and his textual configuration of these contractual relations that sanctions the traffic in artefacts (letters, names, words, affect) operating in his memoir as a circuit of trades marked by voluntary-obligatory negotiations and spontaneous-calculated gestures. A fan letter sent to Simpson, Los Angeles County Jail inmate 4013970, signifies the giving of time and energy to Simpson. It represents a pronounced interest in him and a certain level of regard for him. Simpson's reception and reading of each letter is an obligatory response. It is a reciprocal giving of time, energy, interest and regard from Simpson to each letter writer. Answering his mail is the material realisation of Simpson's reciprocity. He agonises over his incapacity to personally fulfill his obligations when his mail reaches the "tens of thousands" (Simpson 9). Unable to reply to each individual letter writer, Simpson responds collectively, accordingly with a very public display of gratitude and indebtedness. The function of Simpson's memoir as a defense fundraising device reconfigures the 108 letters published in *I Want to Tell You* as donations to his cause. Simpson consumes his mail as potlatch; he reads and uses it as satiating and nourishing offerings of goodwill. Its inclusion in his memoir initiates a potlatch arrangement, "an interplay of voluntary allowances that counts on reciprocity and organizes a social network articulated by the 'obligation
Simpson's memoir articulates, inventively and ingeniously, the active, obligatory engagements of a process of circuitous reciprocity. In his textual performance Simpson foregrounds the ethical and moral aspects of the generosity that enables *I Want to Tell You*. However, the structural practice that underwrites Simpson's memoir as a package registers his indebtedness and calculation as a social enterprise. In "Gift and Commodity," John Frow argues: "the forms of calculation and indebtedness that are set in motion in gift economies must be understood to be structural and prior to all 'ethical' forms" (124). I contend, however, that the ethical and structural forms in gift economies are interdependent and contemporaneous, inseparably, irrevocably social and personal. As Frow explains:

> Gifts are precisely not *objects* at all, but transactions and social relations. [. . .] As an order of social relations the gift economy is intimately bound up with the forms of the person as they are diversely constituted and as it constitutes them. It is a dimension of a *moral* economy: a patterning of *mores*, customary ways of behaving and being, the domain of human life that Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*. ("Gift and Commodity" 124)

The momentum of the gift makes the gift, in principle, an elusive or "ambivalent category, oscillating between the poles of generosity and calculation" (Frow, "Gift and Commodity" 124), altruism and self-interest. This equivalence or this ambivalence of ethical, moral, structural, social and personal phenomena may be another aspect of the "extreme difficulty" of the gift.

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acknowledged by Derrida in *Given Time* (81).

Pre-production, in production and post-production, *I Want to Tell You* is indebted to an interdependent and co-dependent "division of labour" (Mauss 1).2 I have identified an imbricate chronological ten-step program of *prestation* and counter-*prestation* that is crucial to the viability of Simpson's text: the letter writer gives, takes and asks of Simpson; Simpson receives, takes and gives to the letter writer; Simpson replies, thanks, repays, gives and requests of the letter writer; the letter writer receives and takes from Simpson; the letter writer gives to Simpson; Simpson receives, accepts and takes from the letter writer; Simpson gives, thanks and repays the letter writer; Simpson replies, responds, thanks, repays, reciprocates, gives and asks of the letter writer and the consumer-reader; the consumer-reader gives, receives and takes from Simpson; Simpson receives and takes from the consumer-reader. These giving-taking trading praxes generate an ethical, moral, structural, social and personal economy that enables *I Want to Tell You* as a commercial phenomenon. Each of these aspects - ethical, moral, structural, social, personal and commercial - in operational combination formulate the political economy of the personal gain of Simpson's authorship. Simpson's personal gain is public assistance, which will be used to subsidise his defense of the criminal charge of double homicide. In this chapter I undertake an archeological survey of Simpson's text, a historical surveillance that traces its evolution and figuration as a commodity contingent on the ambivalent, charitable spirit of the gift. What follows is a dramatisation of each stage in the chronological ten-step program of voluntary-obligatory giving-taking-giving exchanges that contribute to the production of Simpson's defense fundraising memoir.

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2 According to Mauss, gift exchange "is nothing less than the division of labour itself" (1).
On Friday June 17, 1994, through the lens of the media, Americans witness the police pursuit of Simpson (the "Bronco Chase") and his subsequent arrest for the double murder of Brown Simpson and Goldman. Arraigned and charged, Simpson is detained at the Los Angeles County Jail pending *The People of the State of California v. Orenthal James Simpson* criminal trial. A dissident response to this public defamation ensues in the form of a private, epistolic backlash. A response mobilised, perhaps, by Simpson's "suicide note," "To Whom It May Concern, press or public" (Schiller and Willwerth 67), read by Kardashian during a media conference held at 5:00 p.m. on June 17, prior to the "Bronco Chase" and Simpson's arrest. Letters addressed to Simpson begin to arrive at the Los Angeles County Jail immediately. Simpson writes: "I first heard about my mail when a female deputy sheriff, on my second day in jail, said, 'We've got a problem. We've got too many letters for you.' They had received more letters for me in one day than they had for all the other prisoners, some 6,000 prisoners" (3). And as the letters accumulate to more than 300,000, imaginatively and actually, it is here, in this phatic inducement, that *I Want to Tell You* begins as a story; in the behind-the-scenes activity foregrounded by Simpson and Schiller in their narratives, and by the appearance of the letters in the text.

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3 Simpson's claims are corroborated in *American Tragedy*: a female deputy, a lieutenant, told Simpson, 'We've got too many letters for you.' O.J. Simpson was not the first celebrity to spend time in the L.A. County Jail, but his mail amazed the staff. During his first weekend behind bars, he received more letters than all the other inmates combined. (Schiller and Willwerth 112-13) *In Pursuit of Justice* reports: "Letters poured into Simpson's private post office box (at first, he received 3,500 a day)" (*Los Angeles Times* Staff 45).
Step 1: The letter writer gives, takes and asks of Simpson

Provoked by Simpson's arrest, his incarceration, his "suicide note," a letter is written to him and sent to the Los Angeles County Jail. As the contents of the published letters reveal, it is a voluntary-obligatory act of communication attracted by Simpson's perceived need for emotional support, although some writers did include money with their letters (Simpson 9). The arrival of each letter signifies the time, energy, attention and care already given to Simpson by each writer. What is expressed in each letter - love, condolences, support, concern or anger - is also given to Simpson linguistically. Some writers ask Simpson to reply, to reassure them their "efforts [. . .] are not in vain" (Simpson 10). As physical objects and textual representatives for their writers, all the letters engage Simpson phatically, emotionally and materially; they require Simpson's care, they demand his time, energy and attention.

At this originating point in the creation of I Want to Tell You we can posit an answer to Mauss' question regarding the spirit of the gift: "What force is there in the thing given which compels the recipient to make a return?" (1). The phatic force of each letter compels Simpson to react and respond. It sets in motion the reciprocity of a gift economy. The momentum of the phatic force of the letters en masse drives Simpson to make a return on a grand scale, with the publishing of a book and an audio book abridgement. As to Mauss' additional inquiry regarding the spirit of the gift: "what is the principle whereby the gift received has to be repaid?" (1). It is the principles of moral and social economic relations as they affect honour, liability, conscience, civility and appearances. As a celebrity, for Simpson to deny the reciprocal rights and duties of the exchange would, in effect, bring additional disgrace and dishonour to his public image. His agonistic adherence and spiritual devotion to the etiquette of fan mail correspondence is a textual prostration
of self, a mendicant pose designed to show he is upright and upstanding in character. Averse to inertia, the obligatory spirit of the gift guides Simpson’s authorial emotional labour and his book business.\(^4\) Obligation is an active and activating force. Defying "isolation and stagnation" (Mauss 80), the momentum of the epistolic emotional labour towards Simpson generates a network of "alliance, solidarity, communion" (Sahlins 169), "friendship and intercourse" (Mauss 11), between writers, between each sender and the recipient, between those who give and take. The mobilisation of gratitude obliges Simpson to accept and reciprocate. In its assertion of civil, moral, social and economic implications, the gift is a tactic. Its contractual arrangements appeal to Simpson’s personal and professional principles, his ethical concerns and self-proclaimed code of conduct. He states: "I have never been in the position of being a recipient. I've always been a giver" (Simpson 189).

\textbf{Step 2: Simpson receives, takes and gives to the letter writer}

Incarcerated, awaiting trial, Simpson receives an extraordinary number of letters that have been composed and dispatched with him in mind. Receiving each letter, he takes and accepts what is offered linguistically and symbolically, be it a prayer, a poem, condolences, anger, love, support or concern. In so doing, he devotes (gives) his time, attention and energy to each letter and to each writer. This is not merely Simpson being gracious or behaving according to the etiquette of celebrity. Grappling with the conditions of his remand, isolated, lonely, bored, grieving and fearful, Simpson cannot and does not refuse such generosity, its implications and provisions. Simpson’s principles bind him to the rites and duties of the exchange as his emotional needs bind him spiritually and socially to others. The letters are tokens that establish social bonds between

\(^4\) "The obligation attached to a gift itself is not inert" (Mauss 9).
relative strangers. Society appears as these gestures of goodwill are offered and received. Simpson foregrounds the abstract and non-commercial rewards of the epistolic exchange for him. His mail connects him, internally and externally, to something larger, more wonderful. It revives his spirit, nourishes and sustains him, emotionally and psychologically. This connection is liberating. For Simpson to accept and reciprocate while incarcerated is more than the demonstration of an ethos of celebrity culture, or self-promotion (a marketing exercise). It is a mode of survival, a survival strategy. Taking and giving is a self-interested and tenacious tactical choice. What Simpson takes, what he accrues through his mail, are "interior" and "invisible" economic gains. Debts he knows cannot be repaid in any sense or any sphere, claims he knows can only be acknowledged and reciprocated with inexact ineptitude and hope. Simpson is conscious of his conspicuous role as debtor, eternally indebted to the kindness and compassion of the letter writers. He is the one who will profit most from their altruistic volition and Simpson seems uncomfortably, anxiously cognisant of the fact in *I Want to Tell You*. It is this anxiety, attributable to guilt, shame or humiliation, that sublimates taking as giving, that translates commercial enterprise and self-interested opportunism as a phenomenon of gift exchange, grace and thanksgiving.

In *I Want to Tell You* the social pact between individuals is made manifest as a literary pact between narratives. The letter writers encourage Simpson to speak out, to reciprocate textually, to disclose and perform. Simpson consumes the energy and vitality of the letter writers, utilising the

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5 Hyde provides "simple examples" (57) of generosities or social kindnesses performed by strangers in intimate proximity, such as seated next to each other on a plane flight or in communal dining arrangements (56-57), and suggests the "model they offer may be extended to the most complicated of unions" (57).

6 "The bonds that gifts establish are not simply social, they may be spiritual and psychological as well. There are interior economies and invisible economies" (Hyde 57).
fecundity of their messages as his inspiration. Published, intercalated, Simpson's fan mail and hate mail replenishes the spirit of his narrative, nourishing and sustaining it. The textual allotment accorded each published letter is a stationary space for Simpson's narrative, a rest stop where it is refreshed, revived and, sometimes, re-fuelled. The placement of each letter directs and propels Simpson's narrative along its subsequent trajectory. Simpson's narrative does not unify the text, nor do the letters. Rather, what emerges from the delivery of the interpolation of Simpson and the letter writers is a decentralised connectedness and a democratised cohesiveness, a togetherness that strengthens Simpson's utterance as the alpha-narrative whilst honouring those who make his narrative possible and allow it to be. This intercalation resembles the obligatory structure of reciprocity. It is a textual initiation rite that denotes individualism and socialism, the interconnected relationships formed by exchanges between individuals within a group, between self and others, by sharing and turn taking. The letters represent and function as "gifts of incorporation": "the class of gifts that bring people together and make one body out of several" (Hyde 57). The phatic, dialogic interactivity of the letter writers' questions and Simpson's responses is a voluntary-obligatory narrative exchange between individuals who perform for Simpson's financial benefit and the reader's entertainment. Simpson utilises and works the spirit of the gift: it is fertile for his imagination and offers a substantial material yield. The spirit of the gift is itself a gift. It is a rhetorical ploy that presents itself to Simpson.

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Days after its release ... "I Want to Tell You" (sic) tops the nonfiction and general interest lists released ... by the Wall Street Journal (sic) and heads USA Today's (sic) hardcover best-seller list. The New York Times (sic) reported the book will top its nonfiction list for February 12, based on sales for the week ending January 28. ... Publishing industry sources have said the book drew an advance of more than $[US]1 million. (Schiller and Willwerth 439)
In Pursuit of Justice reports: "The book, plus the sale of memorabilia such as autographed trading cards and bronze statues, netted Simpson nearly $[US]3 million from his jail cell - enough to cover about half his legal bills" (Los Angeles Times Staff 45).
Step 3: Simpson replies, thanks, repays, gives and requests of the letter writer

Simpson replies privately to a selection of the letters he receives. He thanks each writer individually, giving them his time, energy and personal regards, and he makes a special request: that they allow their letter to be published in a book which will generate income for his defense expenses (Simpson 11). Simpson asks them to donate their letter and, in effect, he asks them to donate themselves to his cause. He asks if they would be willing to give their letter to him again in another guise, to make it available for his public use and public distribution. Their agreement would be considered a personal favour to Simpson, an honour for the donor. The approach of Simpson's request attaches an obligation to the transaction, consciously and performatively. The expression of Simpson's debt of gratitude foregrounds his obligation, not the donor's. As each of the named published writers retains the copyright to their letter (Simpson iv), it is as if Simpson borrows it. The rights of each writer, their legal ownership of their epistolary property and labour, are enforced and safeguarded by the rules of the contractual exchange. Their copyright is a sign of an individual enterprise bargaining agreement. It is an arrangement made regarding the supply of their goods, the materials of their labour, for Simpson's use and profit. The moral ambiguity of Simpson's motive, to capitalise on his alleged criminality and his ex-wife's murder, is deflected by his intention to use the funds in self-defense, for the protection of his civil rights. Simpson's method of distribution envisages a utilitarian program. While the financial profits will benefit

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8 According to Schiller's "Acknowledgments," Randa, Simpson's assistant, "contacted each correspondent whose letter appears in the book, and graciously thanked them for O.J." (198). Although this is what actually happened and Randa was acting on Simpson's behalf, under his instructions, not as his representative but as his proxy, this is not exactly how Simpson describes it in his narrative. Keeping it simple and personal, Simpson gives the impression that he acted alone (11). I have interpreted this part of the exchange process pursuant to Simpson's narrative statement in I Want to Tell You.
Simpson they will not remain with him. The cash remuneration will be passed on to others, labouring, at a reduced cost in the interests of justice, for Simpson's legal defense and freedom. If Simpson's defense team is successful, he is acquitted of the criminal charges filed against him, not only he, but his "family, friends, and loved ones" (Simpson 10), colleagues, business partners, employees and fans, will benefit and profit from the proceeds generated by sales of *I Want to Tell You*. It is a journey that can only begin with the willing surrender of epistolic resources to Simpson.

Simpson appeals to the goodwill of each letter writer and vows:

> I will do something useful and worthwhile with your help. With the aid of your donated letters, I will raise funds for my defense. I am innocent. It is not my fault. I have been driven to these extreme measures by an unjust legal system. What else can I do? You have given me an opportunity. I will not squander the money I make. It will be used in an attempt to secure the restitution of my reputation and liberty.

The deal has already been made and executed when we read of this arrangement, this literary promise, in *I Want to Tell You*. For the reader it is a re-enactment of certainty substantiated by the proof of the text itself. The text is testimony that bears witness, guarantees and assures the published letter writers and the consumer-reader that the literary bargain is bona fide. But what are we to make of the letters signed "[Anonymous]" and "[ Unsigned]," validated only by the location of their postmark? How would Randa, acting as Simpson's executor, have reached the unknown, non-locatable authors, these writers who chose not to be acknowledged? Simpson's text includes four "[Anonymous]" letters, seven "[Unsigned]" letters and one from "Marylou" "Postmark: Royal
Oak, MI" (168). Are we meant to assume that Simpson, or Randa, was able to make contact with "A hopeful and law-abiding Citizen of the United States" from "Brooklyn, NY" (Simpson 85-86)? Or, that "Karl K. King" of "Jacksonville, FL" (Simpson 112) is a legitimate identity not a clever alias; that it is only coincidence a man who has the same initials as the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan would write a letter expressing unabashed racial hatred to a black man? The anonymous and unsigned letters are truly gratuitous gifts, they are sent without obligation, without the expectation or possibility of a return. Published within Simpson's text they defer a legitimate credit or receipt for their donation. For technically these letters are not donated to Simpson for his use in I Want to Tell You. Simpson acquires them. As the recipient, he claims them as his mail, as is his right and his duty. Without the legal and public acknowledgement of its writer, each anonymous and unsigned letter becomes solely Simpson's property, until they are claimed. These unnamed writers forego their copyright, their rights to their labour, their written work and intellectual property. The publisher advises that only the named published letter writers have been accorded copyright privilege: "Letters copyright © 1994 by each named letter writer. Permission to publish granted to O.J. Simpson" (Simpson iv). We could also interpret this copyright statement otherwise: that permission to publish has been obtained from the named letter writers only. Altruism or goodwill does not motivate all of the "[Anonymous]" and "[Unsigned]" letters. Of the four anonymous letters, one "believes" Simpson's not guilty plea, one is negative and two are outrageously racist (Simpson 14, 14-15, 116, 116). The two racist letters state: "Please come to Thanksgiving dinner. You may carve white meat" (Simpson 116);

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9 The four "[Anonymous]" letters are postmarked "Goldsboro, NC"; "Van Nuys, CA"; "Boston, MA"; and "Belleville, IL" (Simpson 14, 14-15, 116, 116). The seven "[Unsigned]" letters are postmarked "Toledo, OH"; "Boston, MA"; "Brooklyn, NY"; "Milpitas, CA"; "Tampa, FL"; "Topeka, KS"; and "Vancouver, British Columbia" (Simpson 24-25, 43, 91, 106-07, 119, 142-43, 183).
Filthy Murdering N—ER MOTHER F—KER S.O.B. COKE HEAD

But you're not the only worthless n—er in this country. 98% of you are
UNTERMENSCH S—T. The Ugliest species on the planet. UGLY HAIR, like wire, pig ears, primate noses, bulbous lips, and your ugly blackness. Unconscionable, irresponsible, dysfunctional, immoral, degenerate, perverted mother f—kers.

(Simpson 116)

Of the seven unsigned letters, two are supportive, one is neither supportive nor negative, and four writers, one racist, are confident of Simpson's guilt (Simpson 24-25, 183, 43, 91, 106-07, 119, 142-43). The "[Unsigned]" letter reprinted on page 119 expresses a racism towards Simpson and Brown Simpson that is horrifying and unconscionable:

Don't know why everyone is so surprised by your actions. I'm not. You were only following your old African instincts. You know, like that old saying goes: you can take the boy out of the jungle, but you can't take the jungle out of the boy. I want to thank you for slitting that white n—r's throat. All them bitches deserve the same thing. Feel sorry for that white dude though.

A fan of yours.

Marylou's letter is supportive (Simpson 168). The letter from "A hopeful and law-abiding Citizen of the United States" is negative (Simpson 85-86); and the letter from Karl K. King reviles Simpson racially (Simpson 111-12). Anonymity allows honesty without the fear of reprisal or punishment. Of course, the textual secrecy of anonymity may be at the request of the writer, a nom de plume to protect their identity as a source. They may be amenable to aiding Simpson but do not wish to be seen doing so. It may be too great a sacrifice of self to make - humiliating, risky. This way their secret remains safe, their identity protected by Simpson.
Step 4: The letter writer receives and takes from Simpson

Each letter writer who is approached privately by Simpson, who, via Randa, receives his attentive personal regards and request, is obligated to take of Simpson's time and attention, and to consider what he asks of them. The power relations of the celebrity-fan dyad formulate this exchange between individuals as an honour and a privilege for the latter, the recipient. The intimacy of the exchange enhances the prestige of the encounter and the persuasive rhetorical force of Simpson's petition.

Step 5: The letter writer gives to Simpson

Each published letter writer grants Simpson's request by giving him their permission to publish their letter. Sent to Simpson, the physical object of each original letter would be retained by Simpson, kept in his possession, as his possession. Simpson is the recipient to whom it is written, addressed and sent, so it is his mail. Legally, each named letter writer in Simpson's text retains the copyright to their letter (Simpson iv), the exclusive right to produce copies of their written work and to be acknowledged as its original creative agent. But as property, each letter is fluid, shared and circulated according to a giving-taking principle. This discursive utility and fluidity of movement is what makes the letters gift-like. Hyde describes the gift as something that is in motion, that "must always be used up, consumed" (8):

a gift is consumed when it moves from one hand to another with no assurance of anything in return. There is little difference, therefore, between its consumption and its movement. A market exchange has equilibrium or stasis: you pay to balance the scale. But when you give a gift there is momentum, and the weight shifts from body to body. (9)
Reproduced textually, the letters may still belong to their writers and to Simpson, but as they are passed on, made available to strangers, and move from body to body, they are no longer private property. In this case, the copyright is not a protective mark to deter poaching, but a protective mark designed to preserve the individual integrity of each letter and lay claim to its authenticity.

**Step 6: Simpson receives, accepts and takes from the letter writer**

Simpson receives each named letter writer's permission to publish. Accepting their letter again, as a gift, he takes it as a textual donation. It is now considered, figured, by Simpson and the donor as a legitimate narrative contribution to his defense fundraising memoir (Simpson 11). It is crucial that each letter remains distinct from the sphere of commodities and market exchange if it is to function textually as testimony that is credible, reliable, trustworthy. Simpson must ensure its evidentiary role is not compromised in the transferring process. It cannot be sold by the writer or bought by Simpson. It must seem to be the fruits of a voluntary-obligatory civic duty.\(^\text{10}\) The simplest distinction between a gift and a commodity is that gifts are given and commodities are sold. The mode of transfer between persons encodes the thing as a gift or commodity. The published letters are not sold to Simpson in a monetary sense. Simpson owns them, they are his property and in his possession, but they are not his property alone. Each letter is shared between Simpson and the writer. Both the sender and the recipient have a proprietary claim. When we speak of a letter, we say Colette Peschel's letter to Simpson or Simpson's letter from Colette

\(^{10}\) Prosecutor Clark refused to use the incriminating testimony of a crucial witness, Jill Shively, during the criminal trial because it transgressed the boundary between the commercial and the non-commercial. Shively sold her "story" to the television program *Hard Copy*, for $US5000 and denied she had done so during her grand jury appearance on June 21, 1994. Shively, who detectives Lange and Vannatter "still believe" (194), claimed to have encountered anagitated Simpson driving a white Ford Bronco "at the intersection of South Bundy and San Vicente on the night of the murders" (Lange and Vannatter 194). Shively's police interview report is included in *Evidence Dismissed* (Lange and Vannatter 133-34).
Peschel (Simpson 96), it can be either and it is also both. This shared ownership and shared responsibility constructs an ambivalent custodial status and a momentum between the two parties who contract, correspondingly. Each letter is pledged and loaned to Simpson conditionally.

There is a parallel between the complex conditions of Simpson's procurement of the published letters and an observation made by Mauss in *The Gift*, regarding inter-tribal and intra-tribal trade:

> The gift received is in fact owned, but the ownership is of a particular kind. One might say that it includes many legal principles which we moderns have isolated from one another. It is at the same time property and a possession, a pledge and a loan, an object sold and an object bought, a deposit, a mandate, a trust; for it is given only on condition that it will be used on behalf of, or transmitted to, a third person, the remote partner. (22)\(^{11}\)

The understanding between each published letter writer and Simpson is a financial and textual partnership. A financial proviso governs each writer's permission to publish their letter: the proceeds Simpson accumulates from sales of the book and the audio book will not remain with Simpson, it will be given away, circulated, passed on to others, the remote financial partner, his defense team. According to the same logic, a textual proviso governs each writer's permission to publish: their letter as it is printed within *I Want to Tell You* will be circulated and passed on to the remote third partner in the process, the reader. The letters are not perverted or corrupted by Simpson's use, but they are problematised. A letter is not meant for anyone other than those

\(^{11}\) Mauss makes this observation in reference to Bronislaw Malinowski's ethnographic research of the Trobriand Islanders in Melanesia, recorded in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. 
immediately involved, the writer and the addressee. It is a private and intimate document, not intended for passing on to parties known or unknown once it has reached its designated recipient. It is an offence to divert, misplace, open or read another person's mail without their permission. It is a violation of trust and an invasion of privacy. The consequence of the epistolic charity of each published letter writer is that they agree to allow Simpson to give his memoir reading audience, strangers their letter to read. According to the law of this pact their privacy is not invaded or violated, it is sacrificed willingly. The freedom, the will and the right of each letter writer remain in tact. Passed on, the letters become a legacy of a literary and public kind. Our stranger-danger status is deactivated by our reading practice, the textual inheritance of the epistolary narratives. A particular kind of familiarity develops from a care-taking reading role. The reproduction of the letters does not annul their privacy and intimacy. A precious resonance remains in the textual display of their presence on the page and in their narrative treatment by Simpson.

Simpson's letters do more than connect individuals and link the passages of his narrative. Chosen for their exemplary realism and put into circulation, the letters as gifts, as agents of generosity and goodwill, acquire emotional, textual and financial currency. The letters are (junk) bonds, unredeemable certificates of debt used to generate venture capital, but this does not mean they are worthless. In a commercial sense they do not have a value, a market price, they have worth and this is what distinguishes them from commodities. Hyde makes the distinction that a "gift has worth" while a commodity has "exchange value" or "market value," "a thing has no market value in itself except when it is in the marketplace, and what cannot be exchanged has no exchange value" (60). Each letter donated to Simpson for publication is entrusted to his care. The
rights and duties of prestation bind Simpson to a pact of fiduciary interest and responsibility. In order to nurture the spirit of the gift, to keep it alive and operating, Simpson's consumption and utilisation of each letter within the textual space must ensure it does not transgress the boundary that relegates it to the sphere of a gift economy. This is why the published letters are figured as textual tools, cited as resource materials and functional, constitutive component parts of the product that is Simpson's text.

**Step 7: Simpson gives, thanks and repays the letter writer**

In exchange, and/or as a gratuity, Simpson gives each published letter writer an autographed copy of *I Want to Tell You*. It is a return gift that thanks them for their invaluable contribution, expresses Simpson's gratitude and esteem, and reciprocates the generosity of the donor. Simpson's voluntary-obligatory act connotes, simultaneously, his superiority, his

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12 Hyde conceives of the difference between gifts and commodities [...] by imagining two territories separated by a boundary. A gift, when it moves across the boundary, either stops being a gift or else abolishes the boundary. A commodity can cross the line without any change in its nature; moreover, its exchange will often establish a boundary where none previously existed (as, for example, in the sale of a necessity to a friend). Logos-trade draws the boundary, eros-trade erases it. (61)

13 Citing Karl Marx's *Capital*, Hyde notes: "Marx gives many examples of useful objects which are the product of human labor but which are not commodities. [...] The materials that circulate inside a factory are not commodities," for example (61). I consider the letters to Simpson to be resources, materials used in the process of production.

14 In an interview with *Publishers' Weekly*, Schiller revealed that Simpson was granted court approval to sign "approximately 300 copies of the book" while in gaol (O'Brien 311). Prohibited under court order from financially benefiting from the sale of his signature since his arrest last summer, Simpson was cleared to sign the limited number of copies because they will be used in a 'non-commercial' manner. They will be given away as gifts to each of the 100 people who wrote the letters that are featured in the book, as well as to everyone involved with the publication of the book and audiotape, which Schiller estimates to be approximately 180 people, including 100 'volunteers who helped us work with the mail.' (O'Brien 311)
graciousness and his humility. In accordance with gift economy etiquette the addition of Simpson's signature ensures that the return is bigger and more costly, that the gift is paid back with interest. An autographed copy of Simpson's text is a significant increase on the standard thank you letter. Going beyond expectations it is a reward that pays tribute to the prestige of oneself (Simpson) as giver and to the honour of the other (the donor, the published letter writer) as recipient. And it relieves the constraints of Simpson's indebtedness by redressing the imbalance of the power relation between creditor and debtor, donor and recipient, fan and celebrity, each published letter writer and Simpson. Simpson's requital behaviour shows a sensitivity to the effects of the giving-taking exchange, for "[t]o give is to show one's superiority, to show that one is something more and higher, that one is *magister*. To accept without returning or repaying more is to face subordination, to become a client and subservient, to become a *minister*" (Mauss 72). The limited number of signed copies imbues each of these texts with a rare and precious quality. They acquire worth and value beyond the recommended retail price. An autographed copy of *I Want to Tell You* is a priceless memento for the recipient. It is also an item of memorabilia, a souvenir that can be auctioned, traded and sold, like stock, in the secondary marketplace of the collectible. So, in this way, Simpson reciprocates with a share in his fame or his infamy. Simpson's presenting of autographed copies of his book (containing their words) to the published letter writers goes unmentioned in *I Want to Tell You*. Yet to the recipient, as it is accompanied by a textual over-*prestation* of his thanks and gratitude, Simpson's magnanimous gift-giving display solemnly acknowledges that the giving of the letters, published and unpublished, is a debt he can never

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15 Simpson claims he was "raised to be gracious" (155): "Being gracious was my thing" (154). Growing up "in a government housing project in San Francisco," Simpson learned, "at a real early age," "[i]f you were gracious, you got a lot done," that problems are solved by working, not alone, but together as a community (Simpson 155). Simpson implements this social and political philosophy, this team or communal spirit in *I Want to Tell You*. 
Public hostility and the legal consequences of the double murder charge place Simpson in a tenuous position. The caution of his vulnerability exacts a textual demeanour of exaggerated generosity and humility. It is an attempt to relieve escalating tension, a form of appeasement. Through his humble textual offering of himself, for this is all he has to give, this is all he can possibly offer, Simpson enacts an agonistic inadequacy, he "affects an exaggerated modesty" (Mauss 21). Schiller stresses Simpson's relentless determination to correspond despite his pain and suffering, the overwhelming tragedy of his ex-wife's murder, and his subsequent arrest and incarceration for the crime. Simpson's authorial activity articulates a textual commitment to others. It is a sacrifice Simpson seems compelled and willing to make. His lack of power and emotional debilitation is counterbalanced by his strength of character. In need and empty-handed, seeking alms, Simpson must be careful not to appear too superior or self-aggrandising. For then he may seem undeserving. Simpson is reliant on the benevolence of the letter writers and the charity of consumers who purchase his text for the recommended retail price of $US17.95 for the book and $US9.99 for the audio book. And yet, at the same time he does not wish to be seen to be begging. Dignity amidst adversity is attractive, noble and heroic. The shame of humiliation is not. As author, Simpson looks me straight in the eye as if he has nothing to hide. He refuses to embrace or submit to the mortification of his penalisation. He bears the burden of its imposition with courageous fortitude and self-righteous grace.

Utilising the scheme of a gift economy, Simpson's literary purpose and intent is to give himself to a public audience who will feel obligated to accept what he offers and reciprocate with
cash remuneration. In reality Simpson's text is the product of commerce. It is a work of commodity fetishism. Simpson exploits a marketing opportunity and a ready-made publicity campaign - the saturation media coverage of the criminal trial. *I Want to Tell You* has no real utility for the consumer, it is neither useful nor useless; it is meant to be consumed for pleasure, for entertainment, like Simpson, the celebrity persona it reproduces. As an *entrepôt* of *eros*-trade and *logos*-trade, *I Want to Tell You* is useful and it has utility for Simpson. According to Mauss, the "economy of gift-exchange fails to conform to the principles of so-called natural economy or utilitarianism" (69). Operating within the scheme of a gift-exchange economy, *I Want to Tell You* is concerned with useful and useless excess, a literal hyperbole instigated by the momentum of epistolary extravagance. The number of letters Simpson received in gaol is foregrounded by Schiller and reiterated by Simpson. Their repetitive foregrounding highlights the enormity and the complexity of the editorial culling task. An exorbitant 300,000 letters or more required reduction to a meagre, representative sample, a manageable and suitable 108 letters for publication. This emphasis amplifies rhetorically the textual uselessness of most of Simpson's mail – more than 299,892 letters remain unpublished. The figuring of an idle, epistolary deluge of "waste" demonstrates an over-*prestation* to Simpson. It encodes Simpson's privilege symbolically, his equivalent getting-and-deserving-ness. He is validated and vindicated by the gracious kindness of an actively compassionate public. At the level of narrative the complementary repetition, reiteration and polyphony articulate a rhetoric of excess. The schematics of the system of exchanges that trace the process of production of Simpson's text from inception to purchase reveal a kind of repetitiveness. The same quantifiable approaches and requests are made many times over according to a paradigmatic model of circuitous reciprocal relations that place Simpson at its core. A letter is sent to Simpson more than 300,000 times. A letter to Simpson is opened more than
300,000 times. More than 300,000 letters to Simpson are read. At least ninety-seven writers are asked to donate their letter to Simpson's book.\textsuperscript{16} Five hundred thousand copies of the book are printed. At least three hundred copies of the book are signed by Simpson and distributed. As consumers purchase \textit{I Want to Tell You}, a possible 499,700 retail transactions take place.\textsuperscript{17} It is possible Simpson's book will be read at least 500,000 times, that he will address at least 500,000 people with the same words, not all at once, but at different times in different places.

\textit{Step 8: Simpson replies, responds, thanks, repays, reciprocates, gives and asks of the letter writer and the consumer-reader}

Through his narrative presentation in \textit{I Want to Tell You} Simpson reciprocates the emotional and psychological gifts of the letters. The praise, recognition and "support" conveyed by his fan mail gives Simpson "hope," makes him "feel still part of the world," keeps him "sane," and lets him know he is "not alone" (Simpson 3, 3, 4, 7). What Simpson receives and takes from his fan mail - hope, support, recognition, praise, care, a sense of connection, belonging and worth - is returned to the letter writers textually, collectively. Grateful and appreciative, Simpson thanks the more than 300,000 people who wrote to him in gaol for their unsolicited and unexpected epistolary companionship. Simpson's thanks and indebtedness to each published letter writer is recorded officially by the inclusion of their words in his memoir and by the signatory mark of their authorial name within his text. In reply to the questions articulated by his mail and in response to a demanding public curiosity, Simpson gives his time, energy and attention to the letter writers and to

\textsuperscript{16} I have assumed the four "anonymous" and the seven "unsigned" letter writers were unable to be contacted.

\textsuperscript{17} I have deducted the three hundred autographed copies of the book from the 500,000 copies printed (O'Brien 311; Jaynes).
us, to his audience of readers or listeners, the consumers who will purchase his book or audio book. He gives of himself linguistically and he gives us something tangible as well, the textual object, figured as memorabilia and packaged as souvenir. In giving, Simpson asks that we accept courteously and take charitably what he proffers, the letters, his narrative, his family photographs, Schiller's narrative, the text. He also asks that we give money in return for what we take textually, money that will be used to finance his defense in *The People of the State of California v. Orenthal James Simpson* criminal trial.

Simpson's indebtedness to the published writers is implicit in the antiphonal textual construction of *I Want to Tell You*. Their personal public contributions function as authenticating documentation for his narrative and as structural supports for his text. These gracious donors make his publishing venture possible and legitimate. Simpson acknowledges his gratitude for their benefaction textually. He rewards each published writer with an authorial tribute: their letter is "signed" by the writer's name and validated by their city and state of residence. Each published epistolary message becomes a linguistic donation given in support of Simpson's cause and in return each writer receives a personalised literary receipt. Their sponsorship is more than attributed and acknowledged, made known. As it is inscribed textually, registered ceremoniously and publicly, it is immortalised and memorialised in connection with Simpson's name, and his fame. This singular gesture is a simple and effective multi-functional manoeuvre. It styles the letter as a gift. It fulfills the obligatory steps of a gift exchange by demonstrating Simpson's acceptance and reciprocation of the gift received. Printing their letter and their name honours the gift and the patron. It illustrates that the charitable exchange has been transacted in good faith (Simpson 11),
that even the hate mail writers who agreed to the arrangement have been allowed to have their say, their allotted share of textual space. The document is validated as authentic and legitimate by the textual "proof" of the writer's identity and locality. Simpson should have the complete and exact particulars of their residential or postal address but to publish them would be a violation of privacy, legally unwarranted and unconstitutional. It would place the writer in a more vulnerable position, if not in danger. As a friendly, hostile or indifferent witness for Simpson, each published writer must be under the care of some sort of protection program.

Simpson's textual identification also gives a particular notoriety, an experience of fame to each published letter writer. Like the naming of the "Mail Volunteers," this distinction allows the voluntary-obligatory giver to say reflexively, to oneself and others: "I gave that" (Hyde 79). It is a reassuring, satisfying and self-interested claim to a private individual power. Mauss notes a report of potlatch ritual amongst Native- American tribes in North America that resembles the prestigious effects of Simpson's textual credit:

there is an interesting description of the way the clan brings its potlatch contributions to the chief, and a record of some of the discourses. The chief says: 'It will not be in my name. It will be in your name, and you will become famous among the tribes, when it is said that you have given your property for a potlatch.' (84)

The rhetoric of Simpson's narrative and his text as an assemblage, its form and content, articulates a pronounced ethics and topos of accreditation. Through this prosaic mannerism of formal recognition and assignation, epideictic praise infiltrates the logos, ethos and lexis animated within

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the textual space. Credit, signifying appreciation and respect, is ascribed dutifully, carefully, in *I Want to Tell You* to the letter writers, the "Mail Volunteers," Simpson's family, his mother, his children, his friends, his ex-wife, Brown Simpson, Goldman, Kardashian, Randa and Simpson himself. The singular omission from Simpson's narrative is Schiller, his editor and amanuensis. Instead, Schiller is appointed his own textual annexe within *I Want to Tell You*: the eight page "Foreword" and the three page "Acknowledgments." As Schiller's "Foreword" is a precursor to Simpson's narrative, the main feature, it functions primarily as a tribute to Simpson. As an endnote, Schiller's "Acknowledgments" is a personal space in which he pays tribute to those who enabled him to produce *I Want to Tell You* for, and with, Simpson. Schiller denies authorship, but he does claim credit as a writer: "I could not have written this book without the assistance of a great many people" ("Acknowledgments" 197). Once he has thanked Simpson in his "Acknowledgments," a task that takes up the first two paragraphs, Schiller thanks and presents to view those who have given physically and financially to the project from behind the scenes. Schiller credits the work and assistance of the letter writers, the "Mail Volunteers," Randa, Gigi Guarin (Simpson's housekeeper), his own friends, family, colleagues, business associates, attorney and "personal staff" ("Acknowledgments" 198), the publishers, copyeditor, book designer, technical assistants and technical suppliers. Schiller's careful attention to ensure each member of the production team receives their virtuous due, is mentioned by name and role, resembles the formal attestation of a film's end credits which cites the involvement of an essential personnel of cast, crew and contributors.

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19 Gaurin "helped locate the personal photographs used in" *I Want to Tell You* (Schiller, "Acknowledgments" 198).
Schiller's own space within Simpson's text recognises and registers Schiller's achievements pertaining to Simpson's authorial toil. Simpson's neglect, his narrative absenting of Schiller, may simply be a mistake, an obvious oversight. Yet, Simpson's failure to mention Schiller's work and thank him in his narrative is a distancing technique, a way to establish an objective, dispassionate impartiality and professional interest between the two.\textsuperscript{20} It is Schiller who inscribes and enforces his own presence in the authorial process and the production of \textit{I Want to Tell You}. Their textual relationship may be a business arrangement, yet the pathos of Schiller's introductory \textit{proe cathesis} denies an objective, dispassionate, impartial or professional interest between himself and Simpson.\textsuperscript{21} Schiller "enter[s] O.J.'s world" (Schiller, "Acknowledgments" 198) literally. Through the writing process, he becomes connected to Simpson and to Simpson's emotional, familial, professional and domestic support group. A vociferous recognition, acknowledgement and accreditation is consequential to the ethics of attesting that instigates the letters, Simpson's narrative and his text. Such crediting, even if self-referential, reinforces the exemplary realism of the narratives intercalated in \textit{I Want to Tell You}. It is a testimonial accounting that registers and praises the "I" of the utterance as a true and authentic witness; as an individual agent acting of their own accord.

\textsuperscript{20} I do not consider Schiller's editorial contribution to be a gift or donation, but part of a business arrangement with Robert Kardashian. This consideration is made in light of Schiller's co-authorship of \textit{American Tragedy}, revealing high-level access to Kardashian, those close to Simpson and his criminal defense team; Schiller's role as producer and director of the tele-movie, \textit{American Tragedy}, based on the book; and Simpson's subsequent unsuccessful civil suit against Kardashian and Schiller over the book and the television adaptation ("Judge Rejects Request").

\textsuperscript{21} Lanham defines "\textit{proe cathesis}" as an "G. 'introduction, prefatory account'"; "1. Defending what one has done or said, by giving reasons and circumstances" (\textit{Rhetorical Terms} 119). \textit{Silva Rhetoricae} defines "\textit{proe cathesis}" as: "When, in conclusion, a justifying reason is provided." Lanham defines "pathos" as: "G. 'emotion;experience'"; "both the emotions a speaker feels \textit{himself} and those he seeks to evoke in others" (\textit{Rhetorical Terms} 111). The rhetorical function and effect of Schiller's "Foreword" will be discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis.
The rhetorical show of appreciation and ritualistic giving of thanks articulated within and between the narratives that comprise Simpson's defense fundraising memoir evokes a spiritual paean. It is a social and moral expression of grace called into being by the religious theme of the majority of the letters (Simpson 9) and projected by the antiphonal call and response textual formation. Support, be it emotional, psychological, textual or fundraising is considered to be a blessing, a god-sent or at least god-inspired bestowal of bounty deserving of heartfelt gratitude and existential indebtedness. Of course, the vocalisation of praise is not restricted to obligatory religious practice. A gift economy is a system of exchanges based on credits of gratitude and honour, the distribution of praise and recognition articulated by what is given, received and reciprocated. Fame, the cult of celebrity, is a secular practice of praise, recognition, worship and devotion. It is created and perpetuated by epideictic mythologies, messages, assertions and glorification. And celebrity is Simpson's professional sphere of industry. It is the business he is in. Further, as Derrida advises in *Given Time*, "[a]uthority is constituted by accreditation, both in the sense of legitimation as effect of belief or credulity, and of bank credit, of capitalized interest" (97). A kind of egalitarian authority is articulated in the accreditation practices mobilised textually by Simpson. Yet, Simpson's litany of *eucharistia* is also a form of atonement, a spiritual, moral and ethical absolution for his commercial utilisation of the letter writers and their generosity. This overcompensation may also be a manifestation of Simpson's guilt, his repressed humiliation and shame. It is certainly an avoidance of blame. Simpson denies responsibility for the idea of the authorial scheme. On the dedication page of *I Want to Tell You*, Simpson thanks and credits Kardashian as "the inspiration for this book," and notes in his narrative: "Robert suggested that I

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22 *Silva Rhetoricae* defines "*eucharistia*" as: "Giving thanks for a benefit received, sometimes adding one's inability to repay." Lanham defines "*eucharistia*" as: "Giving thanks; prayer of thanksgiving" (*Rhetorical Terms* 70-71).
write this book as a way of answering all of the letters" (10). This painstaking ascribing and inscribing of credit is an authorial and editorial effort to gain our trust, to demonstrate Simpson's graciousness, his honour and integrity. For, above all else, Simpson wants us to believe him and believe in him. To condemn or censure him is to forsake him.

If Simpson's fan mail is a blessing, it is nourishing, consuming, and has a kind of magic, the force and power to transform his circumstances, then how does this figuration affect Simpson's textual consumption and utilisation of his hate mail? Simpson accepts it as a poisonous or dangerous gift and reciprocates accordingly. Mauss cautions that the gift can be "dangerous to accept," a risky proposition or practice (58): "The danger represented by the thing given or transmitted is possibly nowhere better expressed than in very ancient Germanic languages [and in the etymology of the word 'gift' from the Latin and Greek *dosis*, meaning poison (127)]. This explains the double meaning of the word *Gift* as gift and poison" (61-62). Hyde clarifies Mauss' etymological point:

Those who write on gift exchange usually mention [. . .] that the German word *Gift* means 'poison.' The connection is more accidental than significant, however. The French etymologist Benveniste writes: 'There is a . . . medical usage in which [the Greek word] *ds i s* denotes the act of giving, whence develops the sense of the

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23 This moral scapegoating of Kardashian is repeated in *American Tragedy:*
On Thursday, October 27, Kardashian said to Shawn Chapman [from Cochran's office]:
'Put this guy on the material witness list. He has to see O.J. in the next couple of days.'
'Who's Lawrence Schiller? I've never heard of him.'
'He lived across the street from O.J. for years. But this is about something else.
He's going to make some money for us.' (Schiller and Willwerth 318)
As this conversation reportedly took place prior to Schiller's first meeting with Simpson at the Los Angeles County Jail, on October 31, 1994, (Schiller, "Foreword" viii), it reveals Kardashian's preconceived intention of an income generating publishing scheme which would involve Schiller, a relatively well-known true-crime writer, in the authorial process.
amount of medicine given, a 'dose'. . . . This sense passed by loan translation into German, where *Gift*, like Gr.-Lat. *ｄｓｉｓ*, was used as a substitute [or an euphemism] for *ventus*, 'poison.' (43)

However, indeed, the etymological accident has significance for an analysis of Simpson's textual interpretation of his hate mail within a gift economy, his acceptance of what is offered, a venomous hatred and rage, and his reciprocity. Simpson takes the epistolic dose of poison he is given, but does not swallow. He savours it, mixes it with his own masticating juices to dilute its toxicity and spits it out for others to see. The textual injection of Simpson's hate mail works like a vaccine inoculation. Minute exposure to the toxin builds a strong resistance to its effects in the authorial and textual body.

Simpson ignores Hyde's cautionary warnings: "Because gifts do have the power to join people together, there are many gifts that must be refused" (70); "Gift exchange must also be refused when there is a real threat in the connections that it offers" (72);

Gifts from evil people must also be refused lest we be bound to evil. [. . .] Folk wisdom similarly advises silence before evil. Conversation is a commerce, and when we give speech we become a part of what we speak with. [. . .]

It is because gift exchange is an erotic form that so many gifts must be refused. [. . .] We often refuse relationship, either from the simple desire to remain unentangled, or because we sense that the proffered connection is tainted, dangerous, or frankly evil. And when we refuse relationship, we must refuse gift

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Simpson requests and accepts the textual aid of his racist detractors. He publishes their violent and prejudicial propaganda because he is able to turn their intolerance to his advantage. For example, rather than inciting outrage, the offensive ignorance of Karl K. King provides comic relief:

Aah lookey here Sambo, it Done looks as if you is done jumping into bed with any more white women. Glory be and amen.

Now if something like this would only happen more often to Hollywood n—rs like say Quincy Jones or Mr. Poitier, the world would be a better place. Aint nothin worse than celebrity n—rs with money. The real problem you guys create is that you have a habit of leaving behind your genetic traces in the form of mullato muts. There should be a law passed to sterilize black males when they reach a certain income level. Lets face it, if you guys didn't have the bucks aint no white woman would go near you. I mean what woman wants to have sex with a primitive jungle man?

Good-by Juice, another coon in the can. (Simpson 111-12)

The idiolect seems out of place and inappropriate, an absurd caricature. This effect is more pronounced in the audio book presentation as King's epistle is performed in the stereotypical sociolect suggested by his message. Simpson subverts the logic of his hate mail, the powerful epistolary minority that reviles him, proclaiming his unequivocal guilt. The overt display of supportive letters in *I Want to Tell You* generates a cumulative positivity, epideictic virtue. It is a show of strength, "alliance, solidarity, communion" (Sahlins 169). Inversely, hiding or suppressing what is harmful increases and perpetuates its negativity. Denial and repression is dangerous, poisonous, psychologically and emotionally. Simpson's fan mail, his support, far outweighs his hate mail, but even a small amount of hate mail has a powerfully contagious affecting force.
Publishing his hate mail is a way for Simpson to reduce the threat of its ability to wound and hurt him. Publicising his hate mail, sharing it, Simpson is able to downgrade the effect of its negative capabilities on him. The act of confessing his hate mail, recognising it, addressing it, talking about it and passing it on as a contained hostile gift has curative and restorative properties. It is a form of group therapy that creates social bonds and connective relations, "friendship and intercourse" (Mauss 11), through adversarial reckonings. Sharing the burden does not make the intent of such epistolic invective disappear, but it does attenuate its affecting force and make it bearable. These are the tactics of an emotional labour, Simpson's survival strategy.

Utilising his hate mail as a textual tool transforms and appropriates its power. Simpson turns its evil to his good, to his benefit. The inclusion of the writers and their damning, adversarial accusations in his book is a gesture of goodwill on Simpson's part. Insulted, Simpson turns the other cheek. Despite their differences, Simpson asks them to donate their letter to his fundraising text and they agree. As "[t]he act of donation is an affirmation of goodwill" (Hyde 35), Simpson thanks them, graciously, and acknowledges their kind contribution: "I am grateful that even those who believe in my guilt also believe that I should have my day in court and have agreed to let their words be published in this book" (11). Simpson's response is similar in effect to the potlatch ceremonies amongst Native-American tribes: "When someone in one of these tribes was mistakenly insulted, his response, rather than turning to a libel lawyer, was to give a gift to the man who had insulted him; if indeed the insult was mistaken, the man would make a return gift, adding a little extra to demonstrate his goodwill" (Hyde 35). 25 In Simpson's case the insult is not considered

to be a misunderstanding. His hate mail is accepted and published with its vituperative invective in tact. Simpson seems to honour the writer by honouring their freedom of thought and freedom of speech. They are, after all, textual benefactors. Simpson's narrative treatment lacks any vehement retribution. He does not mete out an overt retaliatory punishment or impose a vigilante justice. He does not attack the racist hate mail writers; he condemns their opinions and attitudes indirectly and generally, rather than directly and personally. As these letters are reproduced verbatim and the writers are identified, where possible, it is as if the writers must take responsibility for the public framing, the public shaming of themselves. It is our place, as readers, to judge. For some, writing to Simpson, telling him what they think and feel, is about venting their aggression, anger, rage and hatred. They consider it their right and duty to notify Simpson of his perceived dishonour, his blame. It is Simpson who gives these viewpoints the discursive field of an epideictic oratory. As these provocative and colourful complementary narratives are published within Simpson's text their writers are figured as donors no less generous or deserving. The only attempt made to censor (and, so, censure) them is the suppression of the word nigger, as "n—rs". This censorship foregrounds the offensiveness of the word and its distressing affect. The lack of blandness and the racism expressed by his hate mail gives Simpson's text colour and texture, a spark of excitement and a sense of realism that comes of the dirty, ugly and mean (the vicious and base). Simpson's hate mail is affecting for Simpson and the reader. It gives Simpson something to kick against, itself a form of revenge, a symbolic restitution.

When Simpson offers *I Want to Tell You* as a published product for sale within a commercial marketplace, the reader is initiated into the process of exchange. A remunerative transaction takes
place at this border crossing between the logic of the commodity and the spirit of the gift. The relational form of the transfer from giver (Simpson) to receiver (the consumer-reader) encodes the thing, the book and the audio book, as a product for commerce and consumption. The procedural order of the exchange is no longer indicative of a gift economy. The reader must give before they can receive the text and Simpson's address. The reader's giving is antecedent, the cause. The reader's receipt is consequential, the effect. Our money is a return payment, reciprocation, but in the temporal causal relation it is enacted prior to our reception. Under the law of this pre-fabricated, pre-packaged deal, we give voluntarily, surrendering our resources. But our giving does not go unrequited. We get something back, material, social and abstract rewards. In the packaging of *I Want to Tell You* remains the operative spirit of the gift and a gift economy.

**Step 9: The consumer-reader gives, receives and takes from Simpson**

A commercial transaction is implemented by the consumer's cash payment for *I Want to Tell You*. In exchange for this fee we receive what Simpson wants to tell us and give us textually, and as we take what he offers we must accept the terms and conditions of such a trade. For this pay-per-view transfer has ethical implications for the consumer and legal consequences. To pay $US17.95 for the book or $US9.99 for the abridged audio book version is to aid Simpson financially in the legal defense of his innocence against a double murder charge. At the retail level, at the point of purchase, a pre-determined, pre-arranged reciprocity binds the consumer to a condition, a position of moral, economic, political and ethical obligation. Our curiosity, desire or lust, our epistemological will to know what Simpson has to say may present a moral dilemma. If we do not consider Simpson innocent or entitled to a defense strategy that accords with his wealth and
celebrity, then, in order to receive Simpson's textual offering, we must make a choice, a sacrifice of self. If we consider his money making scheme to be morally reprehensible, he is capitalising on the murder of his ex-wife and Goldman, and his alleged perpetration of the crime, then we surrender our principles and resources if we wish to gain access to Simpson and his text. As the publisher and Simpson give the consumer the choice, the burden of responsibility is transferred to the consumer-reader at the moment of acceptance.

Textually, Simpson is presented and represented by the services of official bodies who manage and protect the business, the material terms of his narrative transactions. Schiller legitimates Simpson's authorial interests. The publisher, Little, Brown and Company, legalises and enforces Simpson's financial interests: "All of Mr. Simpson's proceeds from the sale of this book and any other rights associated with the publication of this work will be used to benefit Mr. Simpson's defense fund in the legal proceedings that are taking place in Los Angeles, California" (Simpson iv). Booksellers and retail outlets mediate commercially between the publisher and the customer, the producer and the consumer, the writer and the reader. These commercial agents, who provide the means of distribution, traffic in Simpson and they broker the deal for Simpson. As retailers also stood to profit from the sale of Simpson's defense fundraising memoir they were also compelled to make a moral and economic choice. Some refused to stock I Want to Tell You, to buy it at a wholesale price themselves or sell it at a retail price to others, to contribute to or financially benefit from Simpson's publishing scheme. 26 Their role as a commercial agent, operating a commercial outlet, aids in the procurement of paying customers for Simpson's textual

26 “There were pockets of protest from booksellers around the country [the United States], mostly small independents who did not want to be seen as contributing to the author's defense fund” (Jaynes).
services. They facilitate and monitor the transactions between consenting parties, the giving-taking producer (Simpson) and the taking-giving consumer (reader), and they collect a percentage. The bookseller options to either broker or pass on the deal. To become involved is to profit from the terms of the arrangement, to aid and abet Simpson as a commercial co-conspirator. To protest by embargo is a prohibitive judgement that condemns and censures Simpson's commercial enterprise. In accounting terms, the consumer's payment would reimburse the bookseller's account, their commercial debt with the publisher of Simpson's text.

Reading *I Want to Tell You* we give Simpson our time and attention. We receive what he wants to tell us, what he wants to give linguistically in return for our money. However, Simpson offers more than a verbal response. The material terms of his presentation, the construction of its book form and audio book form has a sensual appeal. As a three-dimensional object Simpson's memoir is designed to perform physical functions to do with our body. Our gaze and touch are responsive to its tangible qualities as we pick it up, read and turn the pages. It is an attainable and touchable "literary" representation of Simpson. Simpson's memoir demonstrates a visual rhetoricality and an aesthetic sensibility. As an object, it affects the appearance of both a gift and a commodity; and it affects the practices of engagement that mark both a gift economy and a commercial economy. Prior to and outside our reading encounter, *I Want to Tell You* is solicitous and fascinating. Its commercial purpose is to arouse our desire and seduce us as consumers. Simpson's memoir is a commodity designed to entice consumption, to be attractive and generate lust.\(^{27}\) It has an erotic charge. To sell itself the textual object makes a captivating promise, the promise of the fetish, that it has magical properties and abilities, the power to fulfill expectation, to

\(^{27}\) Hyde notes: "The desire to consume is a kind of lust" (10).
not only satisfy but satiate the desire it mobilises in the inquisitive, cruising (browsing, shopping) customer. What is offered is physical, mental and emotional stimulation; an affecting visual and auditory contact that fulfills the obligations or requirements of the "aesthetic contract ('to teach, to move, to delight')" (Murphet 26). Julian Murphet argues in *Literature and Race in Los Angeles*, whatever the literary work manages to teach us about our contradictory space will delight and move us at least as much as conventional affective devices, for in a context such as ours the cognitive itself has become a source of unexpected pleasure. That context is, of course, one in which aesthetic pleasure (especially formal visual and auditory stimulation) is no longer confined to the isolated work of art, but has spilled out over and saturated social space itself. (26)

Simpson's memoir is sociable, not an isolated work. It is not art, but it is artful. The "aesthetic pleasure" (Murphet 26) of *I Want to Tell You* is incorporated into its commercial intent as a commodity produced for consumption. The "aesthetic pleasure" of Simpson's memoir is generated by the "saturated social space" (Murphet 26) in which his text operates.

An analysis of the physical appearance, the packaging, of *I Want to Tell You* as a product, in book and audio book form, reveals strategic design choices guided by social and commercial conditions. The graphic display of the dust jacket is dramatic and eye-catching. The simplicity and directness of the front cover denotes verbally and connotes graphically its enclosure of factual disclosure (see fig. 5). The title, "I WANT TO TELL YOU," resembles a sensational newspaper headline. Featured at the top of the front cover, formatted in uppercase letters, embossed in black on a white gloss stock, the titular apparatus is styled for cognitive and tactile impact. The subtitle, "My Response to Your Letters, Your Messages, Your Questions," anchors the title in its placement
Fig. 5. *I Want to Tell You*. Dust jacket front cover.
at the bottom of the front cover. The format of the subtitle - italicised title case lettering in a smaller font size, black ink, not embossed, on a white gloss stock background - signifies its subordinate function. Yet, the inclusion of the subtitle on the dust jacket denotes its titular importance as an explanatory device. The subtitle indicates the contents and the genre. It also supports the authorial connection to the title, or the titular connection to the author. It clarifies what the titular "I" proffers. Placed between the title and the subtitle, on a wide black gloss band, is the authorial by-line: "by O.J. Simpson." Embossed in large gold lettering, the authorial identity, "O.J. Simpson," catches the light and shines. The "by" is italicised and reverse printed in white on the black overprinted band. Simpson’s name is treated for maximum merchandising effect. It stands out, literally, for Simpson's name sells the book. His authorial claim identifies and dramatises the titular "I." Simpson's name attracts attention, secures interest and makes the sale. Gérard Genette notes the function of the front cover of the dust jacket of a book as "poster and possibly as protection" (27). The presentational hue of Simpson's name has a prestigious quality. The colour gold is associated with winning, wealth, honour and success. It has aspirational overtones. To print "O.J. Simpson" in either black or white would have been a risky, racially significant manoeuvre. Instead, the wide black band overprinted with Simpson's name resembles a black armband worn as a sign of mourning. It signifies, symbolically and melodramatically, a multilateral mourning, personal and societal, his and ours, for the loss of his freedom, the loss of his ex-wife, a loss of innocence, the loss of a dream of a "color-blind" or "race-neutral" society.

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28 Gérard Genette observes that titles have three elements: title, subtitle and genre indication (56-58).

29 This band, which also appears on the back cover of the dust jacket but is mostly hidden by a large photograph of Simpson and his attorneys, resembles the band Genette identifies in Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation: "The technical term is 'bande de lancement' [launching nd] or 'bande de nouveauté' [new-publication band]" (27).
Fig. 6. *I Want to Tell You*. Dust jacket back cover.
The back cover of the dust jacket is intriguing (see fig. 6). It plays with the charisma of Simpson and the criminal trial. The full-page colour photograph of Simpson in the courtroom, "conferring with his attorneys," captures a private moment taking place within the frame of an overt publicity and an overt public gaze. Cochran and Shapiro huddle close to Simpson. They appear to be listening carefully to his words - Cochran touches his cheek, in thought, Shapiro touches his necktie, in thought, Simpson sits upright, his hands by his sides, his lips parted. Their eyes do not meet. Their faces are expressionless, inscrutable. The three men seem unaware of the camera, yet their lack of facial expression belies their knowledge of an excessive scrutiny and surveillance. This "candid" shot has a promotional function. It suggests to the perusing consumer that the textual encounter will deliver access and insight, bring them closer to Simpson, let them inside his mind; this is the gain of the financial and textual exchange. The external, detachable cover heralds a public announcement. It is a call to attention and a responsive cry that anticipates an oratorical spoken pronouncement. The inside folds of the dust jacket are strategically important in promotional terms. They reverberate with the auditory claims of the publisher advertising Simpson's narrative as compelling, revealing, unique. The brief superlative biographies of Simpson and Schiller spruik the credentials of their fame and legitimacy. Invoked in this section is the linguistic style of the media exposé. Conditioned to the discursive register of this popular genre we hear the commanding insistence of the announcer's booming voice as we peruse and sample, like produce, what is on offer, for sale. This paratextual point reproduces an entertainment media domain in which the ordinary and everyday is promoted as extraordinary and fascinating, where the privacy of the confessional obtains public and commercial currency through intonation.
Genette classifies the dust jacket as a paratext. His definition of a paratext identifies the vestibular nature of the dust jacket:

the paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public. More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, or - a word Borges used apropos of a preface - a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text), an edge, or, as Philippe Lejeune put it, 'a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text.' Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that – whether well or poorly understood and achieved – is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies). (1-2)

The dust jacket is an unlocked gateway, open metaphorically, to Simpson. As the will to know and have becomes an urgent necessity, an audience of consumers is corralled, transfixed by Simpson as commodity and his text as commodity. Here, in the paratext, on view for our predilection, Simpson stands silent but not absent. Here, specularised and spectacularised, he is elevated and

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30 Genette cites Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975) 45. Genette separates the paratext into epitext and peritext (4-5). The dust jacket is a peritext, as is the cover of the book.
Fig. 7. *I Want to Tell You*. Front cover.
auctioned hundreds of thousands of times over.

The detachable, protective, promotional dust jacket of *I Want to Tell You* disguises the soft-focus, fabric-bound hardcover of the book that lies beneath (see fig. 7). A surprising and significant shift from a public to a private surface is enacted by the removal of the dust jacket. The initials, "O.J.," etched in gold lettering on this hidden cover continue the graphic theme of the official front cover, however this personal inscription seems more appropriate for a private journal. The gold mark is a sign of authorship and ownership. Its placement signals the opening to an intimate, internalised space of confidential thought and feeling. Although we are welcome to intrude - Simpson invites us to do so - this veneer elicits the feeling that we are about to trespass on private property. It provokes and tantalises our voyeuristic desire. The inclusion of Simpson’s photographic mementos accompanied by his own recollections reinforces the sense of a private record of a life, and they give the book a sentimental keepsake quality. As the dust jacket encloses what lies within, the experience of entering the book becomes a delightful process of un-wrapping (undressing) the favour it purportedly contains.\(^{31}\) It is as if this physical introduction to the text is preparing us, initiating us to the process of revelation through disclosure that should follow. For this is what we expect from the linguistic dimension of Simpson's text, this is what we understand to be on offer as per the terms of the bi-lateral contract between author and reader. The A5, non-standard publishing dimensions of the notebook-size hardcover, and the quality and weight of the page stock, distinguish the special value, the status of Simpson's memoir as something other than a mass-market paperback. The publishing strategy assumed and the ready-made marketing campaign guaranteed *I Want to Tell You* would be a bestseller, a mass-market hardback. The

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\(^{31}\) Genette calls the dust jacket the wrapper, a paratextual support that resembles clothing (27).
assurance of textual access to Simpson, his availability, was a key element in the production and
design of *I Want to Tell You*. The initial print run for the book was 500,000 copies and the
publishers "reserved press time for reprinting within a week if the demand was there" (Jaynes). In
an interview with *Publishers’ Weekly*, Schiller said Simpson
demanded that the tape be made available at the unusually low price of $[US]9.95
(sic), 'because he felt that there were lots of disenfranchised people out there who
could not afford the book’ [. . . and] added, 'We also reduced the size of the tape’s
packaging to fit in paperback racks so that people can buy it at check-out counters at
places like Wal-Mart and drugstores.' (O’Brien 311).

The book's material packaging is a marketing ploy that figures Simpson's defense fundraising
memoir as a souvenir, a covetous cultural artefact. As an item of memorabilia, it touts its trade as
collectible merchandise and advertises itself as a rare and precious private memento made public.

The audio book produces an aesthetic and commercial effect similar to the printed book (see
fig. 8). The audiocassette is mounted inside a cardboard box of a standard paperback size. The
front flap opens like a book to reveal the promotional blurb and to credit the actors whose voices
appear on the tape. The same photograph that appears on the back of the dust jacket appears on
the back cover of the audio book presentation box. The layout for the front covers of the
presentation box and the cassette case are the same as the book with additional information at the
top and the bottom of the page. The audio book has a unique special feature: "O.J. SPEAKS OUT
FROM JAIL"; which is advertised in uppercase gold lettering on a black band across the top of the
front cover. That this is an audio book containing a ninety-minute cassette is also clearly marked
on the bottom of the front cover. Attached to the clear plastic wrapper encasing the audio book is a
Fig. 8. I Want to Tell You. Audio book. Front cover.
red oval sticker on which is reiterated the unique proposition of this version of Simpson's memoir: "HEAR O.J.'s PERSONAL SPOKEN MESSAGE!" For Simpson's voice recorded in the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail is what makes the audio book an item of memorabilia distinct from the printed book. The audio book offers a unique consumer benefit and it delivers the authentic ambience promised by its point of sale advertising and merchandising. As Simpson speaks personally, intimately, the background clatter of movement and "the muffled speech of other prisoners and their visitors," noticed by Schiller during his visits and noted in his "Foreword" (xiii-xiv), is captured in the live recording. The promise of a close proximity to an incarcerated Simpson may not necessarily be a strong selling point. What may have been for some an exciting close encounter was for me too close for comfort. For months I could not listen to Simpson's voice. The audio book remained sealed in its protective clear plastic packaging. When I finally listened to the audiocassette, Simpson did not sound like the charming and terrifying force I had imagined. He seemed like a humbled man reading carefully from a script.

I did not have the same emotional aversion to I Want to Tell You in printed form. As I ordered my copy of the book from the United States, it arrived shrink-wrapped in clear plastic. This took the unwrapping process a step further for me. The tactile involvement was charged with an enticing and urgent arousal as I sifted through the physical layers of packaging that separated me from Simpson and what he wanted to tell me; from the acceptance of what I had bought and paid for. Hyde relates a similar experience of textual separation anxiety:

I remember the time I went to my first rare-book fair and saw how the first editions of Thoreau and Whitman and Crane had been carefully packaged in heat-shrunk plastic with the price tags on the inside. Somehow the simple addition of air-tight plastic
bags had transformed the books from vehicles of liveliness into commodities, like bread made with chemicals to keep it from perishing. In commodity exchange it's as if the buyer and the seller were both in plastic bags; there's none of the contact of a gift exchange. There is neither motion nor emotion because the whole point is to keep the balance, to make sure the exchange itself doesn't consume anything or involve one person with another. Consumer goods are consumed by their owners, not by their exchange. (10)

I would think Hyde's frustration and anger was due to the fact that the heat-shrunk plastic designed to protect the rare and sensitive first editions denied and thwarted his desire to touch, to make contact with such precious objects of worth and merit. Yes, it is the commodity exchange that separates us from the gift and yes, the seller guards and mediates this displacement, as does our role as buyer. But what the text offers is still a gift and once purchased we receive what the text offers as a gift, especially when it is the gift of Thoreau or Whitman or Crane; and even when it is Simpson's *I Want to Tell You*. It is the physical exchange of money for the vehicle that transports the gift that momentarily, tangentially diverts the course of the gift and its spirit, its motion and emotion. The commodity is the material object of the book, not what it contains. What it contains, the linguistic art created and given by the author, is the gift. Literature is still consumed as a gift even when we must pay for it, whatever we must pay for it. Language is a gift given so that it may be spoken, heard, written, read, shared, reciprocated. Does not Hyde's covetousness lay claim to the worth of the objects he worships and craves, denying their classification as mere commodities?
Step 10: Simpson receives and takes from
the consumer-reader

Simpson receives and takes his payment for his narrative and textual services rendered. He
is the text's financial beneficiary. As a product, I Want to Tell You is dependent on the effect of
market demand and consumer interest. A condition of the commodified cultural sphere to which
Simpson's defense fundraising memoir belongs is that his text will be de-valued or lose value over
time; it will depreciate. Its occasion, its topicality is no longer culturally crucial or commercially
viable. Its residual value is its personal worth as a memento and a reminder, and its invaluable
status within a secondary marketplace of memorabilia. On March 31, 1997, well after the juridical
verdicts of the criminal trial and the civil trial, Time magazine reported that I Want to Tell You had
been remaindered in Los Angeles bookstores, selling for US$99c (23). On February 2, 2000, I
purchased the book through Amazon, the online bookstore, for $US15.99. It was sourced from an
$US2.00. The initial recommended retail prices were $US17.95 for the printed book and $US9.99
for the audio book.

In closing this chapter, I return to the penultimate step in the ten-step program of giving-
taking-giving exchanges that guide I Want to Tell You through a process of production and a
practice of consumption, from letter writer to memoir reader, via Simpson. From our position as
reader, how do we receive the letters contained within Simpson's text and how do we perceive
them? What are we to make of these donated components of the commodity that is I Want to Tell

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32 On January 3, 2004, an autographed copy of I Want to Tell You was listed on eBay for
You? As a remote partner, or party, to whom they are passed, how should we take them and what should we do with them? What can we give in return? Do we give it to Simpson or to each letter writer? And how can each published letter writer possibly take what we give? This, then, is the “extreme difficulty” (Derrida, *Given Time* 81), the extreme complexity of Simpson's text as a figurative assemblage of non-fiction confessional narratives. The perplexities of *I Want to Tell You* remind us that the "structural principle" of language and textuality is the "phenomenon of gift-countergift, of giving-taking - and of exchange" (Derrida, *Given Time* 80, 81). The ambivalence of the gift is that it gives and takes; it is given and taken. It can be good and bad, true and false. It generates a formalised intimacy and a familiarised distance. It demands a public performance of self in relation to another person. It is a social exchange, a social transaction. The ambivalence of the epistolary form is that it gives and takes; it is given and taken. It can be good (fan mail) and bad (hate mail), convey honesty and falsity. It requires a public performance of self, a representation. It generates an intimate address and a physical distance between sender and recipient, between self and another. It is a social exchange, a social transaction. A phatic object with phatic objectives, a letter has requirements. It is an emotional labour. It makes requests of both the writer and the recipient, it asks, demands, takes. It is the writer and the recipient who give. A letter demands time and energy from the writer, the time and energy to be written and sent; and it asks that they care enough to commit to the designated time-consuming, energy-consuming act of writing. A letter demands time, energy and courtesy from the recipient, it requires that time, energy and attention be devoted to its reading and contemplation; and it asks that the recipient care enough to commit to their allotted, time-consuming, energy-consuming task of reading. The obligation to reciprocate is inherent in the phatic address of the letter as a genre, whether it is acted
upon or ignored. Even to make no reply is a response. For Simpson *I Want to Tell You*, a defense fundraising memoir, is an obliging and an economical way to meet the covert and overt demands of his published and unpublished correspondents. The ambivalence of his text is that it gives and takes, it is given and taken, it can be fact and fiction, trustworthy and duplicitous, it is intimate and distant, private and public. It involves the public performance of author and reader, an engagement of self with another. What should we take and requite in response to what is given as gift, as letter, as narrative, as text in *I Want to Tell You*? What is expected of us?

These dilemmas of textual etiquette with respect to *I Want to Tell You* force us to consider the letters as hostile witnesses or apocryphal texts and ask: What if the letters are counterfeit? To pass as gifts within the sphere of Simpson’s text the letters must be acceptable as such to us as readers. We must feel confident that we can take them as gifts and reciprocate appropriately with our trust. In order for this to happen they must first be accepted and requited as gifts by Simpson. To pass as authentic, true, non-fiction, they must be given and accepted as such by their writers, by Simpson and by the text, before we can consider them to be so. Their intention is determined by the tone of Simpson’s reception. The process of exchange encodes the thing. It is a matter of interpretation, consideration. All writing as a representational form is counterfeit, fiction, figurative, ambivalent, a form of passing. The spoken word, the written word, passes as real and is taken for real, but it can only ever be a pose and a performance, a representation of reality; it is metaphorical. Passing, presentation, appearance is not about truth but about trust and faith in what one believes about what we experience, see, feel. In narrative terms each narrator in Simpson’s text gives and we accept what they offer. We receive them and their address as authentic (true, non-fiction) and we reciprocate with the courtesy (care and respect) due their
candour and honesty, their confidence and confession. We acknowledge that the "I" of the utterance is a performative presentation, a textual representation of self, but we deny that it can be a false signature. Each narrator, including Simpson and Schiller, sacrifices their self "in the name of truth or of friendship" (Derrida, *Given Time* 121), they present their self to view and give their self over to our judgement publicly, textually. Simpson gives himself to us as a sight and a site for social and textual commerce. It is Simpson who makes a spectacle of himself.

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33 Derrida notes of the narrator's friend in Charles Baudelaire's "Counterfeit Money": "Confiding himself thus (in the name of truth or of friendship), he gives himself, to be sure, he pretends at least to give himself, to make a show of himself [se donner en spectacle], to present himself to view, to give himself over to judgment" (*Given Time* 121).