Too Many Letters

Simpson's fan mail generates a sense of place and establishes social relations between persons. This is its generosity; this is what makes each letter a gift. It would be easy to dismiss Simpson's autobiographical endeavour as little more than a self-serving image restoration narrative and an opportunistic attempt to raise money for his defense expenses. It would be easy if it were not for the inclusion of 108 of the more than 300,000 letters Simpson received from June 18, 1994, to December 1994, during his remand at the Los Angeles County Jail. The dynamics of the genre of celebrity memoir, its rhetorical gestures and effects, are invigorated by the tactical deployment of additional narrative forces - non-fictional, epistolary, testimonial - embedded with Simpson's voice. The agency of the ordinary person, the fan, whose letter writing instigated and validates Simpson's writing, is privileged in both the structural and thematic organisation of *I Want to Tell You*. Simpson's narrative admission is a textual recognition of his dependence on the productive creativity of the celebrity-fan dyad. The regard of Simpson's fans had an inventive and persuasive potential that should not be underestimated: their scopophilia had the power to transform Simpson's circumstances. The removal of Simpson from their sight, the impediment of the very real barriers of his incarceration, heightened the intensity of the desire to gaze upon him, to be in touch with him. An urgent, erotic curiosity initiated the replacement of a scopic tendency with an epistolic drive.

In this chapter I propose a reading of Simpson's fan mail as exemplary of unwitting and unintentional heroics. A sense of its remarkable worth surfaces from the drama of Simpson's text. Simpson's fan mail is the work of productive consumers, recreational practitioners, whose business
is autonomous and creative, a social tactic. With the guidance of Certeau's work on quotidian practices, an illumination comes of looking closely and intently, without prejudice, at the "everyday pursuits" and "particular circumstances" (Certeau ix) of the occasion and the popular. Following the particular circumstances of the occasion of Simpson's arrest and remand for the alleged murder of his ex-wife and her friend became part of everyday pursuits and popular practices such as watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and magazines, office chatter, bar talk, dinner table discussion. The everyday practice of Simpson's mail, its purpose, was reconfigured by the particular circumstances of his situation. Simpson received letters from concerned members of the general public as well as his loyal fans: "Some of the people who wrote letters to me didn't know me and really hadn't followed my career. But I had made an impression on them and whatever they remembered about me was good and happy and honest" (Simpson 4). The selection of letters included in *I Want to Tell You* represents the personal, immediate, subjective feeling of a practical consciousness in action. A minor yet significant unofficial social history emerges from the epistolic expression of personal experience. Raymond Williams writes that "[p]ractical consciousness is almost always different from official consciousness" (130). Each letter Simpson received articulated the personal experience of a national event and the need to share that experience as feelings and thoughts with the persecuted famous man who was at the time and is (still) its cynosure. This response was triggered by Simpson, his "suicide note," the "Bronco Chase," his alleged criminality, his arrest and remand for the Brentwood murders. *En masse* and individually, the letters bear witness to Simpson; they testify and account to him. And Simpson shared "his thoughts and feelings" (Schiller, "Acknowledgments" 197) in return in *I Want to Tell You*. The autobiographical, first person elements of Simpson's memoir - the published letters, Simpson's narrative, Simpson's photographs, Shiller's "Foreword" and "Acknowledgments" -
articulate presence, social and personal life as it is "actively lived and felt" (Williams 132). *I Want to Tell You* demonstrates what Williams calls a "structure of feeling": "characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity" (132). It presents "a social experience which is still in process" (Williams 132). *I Want to Tell You* was released as the criminal trial began. The "private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating" (Williams 132) experience of the writing process is foregrounded in Schiller's realisation of the authorial sight of Simpson within the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail. These conditions of its creation - private, idiosyncratic, isolating - are present in the style of Simpson's text.

*I Want to Tell You* is the product of actual social relations and practical social activity. The force of Simpson's fan mail was more than theoretical, symbolic or metaphorical. The letter writers became dialogic artisans whose excessive epistolary practice co-produced Simpson's text as a cultural artefact and a pay-per-view commodity. Their rhetorical tactics proved to be not passive, docile or guileless. Their rhetorical tactics initiated and enunciated an effective power. The affecting force of Simpson's mail is foregrounded in his opening narrative remarks. His anecdotal account of its initial arrival at the Los Angeles County Jail is a performance of remembrance that rejoices in the wonder of the experience, relived in its telling. The excess and immediacy of such attentive, intense public desire to reach him, to reach out to him, is a delightful surprise. The extent of his admiration for this remarkable epistolic feat is captured in the exuberance and tenor of his expression. The dramatic mood of his response to the situation conjures an image of Simpson shaking his head in astonishment as he smiles with amusement and gratitude:
In my spare eight by five foot cell there were just bundles of mail, big bundles, small bundles. I remember all that mail around my feet. It was wonderful, the one thing in my life at that moment that was wonderful and beautiful. The jail's phone was ringing off the hook with people asking for my booking number, 4013970, so that their letters would get to me. They had to hire more people at the jail to help them with my mail. Here I was, still in a fog, and one of the lieutenants comes to me and wants to discuss the problem of my mail! Letters were coming to Los Angeles without any address, some just said "O.J. Simpson, L.A. Jail." It just did not stop. One writer, Susan Geise, from Yorba Linda, California, said I needed my own ZIP code.

Thank you. To everyone who wrote, thank you. Your letters kept me sane in those first days. (4)

Simpson believes his readers have to do more than hear about his mail to accept the possibility of its extraordinary occurrence. He reconstructs imaginatively what he witnessed, so his readers can see it, and he reenacts its effects entertainingly, so his readers can feel it, as he did.¹

There seems to be more at stake here than the reader's reception, than the reader's belief in Simpson's testimony. In the unrehearsed spontaneity of Simpson's oral delivery is a sense of self-discovery and self-revelation. His textual memorialisation of the experience seems to be not merely for our benefit as judging readers. Telling the tale allows Simpson to process the experience of his mail and its (emotional and administrative) effects; it is a way for him to convince himself of its veracity and certainty. The public confession of shock and disbelief is a persuasive

¹ As Simpson continues to be bombarded by letters while writing his memoir, the positive affect of his mail remains high, reinforced experientially.
narrative demeanour, an inventive, performative topos, utilised by Simpson throughout *I Want to Tell You*. Its affecting rhetoric appears in the letters and Schiller's "Foreword," and in Simpson's narrative, where it is applied to his mail, the murder of his ex-wife and her friend, his arrest and incarceration, the attitude of the media, racism, and the legal conditions of the North American justice system.

The limitations of Simpson's detention reconfigure and redefine his everyday practices, so that activities previously considered ordinary and commonplace take on an inflated, emotionally charged value. When sent to the gaol, Simpson's mail acquires a heightened and new significance. The practice of receiving and reading his mail resonates with an unprecedented importance and relevance. Simpson's mail has the power to move and transform in its effects. The letters become a positive focal point for a despondent Simpson. They generate a locus of mental liberation by counteracting the solitude of his spatial confinement and relieving his boredom, loneliness and distress. Serendipitously, the "intervention [of his fan mail] transforms [Simpson's circumstances] into a favorable situation" (Certeau 38) – in certain respects, at least. A fortuitous turn of events, their arrival signals the possibility of a tactical advantage, one that will ultimately benefit the penalised hero in emotional and financial ways. According to Simpson, in action, *en masse*, the material presence of his mail is momentarily arresting. Both he and gaol staff are stunned by its immediate arrival and rapid accumulation (Simpson 3; Schiller and Willwerth 112-13). The relentless determination of the letter writers to secure their target and offer succour diverts and distracts attention within the gaol: it becomes a "problem" (Simpson 3), disruptive to

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2 Simpson's mail did not abate. On the day of his acquittal and release from gaol, Tuesday October 3, 1995, the garage at his Rockingham estate contained 70,000 letters for Simpson, "still unopened" (Schiller and Willwerth 874).
institutional routine. Simpson's mail generates additional work for gaol staff, disorganises daily work practices and channels energy into areas of unofficial productivity. The burden of the letters requires a management strategy so procedural order can return, proper command and function can be restored, to the system of processing (warehousing, detaining) inmates rather than mail.

Simpson's mail is an urgent and unique "problem" (Simpson 3) entailing an effective, efficient, yet costly, solution: the gaol must hire more staff to help with Simpson's mail (Simpson 4). The actuality of this solution is absurd.

Simpson's mail is tactical. It subverts the disciplinary regime of the dominant order (the Los Angeles County Jail) by way of personal and social means. Certeau writes:

> The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to *keep to itself*, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a maneuver [. . .] within enemy territory. It does not, therefore, have the options of planning general strategy and viewing the adversary as a whole within a district, visible, and objectifiable space. It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. [. . .] It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. (37)

As the letters collect around Simpson's feet, like autumnal leaves, their excessive accumulation problematises the space available to Simpson, "within enemy territory" (Certeau 37). His meagre prison cell, a "spare eight by five foot" (Simpson 4), cannot accommodate the force of this non-
stop, postal delivery. In the "the space of the other" (Certeau 37) there is no place for the material extreme of Simpson's mail. There are "too many letters" (Simpson 3). The sheer number of messages for Simpson insists he is popular and favoured: "[m]ost were supportive" (Simpson 3). In its penetration of the penal space, unable to be ignored, this resounding regard demands that inmate 4013970 be given special attention. The institutional response to Simpson's mail ensures, paradoxically, relatively, almost impossibly, that, on the inside, Simpson is indulged. The consideration he receives from both internal and external resources is significant. The intervention of Simpson's mail challenges the procedures of bureaucratic and administrative authorities. It fissures the boundary between the bodies governing criminal and civil affairs. Under the energetic strain of the rhetorical repetition and excess articulated by the letters the inviolable machinations of the correctional facility submit to the personal concerns, the civil rights, of the inmate: guilty or innocent of the criminal charges filed against him, Simpson is entitled to his mail.

The desire to reach Simpson, to touch him in some way transforms the places and "the situations in which [the letter writing practitioners] exercise their 'art'" (Certeau xvii) and exert their will. Facilitated by the aegis and surety of the United States Postal Service, ordinary citizens, consumers demonstrate Certeau's assertion that their status within the system as users, "as the dominated element in society [. . .] does not mean that they are either passive or docile" (xi-xii). As tacticians, these customers apply a manipulative pressure, artfully, guilefully, unknowingly, in the practice of their consumption of the quotidian operations of the post. By way of "practical ruses and rhetorical movements" (Certeau 39), not only do the "weak make use of the strong" (Certeau xvii), ingeniously, as Certeau suggests. It would appear that the "superior force" (Certeau xvii), amazed and charmed, effectively persuaded, are only too willing to be of assistance, to ensure
Simpson's mail is accommodated. This activity is obliging to Simpson and his fans. The continual arrival of mail for Simpson would have been an annoyance for staff at the Los Angeles County Jail. In keeping with the "hospitable" theme, as if providing valuable customer feedback, Simpson rates the level of service provided by the Los Angeles County Jail in his memoir: "I must say I'm impressed with the sheriff's department - at least the people running this place. They're totally professional - not like the LAPD" (162); "There are about eleven sheriff's deputies working in my area of the jail. These guys are real professionals" (162). In appreciation Simpson reveals his intention to reward their good care of him and to keep in touch: "After I'm released, I'm going to have a weekly golf tournament with a rotating group of deputies" (162). This bond suggests the deputies are fans of Simpson; or, this is what Simpson would have us believe. To be a fan of Simpson is to believe him innocent.

It is as if Simpson considers himself a guest of the Los Angeles County Jail, deserving special consideration because his remand is an unbelievably big mistake. Amongst Simpson's praise for the sheriff's deputies is the complaint of suffering a wrongful indignity and maltreatment:

The system is wrong to treat me exactly like a convicted criminal in this place when I'm still innocent under the law. I'm led everywhere in handcuffs and a body chain. I have to kow-tow when I'm told: 'Stand here,' 'Stand there,' 'Face the wall' - you know. [. . .] I'm being treated like the worst criminal in the place (162).

Simpson goes so far as to apologise to his gaolers for any inconvenience he may have caused: "I hope I have not made their jobs any more difficult than what they normally are" (162). The promised weekly golf tournament is a form of gratuity. Simpson's emotional attitude is erratic in this section of his narrative (161-62). His tone shifts from frustration, to anger, to blame, to praise,
to apology, to gratitude, to anger in the space of twenty lines. He has surges of strength and weakness; he challenges and cowers. This is a condition of the spoken register of Simpson's oral delivery, spontaneous and candid (uncensored, unaltered). However, the verbalisation of his thoughts, the logic of his unscripted utterance, also reveals something about Simpson's situation. He is vulnerable. He must be careful. His memoir will be released while he is still in custody. Simpson must adhere to the rules of the system as designated by place as he awaits trial in custody. And yet, as he writes, he still has the wherewithal - the energy, resources and support - to challenge the conditions of his incarceration. He is an "innocent" man who has not acquiesced in spirit. He is still provoked by the injustice of his penal restraints.

Telephone requests for Simpson's booking number caused further disruptions at the Los Angeles County Jail. Simpson writes: "The jail's phone was ringing off the hook with people asking for my booking number, 4013970, so that their letters would get to me" (4). The repetition of Simpson's booking number as it is spoken to civilians and written by civilians generates an operational purpose for this identification code beyond its primary function as a penal tool. As a penal tool, the allocation of an anonymous series of digits de-personalises and re-places Simpson (or the iconic, affectionate appellation of "O.J."). The booking number places Simpson within a system of law and order. It is an administrative and punitive designation, representing his alleged felon status as the perpetrator of a double homicide and an inmate at the Los Angeles County Jail. As a locating device, it sorts and classifies Simpson in accordance with police departmental procedure and the practices of the criminal justice system. Simpson's booking number is a ZIP code insofar as it signifies Simpson's zoning for a corrective improvement plan of trial, punishment
and rehabilitation. It controls the conditions of his identity and daily regimes; it defines the boundaries of his individual liberty, of where he can go and what he can do.

Civilian interest in Simpson's booking number and the civilian use of Simpson's booking number generates alternative possibilities for its function and signification. While remaining dependent upon the formality of the prison system, its proper working place, Simpson's booking number is appropriated by those outside the system, "in another place" (Certeau 29), for their own purposes. It is the kind of activity Certeau describes as "bricolage," or "making do" (29); a practice analogous or equivalent to "what in France is called la perruque, 'the wig'" (25), in that each letter writer and Simpson utilises the resources of the system to their own advantage. These resources are minor, "scraps" (Certeau 28). Time, as it is diverted for non-profit purposes, is the major resource stolen by such activity (Certeau 25). This tactical behaviour is an "art of diversion, which is a return of the ethical, of pleasure and of invention" (Certeau 28). In his definition of "Making Do" as uses and tactics, Certeau states: "Although they remain dependent upon the possibilities offered by circumstances, these transverse tactics do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it" (29). The rhetorical reiteration of Simpson's booking number makes it useful for someone who does not work within the (prison) system, pertinent to a different sphere of "action and security" (Certeau 38). Although civilian use does not disobey "the law of the place" (Certeau 29), it does manipulate the official signification of Simpson's booking number. It is a delinquent use, a counterpoint that turns the interpretation of Simpson's booking number into a favourable and positive account. Each quotation of Simpson's booking number is a statement of his current market price. To quote Simpson's booking number is to contribute to an estimate of
Simpson's worth, his popularity and his commercial evaluation as a commodity. Simpson's value is increased by the accumulation of rhetorical and material quotations.

*I Want to Tell You* was released as the criminal trial began, while Simpson was still on remand at the Los Angeles County Jail, so, by repeating his booking number for effect in both the printed book and the audio book Simpson promotes its ready availability for the consumer-reader. He highlights the advantages of its use and the opportunity it affords as a communication device: it is a way of getting in contact with him and a way of making sure packages will get through to him. The preponderant re-use of Simpson's booking number, 4013970, deactivates its function as an anonymous cipher. It becomes a ZIP code, or a private post office box number, a locating device that positions Simpson as a person and a correspondent.³ The utilisation of Simpson's booking number is a tactical intervention, it infiltrates partitioned, secure areas of action, bypassing the protective services designed to keep criminals separate and hidden from the civilian population. Using 4013970 deactivates the gatekeeping function of Simpson's booking number and activates a virtual gateway to Simpson, a portal to guarantee access will not be denied. For efficient procedural purposes a letter sent to Simpson at the Los Angeles County Jail should include his booking number on the envelope. But the rules, when tested, are not rigid and, remarkably, letters with an incorrect or incomplete address are still delivered, much to Simpson's incredulity and relief: "Letters were coming to Los Angeles without any address, some just said 'O.J. Simpson, L.A. Jail'" (4). Simpson makes a minor error, a parapraxis, in his recording of this detail for the audio version of *I Want to Tell You*. He substitutes "from Los Angeles" for "to Los Angeles" (Simpson 4). This

³ Simpson's booking number becomes the ZIP code he needs: "Susan Geise, from Yorba Linda, California, said I needed my own ZIP code" (Simpson 4).
slip of the tongue suggests a Freudian anxiety, as if Simpson imagines himself to be somewhere other than Los Angeles. Indeed, for Simpson the confines of the Los Angeles County Jail would be foreign territory, unknown and hostile, far removed from the Los Angeles of his experience. Yet, as Roland Barthes argues in "Freedom to Write," Simpson's misapplication in the "practice of expression" (44) can also be interpreted as a "euphoric gesture" (45). Giving himself up to the "intoxication" and "jubilation" (Barthes, "Freedom to Write" 45) of the moment, past and present, Simpson forgets to be proper and deviates from the script. As his reading and reliving of the experience meld, Simpson is taken by surprise and delighted all over again.

The letters to Simpson have a transporting, metaphorical purpose. They initiate narrative trajectories and "spatial trajectories" (Certeau 115). Like beacons, they guide Simpson through the emotional and psychological "fog" (Simpson 4, 7) of his grief and shock to a realm of busyness and business. More than 300,000 letters activate the production of Simpson's memoir and a representative 108 of the letters constitute a considerable amount of its content. Simpson's fan mail and hate mail is re-presented for consumption by the reader. Reproduced in Simpson's text, it functions as testimonial evidence, supporting documentation for his narrative. In this way, Simpson appropriates the procedures that govern the initial writing and intended reading of the letters. His legitimate "re-use of products" (Certeau xvii) re-works their enunciatory possibility in a "secondary production" (Certeau xiii) or tactical secondary writing, a re-writing. The letters are cited directly, almost all of the published letters are referenced and Simpson makes no secret of the fundraising imperatives of his text. This authorial and editorial activity suggests that the operations of Simpson's "secondary production [are not] hidden in the process of its utilisation" (Certeau xiii), but
foregrounded. The textual display or appearance of openness may, in itself, be a creative
manoeuvre, a practical ruse or rhetorical movement made by Simpson to generate a sense of
trustworthiness and sincerity. Simpson's textual use of the letters is an instance of "poaching in
countless ways on the property of others" (Certeau xii); on the experience, thoughts and feelings of
others. It is an improvisational performance of what Certeau classifies as 'poi sis': a "consumption"
or "usage" that is "another production" (xii), best defined by the "Greek poiein, 'to create, invent,
generate" (205). Interactive social relations based on (personal) epistolary contact create, invent
and generate the series of borrowings that comprise and construct Simpson's text as a personal
response to the (written) work (letters, messages, questions) of others.

Simpson's fan mail is sociable. It instigates social activity, "friendship and intercourse"
(Mauss 11) between individual persons, that invigorates the space in which its reception takes
place (the Los Angeles County Jail). The persistence of the letters to Simpson generates an
effective power source for the transformation of place through practice. The by-product of this
transformation is creative and artistic activity. Simpson's authorial activity, in response to his fan
mail, appropriates and re-designates the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail, an in-
between space, as a place of authorship, an authorial site. It is where Schiller interviewed
Simpson and recorded Simpson's spoken words for I Want to Tell You. It is where Simpson read
excerpts of his memoir for the audio book version. The two men worked together in a large room
separated "by a glass partition six feet long," one inch thick, rising "almost three feet" above a "gray
Formica flange that served as a table" (Schiller, "Foreword" x). The microphone for the tape
recorder was hung on Simpson's side of the glass (Schiller, "Foreword" xiii). Schiller notes the
privacy of this room, its "sterile quiet" ("Foreword" x), in his recollection of the writing process.
Authorial activity does not transgress or break the rules of use for this room appointed for visiting, but it is certainly not proper to it. In the process of being adapted by its practitioners "to their own interests and their own rules" (Certeau xiv), it is spatialised as other, rationalised as other. In a way that is different to Certeau's comment that the "space of a tactic is the space of another" (37), and yet similar. To make it one's own is to make it other, it is a kind of innovative re-invention that takes place within "the space of another" or "enemy territory" (Certeau 37). The spatial re-determination of the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail signifies a passing aspect or is symptomatic of a temporary condition. For it is only when the visiting area is being used, occupied for the purpose of writing Simpson's book that it is practised as an authorial site and functions as an other space. However, there is a residual effect in which the space operates at all times, outside any particular time, as a space of otherness. For it is the space in which the authoring of I Want to Tell You took place and unalterably always will be. "It is a mastery of time through the foundation of an autonomous place" (Certeau 36). This proprietary claim to an autonomy of place is demonstrated by independent practice, by a temporary control. In a way, secular practice sanctifies the visiting area, making it a transcendent, sacred site. Fan mail sanctifies Simpson as a secular deity, an idol. There is also a strong infusion of religious benefaction and Christian praise in the call of the letters (Simpson 9) and the response of Simpson's thanksgiving narrative. He invokes the work of a divine intervention with his remark: "those letters were a godsend" (Simpson 3).

The practitioners of this authorial space are not only those who are present physically, Simpson (as author) and Schiller (as amanuensis and editor). The letter writers are also practitioners of the authorial space. Their absent, epistolic presence - their spirit - puts into practice
and authorises the occupation of the visiting area as an authorial site. Each initial, individual act of communication originates a mobilisation that collectively necessitates *I Want to Tell You* as a text. Simpson's book is "a way of answering all of the letters" (Simpson 10), a response "to the more than 300,000 people who wrote" to him (Simpson 3). This is Simpson's "first and foremost" objective (3); "The second reason is financial" (10). As Schiller confirms in his "Foreword," something as simple as typical fan behaviour can have extraordinary consequences when its possibility is utilised effectively (vii). Simpson is given an advantage, an opportunity by the 300,000 "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). Their autonomous, recreational activity provides Simpson with the means for "a certain independence with respect to the variability of circumstances" (Certeau 36). Their textual labour profits Simpson. It is beneficial for him, emotionally, morally, economically, textually. Simpson's fan mail has multiple practical applications. It is a motivating force. It provides comfort and support in many ways. An epistolic generosity permits Simpson to arrange his priorities in terms of the text's potential purpose and function, furnishing Simpson with a justifiable and, most importantly, an honourable rationale for writing the book. The welcome opportunity to tell his own exculpatory version of the O.J. Simpson story and to protest his innocence publicly is screened by his conspicuous intent to respond with thanks, firstly, and to generate income for his defense, secondly.

Suspicion or scepticism regarding Simpson's integrity is deflected by his gracious homage to the heroics of the fan and detractor alike, whose dedicated duty of care enables him to secure the "resources" necessary to defend himself adequately in court. Simpson is honest and open
regarding his authorial defense fundraising objectives. He has nothing to hide. He argues the egalitarian righteousness of his moneymaking scheme with indignation. He presents his course of action as fair and equitable given that the case against him, prosecuted by the District Attorney's office of Los Angeles County on behalf of The State of California, is funded by "unlimited resources – from the taxpayer" (Simpson 10). The criminal trial will be funded by ordinary citizens, anyway, consumers who are his fellow North Americans and a high percentage of the "you" of his address. As Helen Stanton notes in her published letter: "This circus costs us taxpayers too much" (Simpson 13). Simpson's rhetoric utilises the inherent power dichotomy that structures the opposing forces of the United States justice system, the prosecution versus the defense, the state versus the defendant, to posit himself as a persecuted innocent deserving the benefits of a community-financed legal aid. As the defendant, Simpson becomes an ordinary, anonymous individual, just another consumer, one of Certeau's "weak" labouring to resist the monolithic might, the "superior force" of the institutional prosecuting body, "the strong" (xvii). The mass media is another "superior force" (Certeau xvii) Simpson, as an inferior force, labours to resist. Marginalised as a criminal Simpson is de-moralised, humiliated, inferior to the "average citizen" (Certeau xvii). He is humbled by circumstance. From this tactical vantage point Simpson is able to make an inoffensive assault. In his appeal he asks for the means to subsidise a relatively level playing field, an equitable defense, and he guarantees how the contributed revenue will be spent.

This proposition of Simpson's text morally binds Simpson, as author, and Schiller, as amanuensis and editor, to a self-justifying, conditional disclosure. Simpson and Schiller seem compelled to give individual accounts of the creation of I Want to Tell You. Each bears witness to the evolution of Simpson's memoir as a social phenomenon and a commercial commodity. Each
testifies to their involvement. This narrative attention to the production process documents the struggle, the creative initiative and the aesthetic activity of the authorial objective as fact.

Rhetorically, this factual register functions to establish the credibility of Simpson and his authorial work, and the credibility of Schiller, as his emcee and his envoy. Schiller's conclusive, introductory *prooecthesis* subjects Simpson to a pre-emptive observation, an emotional scrutiny that demonstrates rather than investigates Simpson's candour. In preparation for the readers' textual reception of Simpson Schiller attempts to move us and persuade us to be compassionate consumers through the revelation of his own feelings, his own experience of Simpson. Schiller's "Foreword" is an impassioned plea, defending Simpson's authorial right and his own editorial labour. Schiller, in the protective guise of a white abolitionist, validates and vindicates Simpson and Simpson's narrative. As *I Want to Tell You* is written from a persecuted, pilloried position and a place of prosecution Schiller's testimony makes Simpson's textual endeavour warranted; it reforms its value from odd and errant to noble and righteous, deeming it acceptable. The testimony of Simpson and Schiller allows readers the opportunity to witness the mythic creation of

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4 Lanham defines "prooecthesis" as an "G. 'introduction, prefatory account'; '1. Defending what one has done or said, by giving reasons and circumstances" (Rhetorical Terms 119). Silva Rhetoricae defines "Prooecthesis" as: "When, in conclusion, a justifying reason is provided."

5 It is an example of *pathopoeia*. Silva Rhetoricae defines "pathopoeia" as: "A general term for speech that moves hearers emotionally, especially as the speaker attempts to elicit an emotional response by way of demonstrating his/her own feelings." Lanham defines "pathopoeia" as: "G. 'excitement of the passions'; 'General term for arousing passion or emotion" (Rhetorical Terms 111).

6 The authentication of Simpson's narrative by Schiller's "Foreword" and "Acknowledgments" is a move reminiscent of the publishing of nineteenth-century slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845) and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (1861), in which testimonials by white abolitionists prefaced and appended the texts. Appearing in the form of letters addressed to the author or as a polemic addressed to the reader, this supporting documentation vindicated the rights of the slave author to articulate their experience in their own words, and vouched for its veracity. Like Wm. Lloyd Garrison and L. Maria Child before him, Schiller asserts his relation to the text as "the ordering intelligence of a white amanuensis or editor" (V. Smith 9).
Simpson's narrative. As the reader is written into the authorial space as audience, silent onlooker, the "you" of the addressing "I," they are also figured as a practitioner of the authorial site. The understanding and assumption of this active role is crucial to our involvement with the text, with what Simpson and Schiller want to tell us. In order to prepare, or ply, readers, the documentation of the genesis of Simpson's text is arranged as a prefatory, excusatory focus.

Schiller's "Foreword" is a realisation of the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail as an authorial site. In Schiller's recreation of his own experience, Simpson becomes an authorial sight. Schiller's careful, meticulous account of the sequence of events that led to his engagement with Simpson confirms his position as Simpson's amanuensis and the editor of *I Want to Tell You*. A contribution Schiller reiterates in his "Acknowledgments" (197-99). Although Schiller's record is infused with factual data - dates, figures and descriptive, eyewitness reports - its details are highly emotional and imaginative. Schiller's observations have a strange and eerie, almost gothic undertone. Schiller's narration, which justifies and legitimates Simpson and his memoir, dramatises the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail as an irrational space of otherness and as an authorial site for readers. Depicting *mise-en-scène* and action sequences, Schiller secures the particulars of time and place in a series of verbal *tableaux vivants*. He notes ominously that his first meeting with Simpson occurred on Halloween night (Schiller "Foreword" viii), the one time of the year when spirits, demons and the dead may walk freely amongst the living, according to pagan superstition. Schiller juxtaposes this effect with the innocuous appeal of Halloween as a playful celebration shared by American parents and children: "Our first meeting was on Halloween night, just as little ghosts, Power Rangers, and Princess Jasmis and their parents had begun ringing doorbells" ("Foreword" viii). What Schiller sees and describes expresses Simpson's
remand placement as a state of exile, a separation that punishes not only Simpson, unfairly, but his children, Sydney and Justin, who cannot be joined by their father, their surviving parent, to enjoy this popular annual event.⁷

Schiller continues to work with a Halloween atmosphere in a less frivolous way throughout his "Foreword." The motif of a spectral visitation permeates Schiller’s realisation of Simpson. Schiller is plagued by an irresistible, irrational fear at the conclusion of their first meeting, as Schiller departs and Simpson remains waiting for the guards to return him to his cell. Schiller recalls: "Once I turned away, I could not look back. […] I did not look back. I feared that if I did, he would not be there" ("Foreword" xii). In part self-induced, the affective state of this separation anxiety haunts Schiller repeatedly during his sessions with Simpson: "Each time as I left, as the sally port door opened to free me from the confinement of the jail, I reflected on my first visit with O.J. I remembered my fear that if I looked back at him, he would not be there" ("Foreword" xiv). And this is the feeling with which Schiller concludes his "Foreword." Schiller’s gaze is powerless, ineffective, blind without the determination of Simpson’s autonomous desire for corporeality, presence, presentation and objectification. Indeed, the Simpson Schiller sees, the Simpson the reader is presented with in I Want to Tell You is an imaginative construct, he is a figuration that can de-materialise and re-materialise at will, through a linguistic medium.

Schiller’s description of his own sensory and psychological experience - what he sees, hears, feels, observes and thinks - is a subjective realisation of Simpson’s experience. Schiller’s

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⁷ As events transpired, that was the only Halloween Simpson would miss with his children. He was acquitted and released on October 3, 1995.
rapture is a kind of "capture" of Simpson. On page ten Schiller captures in detail the effects of Simpson's appearance in an unconventional blazon, unconventional in that Simpson wears the garb of a criminal:

O.J. [. . .] was casual, with a little smile on his face [. . .]. His hands were loosely cuffed in front, a chain between them linking them to a metal belly restraint. He held a brown expandable file folder in his hands, the kind that usually has woven ties to secure the top flap. But, of course, there were no ties or laces on the folder now, nor any laces in his immaculate white high-top canvas shoes. He wore a blue prison jumpsuit with a U-neck, and where a handkerchief would have decorated a suit the words LA COUNTY JAIL were stenciled in white. Beneath the jumpsuit he wore a white T-shirt. He was clean shaven and his hair, while short, looked freshly groomed. He was calm, collected. Despite the jailhouse garb, he did not look like a man in prison. (“Foreword” x)

Schiller juxtaposes the man and his clothing. As the clothing denotes Simpson's situation, his alleged criminal status, Schiller's contrast highlights the incongruity of the man and his circumstances, the impossibility that Simpson could be guilty of the double murder of which he is accused. The institutional practice of slavery hovers over this portrait of Simpson as captive. An African-American in chains is an affecting image. The historical associations of Schiller's portrayal demonstrate the immoral and reprehensible condition of Simpson’s unjustified incarceration. As Simpson is branded a criminal, denoted by the violence of his alleged crime as monstrous and demonic, Schiller functions as a character witness whose personal testimony must exonerate Simpson as beyond reproach. From Schiller’s point of view, the view from which the reader sees Simpson, although he may be dressed and shackled as a criminal, Simpson's immaculate
appearance, his proud bearing and poised demeanour elevates his status as respectable, noble
and wrongfully accused. The marked absence of condescension or pathos in this scene is a
rhetorical gesture towards Simpson’s obvious superiority, an attempt to solicit our indignation rather
than our pity. In Schiller’s thoughts and perceptions, Simpson rises above this humiliation through
the affective humanity of his decorous civility and dignity.

Despite Schiller's framing, the reality of the image of Simpson as a criminal does not wan.
The absence of ties or laces is a condition of penal surveillance; Simpson is on suicide watch. The
confiscation of everyday markers, those convenient and ordinary materials of normal life, signals
the possibility of doom, of a man in extremis, who, paradoxically, can appear “casual, with a little
smile on his face” (Schiller, "Foreword" x). Simpson is ultimately inscrutable. There is a touch of
the macabre in Simpson’s “little smile” (Schiller, "Foreword" x) reminiscent of his signatory “smiley
face” in the "O" of his name on his "suicide note." Schiller’s “of course” ("Foreword" x) is a
composing remark, an orientating mechanism meant to reassure himself and the reader following a
moment of confusion or misrecognition; an uncanny feeling that something is not quite right. It is a
reminder that foregrounds the context of Schiller and Simpson's meeting and our reading. The
authorial scene occurs in a place in which the self, as it is guarded and partitioned, is both
threatened and protected. Schiller's aside articulates resistance and submission to the laws of the
location in himself, Simpson and the reader. Simpson's bondage is discomfiting. It evokes
discomfort and trust.

Schiller effuses a tone of worshipful observance and adoration with respect to Simpson.
Schiller is a fan of Simpson, awed by his presence:
As O.J. sat down in the spotless orange chair opposite me, both his hands were uncuffed by a deputy. In a move that surprised me, O.J. reached down and attached one of the cuffs to a chain fastened to the floor. He did it with a unique grace and sudden smoothness - much the way he once would have surprised a line-man who thought he was about to tackle him. His eyes were sharp, intently alert, like an eagle. He had a total awareness of his surroundings just as he had once had on the football field or in the announcer's booth. ("Foreword" xi)

Schiller attempts to present Simpson as heroic, almost god-like in his superhuman qualities and faculties, but this depiction also conveys a sense of Simpson as predatory, stealthy, unpredictable and mysterious to ordinary humanity. The accoutrements of Simpson's prison uniform and prison chains stage a display of discord and inappropriateness. The imposition of Simpson's visible physical restraints is transcended discursively by Schiller's praise of his intellect and civility. Noting Simpson's triumphant career, Schiller equates Simpson's ability to rise above his present circumstances with his transcendence of the social restraints of his blackness through sporting prowess and a determination to succeed. The placement of such an undeserving man in chains signifies that Simpson has not transgressed, the law has.

In other passages in his "Foreword" Schiller humanises Simpson as an ordinary man bearing the overwhelming hardship of deep pain and sorrow: "I soon realized that he could not discuss his ex-wife’s death or its effect on his children’s lives in any detail without losing his composure. Sometimes there was only the sound of his sobbing [. . .]. In these moments, even though I was only two feet away, he was alone" (xiii-xiv). Schiller's rhetorical function as witness and narrator is to arouse reader compassion, to expose us to Simpson's vulnerability. Schiller
figures Simpson as Job-like, the undeserving victim of an intolerable damnation and unwarranted persecution whose faith is tested almost beyond endurance. It is a comparison Simpson foregrounds in his own narrative as he quotes passages from the Book of Job (133-35) and states: "I was really unaware of all that Job went through [. . .]. I, myself, went through a phase in jail when all these things began to happen to me. Now I am able to relate to Job" (132). Simpson's patient ability to survive the burden of an intense emotional and physical distress gives him an extraordinary greatness for Schiller ("Foreword" xiv). Schiller conveys the sympathy, respect and affection he comes to feel for "this extraordinary man" ("Foreword" xiv) as a revelation. Schiller bears witness to his own unforgettable experience of Simpson, re-living his encounter with the man as unique and privileged, and he invites the reader to interrogate the text with likewise humility. In his "Acknowledgments" Schiller commends Simpson's authorial commitment as a brave and selfless act:

O.J. Simpson determined to do this book, and provided essential access, cooperation, and time so that I could preserve his thoughts and feelings at this juncture. Rarely does one have the opportunity to sit with an individual when he is in the midst of the biggest battle of his life. It took a lot of courage for O.J. to sit for this portrait." (197)

Schiller conceives of the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail as a space of self-determining freedom for Simpson located within the limitations of his captivity. He writes: "I realized this sterile cubicle, five by eight feet in size, was now his only place for contact with the outside world where neither the state nor the news media could scrutinize him" (Foreword xi). This is an impenetrable, confined, yet, captivating space for Simpson and Schiller, and for the reader. It

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8 This room in the visiting area has the same dimensions as Simpson's cell (Simpson 4).
holds a sense of escape, of privacy and invisibility from surveillance mechanisms in its containment. As he remembers the space of writing Schiller reconstructs this place as an otherworldly, in-between dimension, hovering within and without the public and the private. As its purpose is determined by its practice, it is a locus for gathering, meeting and exchange, a safe space of exposure, offering Simpson a respite from the isolation of his cell, but not from the enclosure of the complex. The literary act promises liberation, metaphorically and financially. Schiller involves the reader in the procedural acts and the effects of the authorial and editorial process. The book - and its audio book realisation in particular as we hear Simpson's voice - permit us a virtual visit with Simpson in gaol. That the sections of the audio book spoken by Simpson were recorded in the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail enlivens this virtual possibility; its "articulation of presence" (Williams 135) makes it "real," specific. The background noises, the scraping of chairs and "muffled speech" (Schiller "Foreword" xiii), ensure we hear the visiting area for what it is in actuality.

Writing and sending a letter to Simpson initiates a form of social contact. It establishes a connection with Simpson. Each letter also links its writer to Schiller, to the authorial site, to the text and to the other letter writers in a network of collective relations. The ethical and behavioural rules of letter writing as a social activity insist that its practitioners, operating individually, be geographically displaced and dispersed, and so, physically absent from the addressee. And yet at the same time letter writing proposes an intimate arrangement of address and affect between participants. This ambivalence of proximity and distance in I Want to Tell You, real, textual and metaphorical, is not a contradiction but a condition of the evolving network of contractual relations that comprise this epistolic spatiality and the place of the narrative. By their nature, letter writing
and letter reading are clandestine pursuits, solitary and private procedures. A sense of illicit and erotic secrecy protects the ritual of epistolary practice: the composition of the communication; its commission on paper as it is handwritten or typed; the securing of the communication in a sealed envelope; the formal legalised system of pre-paid postage, involving the delivery and reception of an unknown quantity by an anonymous third party; the opening and unfolding of the material that carries the message by the recipient; the reading by the addressee, a process in which the unknown becomes known, the reason for the writing understood; the acknowledgement of receipt, the acquiescence to or refusal of an obligatory response. The prolongation of the communicative act, suspended between its initiation and reception, and its element of concealment, gives a "voluptuous pleasure" (Certeau 92) to this exchange between an active writing "I" and a passive viewing eye that defers perhaps permanently physical bodily contact and a simultaneous present. Unlike a conversation by telephone or in person, this form of contact privileges a permanence of time and place through its permission of innumerable returns to and negotiations of the encounter through the re-use (re-viewing) of a memento that documents an occurrence in fact rather than memory.

Legally, it was prohibited and neither permissible nor practical for any of the letter writers to visit Simpson in jail. Physical access to Simpson was relatively limited. In addition to his defense team, visitation rights were granted to a list of fifty-two people including family, close friends and material witnesses (Los Angeles Times Staff 45). And Simpson's telephone privileges would hardly extend to the point of allowing him to converse with fans, although it is what he says he "would prefer, actually" (Simpson 10). If Simpson had been free "to talk to the people who wrote, to call them on the phone or speak to them in person" (Simpson 10), the sheer number of people
Simpson would have to contact (more than 300,000) suggests this intention is unrealistic; perhaps just for show. Simpson's admission of his limitations as a respondent is an ironic understatement that demonstrates the overwhelming demands and the irrepressible force of his fan mail (9). Writing to Simpson is an artful approach. It is an inventive and persuasive form of resistance to the isolating spatial strategies of institutionalised, compartmentalised discipline and surveillance. Writing to Los Angeles County Jail inmate 4013970 is a rhetorical re-territorialisation that circumvents the custodial and social barriers separating these interlocutors from Simpson, that refuses to be controlled by marginalisation and the delimitation of access. Operating in this context, the letters to Simpson are the voluntary labour of a recreational craft, the productive work of social artisans or social activists whose power is exercised in the possibility of their discursive, epistolic performance. *I Want to Tell You* is the consequence of the antecedent, emphatic, more than 300,000-strong regard of the published and unpublished letter writers. Contextualised in this way, their activity is an ingenious seizure of means by the weak, the inferior, the silenced, consumers whose willing surrender of their privacy for public consumption highlights that simple, everyday practices can be risk-taking enterprises, hazarding exposure and vulnerability.

The practice of reading *I Want to Tell You*, a text comprised of Simpson's narrative and captioned family photographs, the letters and Schiller's "Foreword" and "Acknowledgments," involves both clandestine operations and social activity. By going public with his narrative, his fan mail and family photographs, Simpson collapses the institutional divide between private property and community-access. Figured as neither transgression nor trespass, the reading of intimate, personal correspondence is invited and welcomed by Simpson. So too is the viewing of his cherished snapshots of precious times spent with his children, his dead ex-wife, his family and
friends. Simpson seems to share unreservedly. The intimacy conjured by Simpson's textual construction and his tone of confessional candour deconstructs metaphorically the literal spatial boundaries between his in here and our out there, or our out here and his in there. And yet, and at the same time, the narrative and financial aims of Simpson's literary endeavour are fundamentally dependent upon the spatial and moral division that separates us from an incarcerated Simpson. The text's success is reliant upon the interlocutory distinction between Simpson's privacy and our voyeuristic fascination, in which the subjective gaze of the reading self positions and relishes the object looked at as other, as spectacle. In Simpson's case this distinction is consensual. He conscientiously positions himself and performs as other, as spectacle, captive, for the subjective reading gaze.\(^9\) This seduction technique is more than a generic convention, it is inherent to the textual encounter with the autobiographical memoirist whose fame-turned-to-infamy lures his audience. Simpson is adept at this provocative, ambivalent play of distance and proximity, of safety and risk. As readers and consumers we are encouraged to pry, invade and intrude. This is Simpson's appeal, for the pay-per-view price of $US17.95 for the printed book and $US9.99 for the audio book. The construction and activation of the AskOJ website in July 2000 with a $US9.95 registration fee (a virtual entry fee) continues to capitalise on this entrepreneurial social dynamic of publication and sports marketing. The new electronic technology enables pay-per-view as a mode of public expression, presentation and access. What is produced by the oral, conversational, almost conspiratorial, style of Simpson's memoir is not a false intimacy but a fake intimacy; what I would suggest is an intimacy fallacy. The intimacy of the text is not real. It is a performance, a rhetorical effect. It is not fallacious in the sense that it is deceitful. Its deception has something to

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\(^9\) See chapter 5 of this thesis for a more detailed analysis and discussion of Simpson's performative style.
do with the sin or the fear of idolatory, but more to do with the logic of the celebrity-fan dyad. The intimacy of Simpson's text is an illusion intended to enthrall and entertain through a sleight of hand trick, a verbal dexterity that allows each of us, individually, to imagine if only for a moment that he is speaking directly to us, directly with us. He is not out here with us - we are in there with him.

The letters to Simpson formulate the dialogic narrative structure of *I Want to Tell You*. Simpson's mail, supportive and accusatory, preconceives and anticipates the shifting narrative trajectories Simpson traces in his memoir. He responds to the questions posed, "issues" raised, opinions expressed, confessions made and commiseration he receives. Instead of an interrogative program, a strict question and answer interview format whereby Simpson replies directly to what is asked, the text's style suggests a more visceral form of responsiveness guided by intuition, emotion and the expressive need of a wounded consciousness; grieving, hurt and angry. The spatial layout of the text on the page foregrounds the discursive arrangement of the letter writers' "thoughts and feelings" (Simpson 10) and Simpson's "thoughts and feelings" (Schiller, "Acknowledgments" 197). A stylistic linear demarcation, an elongated dash, is inserted before and after, above and below, in between each comment by Simpson and each letter. This hiatus in the movement of the manuscript is a mark of respect, a pause between speakers allowing each narration the dignity to stand alone as testimony. Yet it is also an adhesive device that intertwines each narrative strand. Schiller states that he "shaped" Simpson's narrative "into book form" from "twenty-two hours of conversations" ("Acknowledgments" 197). It seems an odd word to describe his editorial organisation of Simpson's text. "[S]haped" is a verb more indicative of a three dimensional sphere of agency, of working with tangible objects already formed and accessible; or pliable, plastic products ready-made for use. And indeed, there is a collage or assemblage quality
to the format of *I Want to Tell You*. Individual, disparate elements are combined to present thematic concerns, parts and chapters, which together, in relation, work to produce the text as a collaborative, artistic gestalt. Although the audio book is an abridged version of Simpson's text, it does follow the printed book in some aspects of its format. There is a silent pause between each passage of Simpson's narrative and each letter. A change in speaker and narrative point of view is registered aurally on the audio book with a variation in vocal style; instead of a variation in typeface: the stylistic graphic differentiation of Futura for Schiller's "Foreword," Garamond for Simpson's narrative and Garamond italics for the letters.¹⁰ The voices of Schiller, Simpson and the actor-readers of Simpson's narrative and the letters are differentiated by their melodic pitch and timbre, by their unique oral delivery.

The affective elements of a sense of personal existential crisis, the "impulse, restraint, and tone" (Williams 132) of a practical consciousness drives the content of each letter and Simpson's utterance. The compulsion to offer spontaneous, candid and realistic testimony regarding Simpson's remand for the murder of his ex-wife and Goldman informs the seemingly extemporaneous stylistic composition of *I Want to Tell You*. The following excerpt from Betty Chappell's letter and Simpson's narrative response provides an example of this sympathetic collusion of narrative expression and textual construction:

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I know that deep black bottomless pit you live with everyday. Now, it is even blacker & deeper than anyone can imagine, unless you have experienced it personally.

O.J., I cry for you in your despair, I cry for you in your loss of your wife, I cry for your crucifixion.
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I am not a sports fan. I write to you as a person who has touched the same depths
of despair, who has come through the other side, but can still remember the daily hell.

O.J., call on our higher power, even if you feel He's so far away right now, ask your
guardian angels to guide you through this, the most trying time of your life.

Believe in yourself, one day at a time, one hour at a time, if that's what it takes.

Most sincerely,

Betty Chappell

Aurora, Ontario, Canada

Days later, after I had read hundreds and hundreds of letters, I started reading
between the lines and realized that there were so many people hurting out there.

Maybe not to the degree I was - the loss of Nicole, the pain of Nicole, never left my
mind as I read the letters. But the one thing that also came across loud and clear was
that there were a lot of people in pain out there. I could hear their fear, their
hopelessness, their sadness. I knew I was not alone. (Simpson 6-7)

The strategic and responsive placement of the monologues of Chappell and Simpson effects a
dialogue, a conversational state of reaction and interaction. There is a mutual projection of distress
and despair in operation between Chappell's letter to Simpson and his narrative response, within
the symbiotic fan-celebrity dyad. Simpson is highly sensitised, alert and emotionally receptive to
the feelings of not only Chappell, but also "hundreds and hundreds" (Simpson 7) of his
 correspondents. He registers and recognises their "pain [. . .] their fear, their hopelessness, their
sadness" (7), as they claim to know and feel his. What we have here is not a celebration of
strength but an unashamed acknowledgement of human frailty, inadequacy and failing. The act of
confessing or attesting to having been beaten and subdued by the vagaries of life is a show of humility, not pride. To testify to a firsthand experience of suffering and to bear witness to the struggle of a painstaking self-determination to survive is an expression of solidarity, faith and mutually beneficial support. It is a relational tactic, "a struggle for life" (Certeau ix), a twelve-step Alcoholics Anonymous survival strategy. This interpersonal communion with strangers is simultaneously real, metaphorical and textual. It is not anonymous and, once published, not private. And this is what Simpson’s text really offers, or promises, an open-ended public expression of thoughts and feelings without synthesis: without any answers that provide a definitive, unquestionable proof of Simpson’s guilt or innocence.

Schiller presents his experience with Simpson as a process of discovery, enlightening and transforming exploratory work. For Simpson the authorial experience is travail. Schiller writes: "It was hard work for O.J. His mind wandered [. . .]. Later, reading the transcripts of the interviews, I could see that he had answered the questions, not in neat numbered paragraphs, but in a kaleidoscope of anguish and emotion ("Foreword" xiii). Schiller interjects twice during Simpson’s narrative to convey the incapacitating effect of Simpson’s anguish and emotion.11 Schiller’s interruptions are a rhetorical request for our understanding, patience and compassion. On page 181 Schiller performs a textual display of adynata on Simpson’s behalf, he expresses editorially Simpson’s "inability of expression" (Silva Rhetoricae).12 During an authorial recording session,

11 A discussion of Schiller’s page 181 editorial insertion follows. His interruption of Simpson’s narrative on page twenty-one will be discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis.

12 Lanham defines “adynata” as: “A stringing together of impossibilities. Sometimes, a confession that words fail us” (Rhetorical Terms 3). Silva Rhetoricae defines “adynaton” as a figure of pathos “used to provoke emotional response”: “The expression of the inability of expression – almost always emotional in its nature.”
Simpson undergoes a fit of *aposiopesis*, "[b]reaking off suddenly in the middle of speaking" (*Silva Rhetoricae*) about the death of his father, Jimmie. As Simpson is "overcome with emotion" (*Silva Rhetoricae*), struck mute by his fear and his grief, Schiller informs the reader of Simpson's silence, the alteration in his behaviour and mode of delivery:

One day in 1986, I woke up in bed with Nicole and just said to her: 'I feel like I got to go see my dad.' I wanted to go see him. It was like the weirdest thing. I flew up to San Francisco and planned to spend the day with my mom, and then see my dad at his place, since I was going on the road shortly. I went to my momma's house first and nobody was there. I knew one of my sisters was staying with my dad, so I went by his house and nobody was there either. I called Nicole and she says: 'Where are you? Your dad's at the hospital.' I went to the hospital and my whole family was there. I just walked in and kind of put my hand on his, and he kind of gave me a squeeze, and he said: 'I thought you weren't going to make that flight.' He liked teasing me about the Hertz commercials where it seemed that I was always late - my dad was like that. I sat there and held his hand, and my mother was sitting in the room with him and I said: 'Let me call Nicole: she's worried.' I went to the pay phone on the floor and I wasn't on the phone a minute and my sister came running out - 'You gotta come!' I ran back into the room and my dad was dead. I don't know why God gave me that five minutes for my dad and not a second for Nicole. It hurts so much about Nicole, I don't know why God didn't give me time with her.

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13 *Silva Rhetoricae* defines "*aposiopesis*" as: "Breaking off suddenly in the middle of speaking, usually to portray being overcome with emotion." Lanham defines "*aposiopesis*" as: "G. 'becoming silent'; "[s]topping suddenly in midcourse, leaving a statement unfinished; sometimes from genuine passion, sometimes for effect" (*Rhetorical Terms* 20). Simpson's performance may be a fit of genuine passion, however Schiller's report of Simpson's inability of expression is for rhetorical effect.
Throughout this part of our conversation O.J. became emotional. His voice broke a few times, and then he wept.

Nicole always used to always say to me even after we split, 'I love you.' And I'd say back, 'I love you.' We tried to say these things whenever we parted because you just never know. (Simpson 180-81)

Simpson's dramatic absence, his close proximity, but unavailability as a witness to his father's final moments is a Freudian parapraxis, a small accident. It is a slip that when repeated in the case of his ex-wife's death becomes an unforgivable, unavoidable affliction; if indeed Simpson was not responsible for her murder. There is a palimpsest quality to the portrayal of Simpson's memories as the two death scenes are bifurcated. Simpson's father's death and Simpson's existential helplessness, his inability to know it and prevent it, becomes a warning, a symbolic prescient precursor in retrospect to the slaying of Brown Simpson. Simpson's *aposiopesis* is a discursive state invoked by the sublime incommensurability of the fatal events that overwhelm and emasculate him. Schiller is obviously moved by Simpson. He is also troubled and challenged by him. Almost an apology, on page thirteen of his introductory remarks Schiller contends the difficulties involved in attempting to interview Simpson formally for publication. He explains how as editor he struggled to order the thoughts of an irrational subject, to keep up and afloat amidst the undisciplined, unbridled copious tumult of what Simpson wanted people to know and the necessary restraint of legal reticence (Schiller, "Foreword" xiii). By Schiller's account, Simpson's spontaneity and unpredictability, his free association of ideas and emotions informs the style of his narrative. Passionate, repetitive, autonomous, "never cautioned or censored by his attorneys" (Schiller, "Foreword" xiii), without revision or alteration, Simpson's way of operating and his vernacular use of language is allied with the contractual characteristics of spoken language and oral discourse. As
Simpson's words were initially recorded, rather than written the humility and authenticity of the speakerly is inescapably foregrounded in the expressive content of Simpson's textual utterance.

The linguist M. A. K. Halliday makes the distinction between the form of written discourse and the form of spoken discourse in *Spoken and Written Language*: "Written language represents phenomena as products. Spoken language represents phenomena as processes" (81). In Simpson's narrative, in *I Want to Tell You*, the processes of talking and doing are foregrounded in his lexical usage of the verb form; as is "typical of speech" (Halliday 80), or conversation. But Simpson's speech patterns reveal more than a typical usage. He seems to utilise the properties of spoken language to exert a manipulative pressure on its structure and delivery. He blends the relaxed informality of conversation with the rhetorical force of oratory. The declarative stance of Simpson's narrative dominates its demonstrative function. He prefaces his speech acts with an assertive show. Simpson simultaneously states his intentions, expresses his wishes and enacts them through speech. For example, "I want to respond to the more than 300,000 people who wrote to me. I want to say thank you, I want to tell you those letters were a godsend" (Simpson 3); "I want to state unequivocally that I did not commit these horrible crimes" (Simpson 15); and *I Want to Tell You*. These statements are a kind of performative utterance as defined by J. L. Austin: "perfectly straightforward utterances, with ordinary verbs in the first person singular present indicative active, and yet [. . .] they couldn't possibly be true or false"; whereby "in saying what I do, I actually perform that action" ("Performative Utterances" 235). When he makes these statements Simpson is "doing something rather than merely saying something" (Austin, "Performative Utterances" 235). His performative utterances or speech acts articulate presence. They are spoken words that capture the present of the writing process as it is lived. On the page they create
a sense of Simpson being present during the reading process. The oral discursiveness of Simpson's narrative generates a rhetoric of presence.

Simpson's performative utterances are complicated by their function, the tone of their delivery and the mood of their reception. Austin states: "it would be absurd to regard the thing that I say as a report of the performance of the action which is undoubtedly done" ("Performative Utterances" 235). And yet this is exactly what Simpson's performative utterances do. They report on and indulge in the action his statement performs, confirming it. It is an emphatic display generated by syntax, the prosodic intonations and rhythms of the vocal register and the idiosyncratic arrangement of Simpson's individual speech patterns, the "practical ruses and rhetorical movements" (Certeau 39) that comprise and represent his way of operating, his own personal style. His signature verbal marking authenticates his narrative. A performative, conversational, attention-seeking praxis is the dominant trope of Simpson's narrative. It is a kind of "operative" written form, as "used by lawyers":

Lawyers when talking about legal instruments will distinguish between the preamble, which recites the circumstances in which a transaction is effected, and on the other hand the operative part - the part of it which actually performs the legal act which it is the purpose of the instrument to perform. [. . .] 'I give and bequeath my watch to my brother' would be an operative clause and is a performative utterance. (Austin, "Performative Utterances" 236)

The operative and performative utterances made by Simpson seem to be declarations that make a commitment to the action they perform, like a promise or a pledge. They are also descriptive, they can "be taken as a description, true or false, of the state of his feelings" (Austin, "Performative
Simpson's repetitive use of the emphatic modal auxiliary "I want to" signals the unconscious rhetoric of an autonomous choice of action, a wish, and a sense of being bound to that action by duty.

Simpson's speech acts draw "attention in some way (without actually reporting it) to some important feature of the circumstances in which the utterance [is] being made" (Austin, "Performative Utterances" 234). His expressive, confessional mode seems "intended not to report facts [necessarily] but to influence people" (Austin, "Performative Utterances" 234). Simpson's rhetorical reinforcement of his intention is a reflexive stammer that reveals his anxious need to be understood and accepted. Not only does he seek to ensure the understanding and acceptance of his words as an author. He wants the reader to understand and accept him as a man, as he stands before us, as himself; as the "gracious" (Simpson 154), "loving guy" (Simpson 168) he wants us to see, and the truthful, innocent man he needs us to believe he is. Simpson foregrounds his desire in the guise of imperative optatives, urgent wishes: moral, ethical and rhetorical. He presents himself and declares himself as a supplicant who with grace and humility begs our indulgence to grant him the favour of our time, honouring his request for us to listen to his story, to hear his confession with kindness and compassion. Yet Simpson's performative utterances are also authoritative commands that grant his readers permission to enter the narrative space, imperatives that compel us to heed his words. The privilege and favour of his benevolent grace, his authority, allows us to be privy to what he wants to tell us, what he wants us to know. His subtle and obvious, covert and overt authorial tactics, the virtues and vices of his oratory, are "good and bad tricks of rhetoric" (Certeau 39). "They are manipulations of language relative to occasions and are intended to seduce, captivate, or invert the linguistic position of the addressee" (Certeau
Simpson's pilloried persona is a dramatic conceit, a rhetorical passing, utilised, performatively and discursively, to shift and manipulate networks of power within his text and without.

Schiller asserts that Simpson's narrative was constructed in conversation, in response to Schiller's interview questions. He stresses that Simpson, driven by his correspondents' need, is the dominant, controlling force. It is a one-man "conversational" show: O.J. Simpson in Conversation. First and foremost, Simpson's narrative is a performance, a presentation. He is never without an audience in the authoring process. On page thirteen of his "Foreword" Schiller admits that in addition to himself, Kardashian and Skip Taft were always in attendance to witness the writing sessions. Their protective presence indicates the need to guard against the possible revelations of Simpson's heartfelt emotional outpourings, the possibility he might lose control and forget to contain or monitor himself, his words. It also exposes the erotic and traumatic intimacy of the one-on-one creative encounters between Simpson and Schiller to be a simulation, an illusion. This private act is performed in semi-public conditions initially, repeatedly and continually. Analogous to the performance of a sex scene by two film actors who are surrounded by a watching, directing closed-set crew off-screen, the intimate, intense, libidinous engagement is a job, a dramatic literary trick. Their parts are staged and scripted with just enough room for

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14 Skip Taft was Simpson's "business manager" (Simpson 189).

15 Indeed, American Tragedy reports that one of Simpson's attorneys, Barry Scheck, was extremely concerned about the legal implications of Schiller's interview tapes; that they could be subpoenaed and incriminate Simpson:

"My God, this is a nightmare!" Barry Scheck exploded. "What if the interview tapes get subpoenaed? They may be inconsistent with Simpson's police interview. What if O.J. testifies? He'll be limited by what he said to Schiller." (Schiller and Willwerth 398)
improvisation and creative manoeuvre to make the experience seem genuine. As players they lay themselves bare and give themselves to the reader, they subject themselves to our gaze so that we may be affected, gratified, entertained. Their own gratification is merely a pose. They “fake it.” Their intimacy is in the control of others; it is edited, produced, packaged. And yet Schiller's attraction to Simpson certainly seems real. As voyeurs we accept the “authorial” exchange as true to the degree we want or wish to be entertained. Schiller's documentary behind-the-scenes account of the making of *I Want to Tell You*, replete with scene clips and production notes, the requisite publicity materials of an electronic press kit, does not deflate the charge of the text's special effects. Our fascination does not work that way. We want to know how it was done so we can marvel or scoff at the enhancement of affect, the artistic feat that enabled the possibility of such a focussed and intimate intensity under the scrutiny of an attendant and immediate probing gaze. Schiller's “Foreword” is background, back-story detail meant to enrich our understanding of our experience of Simpson and his text. It is also an authenticating device.

As Simpson does not mention Schiller in his narrative, Schiller's testimonial inscription of the production process functions as a registration of his own collaborative involvement. Schiller literally writes himself into Simpson's narrative with his rhetorical editorial insertions. And yet, Schiller is compelled to salvage some sort of solitary composing strategy for Simpson's mode of authorship. Even if exactly what that profile may be is obfuscated by the operational combination of Schiller's imaginative discourse and his analytical observations, his feelings and thoughts. Schiller writes: “Before Robert [Kardashian] could even get the tape going, O.J. was talking, telling me of his innocence, his emotional state, recent events, his whole life. Although there were four of us in that glass room, for those moments the others did not exist for him” (“Foreword” xiii). It is not clear if
Schiller considers himself to be an "other," which would leave Simpson creatively, imaginatively, on his own, or if, by "the others" Schiller means Taft and Kardashian, not himself, thereby re-establishing the isolationist imago of his trysts with Simpson. Taking both interpretations respectively, Schiller suggests Simpson's narrative to be in the form of either a soliloquy "in which the speaker is supposed to be 'overheard' while alone," "or while under the impression of being alone," or a dramatic monologue "in which the speaker is imagined to be addressing a silent audience" (Baldick 141, 207, 141). Chris Baldick states: "Soliloquy is a form of monologue, but a monologue is not a soliloquy if (as in the dramatic monologue) the speaker is not alone" (207). In fact, the style and tone of Simpson's narrative fits the criteria for both the dramatic monologue and the monologue of the soliloquist whom "reveals his or her inner thoughts and feelings to the audience, either in supposed self-communion or in a consciously direct address" (Baldick 207). This may be why Schiller's depiction of the authorial scene seems inconclusive. The dramatic form of Simpson's speech in I Want to Tell You conveys both a self-reflective, introspective musing by the subjective "I," and an address of self to an attending audience that is direct, confessional and revelatory.

The idiosyncratic mannerism of Simpson's speech, the parenthetical insertions of "you know" (32), "I want to" (3, 3, 15) and the imperative "[t]rust me" (16), confide or reassure an intimacy intended to impart to the audience a gentle and artful emotional persuasion. His discursive rhetorical questioning and reasoning is provided as argumentation and proof by ratiocination,

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Simpson's seemingly self-addressed investigative affirmations and denials are theatrical, solipsistic soliloquies. In a state of discursive amazement and perplexity, Simpson epitropically "turns things [the non-forensic evidence of his innocence] over to [his] hearers" (*Silva Rhetoricae*) for their, our, non-juridical consideration and judgement.

The inclusion of family photographs in *I Want to Tell You* visually reinforces the personal and sociable style of Simpson's memoir and his nature as a "loving guy" (Simpson 168). It also juxtaposes the spatial dynamics of his incarceration with his life before the murder of Brown Simpson and Goldman. Simpson laments:

I can't even keep pictures of my family in my cell. It's not because I'm not allowed to. I am. I just can't have a picture of my younger kids, Sydney and Justin, because it is so - it's all so debilitating for me when I see a picture of them. I can't control my emotions. I cry. I pray for my kids every morning, every night. I can't have a picture of their mother either. If you cry every day in here, you'll never survive. (54)

Included in his memoir and captioned by Simpson his photographs are restored to their rightful function, even if they are still out of place. His ex-wife features prominently both in the photographs and as the photographer: "Nicole was big on taking pictures. We always had a camera with us, and over the sixteen years you can see our whole life and the life of our kids" (Simpson 150). The

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17 Lanham defines "erotema" as "erotesis": "A 'rhetorical question,' one which implies an answer but does not give or lead us to expect one" (*Rhetorical Terms* 71). *Silva Rhetoricae* defines "erotema" as: "The rhetorical question. To affirm or deny a point strongly by asking it as a question." *Silva Rhetoricae* defines "epitrope" as: "A figure in which one turns things over to one's hearers, either pathetically, ironically, or in such a way as to suggest a proof of something without having to state it." Lanham's definition of "epitrope" does not seem applicable in this instance: "G. [grant of] power to decide": "1. Concessio; Permissio. Conceding argument or permission to an opponent, often ironically" (*Rhetorical Terms* 70). Simpson debates the statements of his opponents with himself. Lanham's definition of "anacoenois" may be more appropriate: "Asking the opinion of one's readers or hearers" (*Rhetorical Terms* 10).
amateur, snapshot quality of the photographs makes them more appropriate for a domestic setting, framed and arranged on a bedside table, in the living room, on an office desk, or in a family photograph album.¹⁸ The direct address of Simpson's commentary appeals to the reader. His tone anticipates attention and interest. It depends upon it. Filled with the joy of reminiscence and a wistful sadness, an intimate spoken register marks Simpson's delivery. It is as if he hands each precious photograph to his readers or turns the pages of a family photograph album, pointing and situating the captured moment in his life, from his perspective. While he does appear in many, our gaze is directed to look at the photographs, not at him. Appositely, his memories are anchored by and engaged with the co-ordinates of a determining singularity revealed in his repetitive use of deictics such as "we," "here," "this," "our," "was," "us," "I," "there," "when" and "that's." The linguistic structure of Simpson's captions is familiar: both stereotypical and standard practice. This is how we all narrate the showing of our photographic memorabilia to others, with the praxis of an individuating, self-identifying specificity and a self-indulgent, affectionate pride. Simpson's photographs honour the times, places and persons they recollect. Their accumulation suggests a secure belonging, a strong sense of place and identity, a personal history. The selection of photographs chosen for inclusion in Simpson's memoir accords with the observations made by David Halle during his research of the display of photographs in the American home: "Family pictures reflect [. . .] the idea that a central aim of life is to spend time enjoying the company of family members. The more such moments a person has experienced, the greater life's value. Family pictures here serve as records and reminders, not of power, status, or ancestry, but of good

¹⁸ The photographs are sorted into four sections entitled: "Pictures I Love" (Simpson 33-40), "My Kids" (Simpson 57-64), "Family" (Simpson 145-52), and "Loving Memories" (Simpson 169-76). It is an arrangement similar to the way that "[c]lusters dominate the placement of family pictures" in the home (Halle 108).
times" (115). Simpson's photographs project an image, the "idea" of his private life as family oriented and happy.

Our reading and experience of Simpson's family photographs is informed by a pervasive sense of recognition. Their intertextuality prearranges both reception and response. The rhetoric of their composition is familial and familiar. Their settings display the common, ubiquitous rituals and practices of an ordinary (Western, particularly middle-class American) existence: social gatherings of family and friends; Christmas; Halloween; the Fourth of July; vacations (spent in Hawaii, Europe, Monte Carlo, Aspen, Vail, New York, San Francisco); celebratory dinners; Brown Simpson in her wedding dress; the college graduations of Simpson's children, Arnelle and Jason; Brown Simpson and Simpson together; scenes of home-life - Simpson reading to his youngest son, Justin in the den of their Rockingham home, his daughter Sydney with her Barbie Dolls, back yards, lounge rooms, winter in the snow, home-made fancy dress costumes, summertime by the pool, children and adults at play. 19 Simpson's photographs suggest the demand for spaces within the home and personal life "intended to counter the centrifugal forces that pull the family apart" (Halle 24), the nuclear family as well as the extended family in Simpson's case. 20 Simpson and his ex-wife appear in the pictures as a happy and "loving" couple, a family. Yet Brown Simpson's visual presence also signifies the "fragility of the relationship between the marital couple" (Halle

19 The shots are typical. Halle states:
   The family photos displayed nowadays reflect a shift from formality to informality. 'Formal' here refers to pictures that depict people either in noncasual clothing or at certain special occasions (such as weddings, graduation, or religious rituals), or both. Most family photos now depict people at leisure - in the backyard, at the beach, on trips and outings within the United States or abroad. (96)

20 "Even when non-kin are depicted, they are usually part of a context which highlights kin relations and, above all, the nuclear family" (Halle 104). I would suggest that the inclusion of non-kin, friends and colleagues, in Simpson's family photographs makes them kin, strongly connected to Simpson. This applies equally to the photograph of the "Mail Volunteers" (Simpson 202-03).
23). It foregrounds the difficulties of their relationship, their marriage and divorce, and her murder. The placement of the picture of Simpson and Paula Barbieri, his girlfriend at the time of Brown Simpson's murder has a connotative function. It is the last photograph in the "Pictures I Love" cluster, in which Brown Simpson appears in each photograph except this one - in five pictures with Simpson, in her wedding dress on the day they were married, with their daughter, Sydney and with their son, Justin. The photograph of Simpson and Barbieri has a domestic setting - they are seated on a sofa - but this is not Simpson's family home, the Rockingham home. Simpson informs the reader: "This photograph was taken at her mom's home last year and is one of my favourites" (40). The inclusion of this shot of Simpson and Barbieri together indicates the importance of Barbieri in Simpson's life. Barbieri's presence provides Simpson with an emotional alibi. It suggests that Simpson had finally accepted that he and Brown Simpson were no longer a couple at the time of her murder and so could not have killed her in jealous rage. It is used to protest his innocence.

Simpson's daily life, his personal and legitimate real-life roles as father, husband, lover, friend, son, brother, tourist and patriot are disclosed in this collection of candid photographs. There are no football photographs of Simpson included in this collection. The choice of shots, their style and subject matter is an indication of Simpson's priorities. Halle notes of family photographs that "informality reflects the drive for pleasurable times with the family rather than for power or occupational success" (115). Simpson's family photographs substantiate the verbal testimony of his narrative. Our critical evaluation of the evidence he presents is skewed by a partiality of judgement, a cultural relativism or social attitude that ensures we critique Simpson's life and his society by placing it, emotionally, sympathetically, in relation to our own. Simpson shows his invaluable, irreplaceable possessions with pride and affection, and he wants the reader to feel and
understand that access to them is a privilege. Their lack of any real commercial value is
problematised by their inclusion in Simpson's memoir. As component parts of the commodity that
is Simpson's text, they are traded as commodified or commodious materials. Simpson's
photographs are tools that sell *I Want to Tell You* and market O.J. Simpson, advertising and
branding his image as a family man, responsible, loved and loving, with a regular life, "no different
from yours or mine." As a good guy who is open, friendly and amiable, with nothing to hide. As a
man who is the same in private as he is in public. They are a pictorial declaration of his statement:
"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"
(Simpson 89).

In addition to and prior to their use and function as narrative props, the letters provide
Simpson with emotional, psychological and spiritual support. As originally intended, they comfort
and console Simpson in a time of need and crisis (Simpson 3-4). The activity of receiving and
reading his mail seems to revive Simpson. He finds solace, peace, beauty, wonder in communion
with strangers (Simpson 4, 7). Simpson articulates the affecting discursive power of the letters and
the affective visibility of their collective immanence. They have a reinforcing materiality. Although
not unconditionally free agents, as Simpson's mail the letters have an autonomy that makes them
capable of mobilising activity and producing effects. Individually and collectively the letters are self-
determining objects. Their tangible presence articulates the life-affirming practice of "a struggle for
life" (Certeau ix), an art of survival. They free Simpson mentally from the solitude he "can't stand"
and satisfy his urgent need "to talk to people" (Schiller and Willwerth 102). Literally, Simpson's
mail generates a link with the outside world, reminding him that he is not alone despite his isolation:
"I'm so alone for the first time in my life. I'm in isolation all the time. I haven't had one full
conversation with another person except when I have visitors. I have good days and I have days
when I get so disillusioned. They say I'm in solitary confinement for my own good. I wonder about
that" (Simpson 165). Simpson's sense of isolation is reinforced within the Los Angeles County Jail
by his solitary confinement and by his protective placement away from other prisoners: "Because of
his fame, inmate 4013970 was isolated from the general population. His first bunk turned out to be
next to Erik Menendez's cell. When guards realized the two famous murder defendants could hear
one another's phone calls, they moved Simpson to a quieter spot and kept the six surrounding cells
empty" (Los Angeles Times Staff 45).

The diversion of his fan mail offers Simpson a respite, a spiritual, almost religious
experience. It allows him to transcend, temporarily, the bonds of his solitary physical captivity, his
enforced exile from his beloved society. Through his mail, Simpson is reconnected to his social
and professional identity as a celebrity, and reacquainted with the accoutrements of fame.
Signifying a particular regard for Simpson, the letters let him know he has an attending audience.
They are the representatives of a heterogeneous spectatory mass that is neither passive nor
docile, but actively engaged in its persistent observational pursuit of Simpson. Simpson does not
consider this form of surveillance an uncomfortable invasive procedure.21 The knowledge that his
fans have not deserted him resuscitates and rejuvenates a despondent Simpson, whose survival is

21 In contrast, see Simpson's comments regarding the video camera surveillance of his cell as an
extreme invasion of privacy:
Solitary in here doesn't mean you're really alone. I have two video cameras watching
me all the time. At first I got flat-out indignant because I could not even go to the
toilet without these cameras watching me. The pictures go to some office somewhere. I
don't know the kind of people viewing those pictures of me. Maybe there are female
officers in there. It took a couple of days, but now the video cameras are not pointed
toward the toilet in my cell. (165-66)
Simpson unwittingly raises ideas about homophilia, negrophilia, mapplethorpism (duCille), penis
envy and the myth of black male genitalia.
dependent upon his futurity as a celebrity and a reputable public figure, well liked and in demand. His status within public opinion is relevant in the marketplace of commodities where he trades on his name and in the jury pool of the legal realm. The latter was crucial, considering the impending trials Simpson would have to endure – the imminent criminal trial for double murder, the wrongful death civil suits filed against him by the Brown and Goldman families, and the Family Court trial for the custody of Sydney and Justin. These socio-economic "relational tactics" (Certeau ix) do not disregard Simpson's most basic human desires for self-respect and exoneration, to be liked and thought well of.

Simpson is quick to let us know that he does have an audience who supports him and is concerned for his welfare. Foregrounding his popularity and his innocence, in that order, Simpson's *I Want to Tell You* is a polyvocal expository text designed to inform, impress and persuade one attendant audience, his readers, with the active regarding force and sincerity of another attendant audience, the letter writers. Simpson is mindful of our opinion as readers, as inaudible interlocutors operating within the dialogic textual space whose epistemological fascination looks for some sort of proof for whatever we may believe about his guilt. In response, he rallies the attention of more than 300,000 letter writing attendees for our edification, garnishing it as positive supporting documentation. The publication of 108 of the letters proves the existence of an observing, corresponding and interested community of Simpson gazers.

An exposing passage in *American Tragedy* figures Simpson's craving for the favourable attention of others as a dependency or an addiction. When it is withheld or withdrawn, he is unable to live or function properly:
For Simpson, who couldn't bear solitude, these letters became his life raft. All his life, O.J. had hardly been able to breathe if he had to be alone. Something in him died without the admiration of others. Now here were hundreds of letters tied up in bundles and stacked in his cell. People cared; people believed in him. They were offering prayers, condolences, the warmest support and confidence. He wasn't alone.

(Schiller and Willwerth 113)

Simpson, in *I Want to Tell You*, and Schiller and Willwerth, in *American Tragedy*, stress the overwhelming and vital importance of his fan mail. Yet, Simpson's catachrestic description of the letters as his "security blanket" (7), and Schiller and Willwerth's catachrestic description of the letters as "his life raft" (113) seems to downscale their value, unwittingly. I do not suggest it is the intention of Simpson or Schiller and Willwerth to downplay the significance of the letters in any way, I think the opposite is the case. The limitations or the constraints of their literary aptitude reveal an unimaginative, inadequate clutching at idiomatic metaphors, already overdetermined, overused and so, *cliché*, in an attempt to elevate the significance of the letters. The diminished figure of speech reveals a not-quite inarticulateness. Perhaps a loss for words, as when one who is not an "artful" writer is challenged creatively by the difficulties of translating, expressing and encapsulating emotion in a literary register. It is a kind of responsive stammering, as when one is caught out or simply caught between saying everything and nothing, between silence and telling, between bearing and baring all. Rhetorically, it is an inadvertent *adynta*, an emotional expression of their inaptitude for figurative expression. Simpson, and Schiller and Willwerth are, afterall, writing in the realm of non-fiction and reportage, respectively. Keeping his language simple and prosaic, Simpson maintains an audience-friendly tenor. Its informality and spontaneity is what makes his narrative interesting, accessible, engaging and acceptable. Tactically, both images, "security
"blanket" and "life raft," suggest a resourceful utilisation, a metaphoric making do. As metaphors they are practical, everyday, pedestrian; and a sense of ease, of not having to work too hard, can be found in the predictable and the popular, for both writers and readers.

The determining strategies of Simpson's remand enforce his occupation of marginalised space. A sense of self and subjectivity that is other, fictional, counter to what he believes himself to be - an innocent man, wrongfully accused - is imposed on Simpson. As a defendant, an alleged murderer, he is pilloried, criminalised, villainised, demonised. By speaking out from within "enemy territory," "the space of the other" (Certeau 37), he is able to manipulate his spatial and temporal confinement, "escap[ing] it without leaving it" (Certeau xiii). Physically and geographically restricted, Simpson makes do with or makes use of the resources available to him and turns the conditions of a foreign and hostile environment to his advantage. He resists alienation in a tactical deployment of friends, family and fans whose textual network of support and affiliation constructs a cosy, safe and familiar space. His creative endeavour generates a liberatory, other spatiality. Through narrative, through story, a mobilisation takes place that reaches out and invites the reader into that space territorialised as other: the space of the text.

The letters intervene in Simpson's text and the greater O.J. Simpson story, inserting narratives that run counter to or operate outside the "commodified, marketplace story and the official story" (Morrison, "Official Story" xv). Commenting, writing, in effect, narrating are improvisational tactics that offer alternative itineraries to the "stories and legends distributed by the newspapers" (Certeau xii), television, magazines, radio; the mass media outlets consumed by the production of the O.J. Simpson story as an event and a "national narrative" (Morrison, "Official
As expressions of social activity and personal experience, the letters propose a heterogeneous story that traverses different perspectives and articulates resistance in an anarchic free range of feeling, thought and opinion. The procedures followed by the letter writing consumers in order to have their uncontrolled say "lend a political dimension to everyday practices" (Certeau xvii). A practical consciousness, a social history in process "develops in an atmosphere of tensions, and often of violence, for which it provides symbolic balances, contracts of compatibility and compromises, all more or less temporary" (Certeau xvii). *I Want to Tell You* is infused with the force of narratives in conversation within and without the confines of Simpson's textual incarceration.
Fascinating Endorsements

In "The Greatest Story Ever Sold: Marketing and the O.J. Simpson Trial," George Lipsitz argues: "The very affinities for products, appetites, and the family in jeopardy that drove the Simpson saga as a media event also made it nearly impossible for public discourse to go beyond the frames and boundaries imposed by television's rhetorical and ideological conventions" (19-20). This chapter is an exploration of *I Want to Tell You* as a "nearly impossible" (Lipsitz 20) space where public discourse could go beyond the boundaries of the mass media response to the Brentwood murders and Simpson's alleged involvement. A sense of *agora* is generated by the antiphonal construction of *I Want to Tell You*. Simpson's memoir is a textual public place of assembly for the 108 first person narrators who engage with, support and challenge him via their epistolary presence. Within the textual marketplace of ideas, opinions and points of view generated by Simpson, controlled by him, to a degree, and commodified for his own purposes, these contributors are visible and vocal. A rhetoric of presence is articulated by the distinctly oral expression of the letters and Simpson's narrative, and by the interpersonal mode of exchange that determines the interlocutory framework and performative style of Simpson's text. Simpson's narrative reproduces the spoken register of his utterance as Schiller recorded it. The letters, though written to Simpson, have a speakerly address. Their textual intercalation as testimony, fascinating endorsements, makes interpersonal reciprocity the operative mode of *I Want to Tell You*. Reciprocity informs the tone, mood, ethical structure and function of Simpson's text.
The dialogic, conversational antiphony of Simpson's memoir is indicative of what Lawrence Levine identifies as a "call and response pattern" (33). In *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*, Levine writes:

> The overriding antiphonal structure of the spirituals – the call and response pattern which Negroes brought with them from Africa and which was reinforced in America by the practice of lining out hymns – placed the individual in continual dialogue with his community, allowing him at one and the same time to preserve his voice as a distinct entity and to blend it with those of his fellows. (33)

The antiphonal formation of Simpson's text makes the same individual and collective allowances Levine observes in the call and response pattern: "the process by which the spirituals were created allowed for simultaneous individual and communal creativity, so their very structure provided simultaneous outlets for individual and communal expression" (33). Simpson’s text generates a strong sense of community. A community adhered by its majority opposition to the epistolary display of Simpson's immoral hate mail and reinforced by its weakness with respect to the narrative power of the mass media. The rhythms of call and response patterning can also be found in the congregational practices of the African-American Baptist church service.  

Baldick defines antiphon as "a song, hymn, or poem in which two voices or choruses respond to one another in alternate verses or stanzas, as is common in verses written for religious services" (12). It may be no coincidence that the "majority of the letters [to Simpson had] some religious theme to them" (Simpson 9). The overriding religious hist of Simpson's epistolary interlocutors conditions the terms of his text and narrative response, the reciprocal rights of the linguistic exchange.

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1 Simpson attended the "Evergreen Baptist Church [. . .] as a boy in San Francisco" (Simpson 131). Simpson mentions this again on page 117: "Evergreen Baptist Church, where I was raised."
One hundred and ten first person narratives coalesce in *I Want to Tell You*, enunciated by Simpson, Schiller and 108 letter writers. This excessive polyphony has a dramatic effect on the speaking and reading point of view. The personal pronouns of "I" and "you" which orient the subjectivity of the narrative viewpoint shift according to the address of each non-fictional narrator, of who is speaking to whom: Simpson to the reader, Schiller to the reader, the letter writer to Simpson. When Simpson is speaking to himself, self-communing, in soliloquy, he is speaking (indirectly) to the reader. The letters to Simpson are the most fascinating narratives in Simpson's text. Each published letter is transitional in that it links the passages of Simpson's narrative and transitional in that it activates a transitory state, a change in consciousness. With the narrative intercession of each letter there is a necessary transition of the first person, subjective "I," and a re-direction of the narrative address of "you" away from the reader to Simpson. It is a kind of turning back to the original purpose of the letter addressed to Simpson, a re-enactment of a textual scene in which the reader witnesses an interpersonal exchange between others. Authorised by Simpson and each letter writer, the reader becomes a voyeur and more. Our reading of each published letter to Simpson activates the animation of the voice of another. A dramatic reading, a rhetorical *ethopoeia*, is enacted as we read from the point of view of each epistolary identity, as we speak from another's point of view. Lanham translates "*ethopoeia*" as a "G. 'delineation of character'" (*Rhetorical Terms* 71). He defines "*ethopoeia*" as:

1. Type of *Enargia*: description of natural propensities, manners, affections, virtues and vices in order to flatter or reproach; character portrayal generally. 2. Putting

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2 A 1993 Father's Day letter from Simpson's youngest son, Justin is also included (Simpson 55). Written prior to Brown Simpson's murder this letter generates a sense of her presence in its writing, as Justin would have been five years old at the time. Its inclusion in *I Want to Tell You*, in the chapter entitled "Kids," is an endorsement of Simpson's role as a father. He is endorsed by the unconditional love of his young son.
oneself in the place of another, so as to both understand and express that person’s feelings more vividly, [. . .] this technique [. . .] does not seem too far removed from ‘method’ acting, or indeed from naturalistic acting of any sort. The term might be used, though to my knowledge it never has been, to describe the ‘acting’ of a character in a play-within-a-play. (Lanham, *Rhetorical Terms* 71)

Each published letter has the rhetorical role of *enargia*: it is an advocate for Simpson. Signifying his virtue, the fan mail flatters Simpson. Signifying his vice, the hate mail reproaches Simpson. As an estimate of Simpson's virtue and vice, "[o]ver ninety-six percent of the letters [Simpson received] were positive in nature" (Simpson 9). Lanham's translation of "*sermocinatio*" as "L. ‘conversation, discussion,’” whereby the "speaker answers the remarks or questions of a pretended interlocutor" (*Rhetorical Terms* 138), does in some way explain Simpson's memoir as a whole and his narrative in particular. Simpson's memoir and his narrative have the rhetorical spontaneity of conversation and polyphonic discussion. The letter writers, Simpson and Schiller all imagine their interlocutors as they write; they answer the anticipated "remarks and questions" of a pretend interlocutory audience (Lanham, *Rhetorical Terms* 71). The presence of the letters within Simpson's text makes his interlocutors real, actual, not pretend or apocryphal: "I hope that everyone who wrote to me will find, somewhere in this book, a response to the thoughts and feelings they expressed in their letters to me" (Simpson 10). As author, Simpson narrates from a visiting room in the Los Angeles County Jail. He imagines himself alone as he speaks from a solitary, internal space and addresses an absent audience of hundreds of thousands. Schiller introduces the reader to Simpson textually and actually, he intercedes on Simpson’s behalf with an *enargia* gleaned from personal experience. Each letter writer writes from a solitary, internal space,
addressing a man they do not really know. Eventually, their words will reach an audience of hundreds of thousands. To utter "I" is to refuse all strategies of isolation and silence. It is an affirmation of individualism and socialism, a self-determining practical application of social and collective activity. Each articulation of self-identification - by Simpson, each letter writer and Schiller - is a very personal tactic of resistance, a rhetorical manoeuvre.

The exemplary realism of the 110 first person narrative voices operating in Simpson's memoir may be questionable. However, as documentary accounts they reveal the evidence of a humanness that cannot be denied. In order to analyse this aspect of Simpson's text further I introduce to my discussion the theatre-based performance work of Anna Deavere Smith, whose "social dramas" (A. Smith xxiv) explore real-life events as experienced by actual persons. In the "Introduction" to Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992, Smith explains the development process for her one-woman performance series, On the Road: A Search for American Character: "Each On the Road performance evolves from interviews I conduct with individuals directly or indirectly involved in the event I intend to explore. Basing my scripts entirely on this interview material, I perform the interviewees on stage using their own words" (A. Smith xvii). Smith suggests she performs rather than portrays, presents rather than represents the material presence of each interviewee's voice. She states:

What most influences my decisions about what to include is how an interview text works as a physical, audible, performable vehicle. Words are not an end in themselves. They are a means to evoking the character of the person who spoke them. Every person that I include in the book, and who I perform, has a presence that is much more important than the information they give. (A. Smith xxiii-xxiv)
Smith's work is more than mimicry, acting. It is being other, mimesis. And this is the connection I make to the presence of each character, each narrator who appears in *I Want to Tell You*: "The spoken word is evidence of the humanness" (A. Smith xxiv).³ The letters published in Simpson's text are "physical, audible, performable vehicle[s]" (A. Smith xxiii) made available to the reader. They have a physical and vocal presence on the page, an audible presence on the audiobook and a performable presence that is enacted as they are read. Performative cues as to the character of each letter writer can be found in their linguistic style, the affect in their tone, the content of their utterance, their name, their geographical location, the personal details they supply.

The quasi-material presence of the letter writers in Simpson's memoir reproduces the epistolary moments of their writing practice and Simpson's reading practice. Represented in Simpson's memoir these scenes are reanimated with a rhetorical and imaginative force. The letters make Simpson's memoir dramatic and discursive. The *frisson* of a dramatic and discursive reading performance is carried within each appearance of another person on the page, another character on the textual stage. For the reader is not only audience. The reader is also performer. We inhabit each disembodied voice as we read, animating the character of each writer and as we do so we speak as them to Simpson. Our dramatic reading is more than mimicry, a citation. Through the repetition of their words, the enunciation of their first person narrative, we can become them, we can become other, we can enter the flow of identities, personalities and ideas comprising the spatial logic, the dialogic, reciprocal spatial structures of Simpson's text. Reading for Simpson's sake, we cannot remain unaffected and, so, uninvolved. This is the rhetorical effect of

³ In "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man," Henry Louis Gates notes Smith's incorporation of the Simpson criminal trial into her work: "The performance artist and playwright Anna Deavere Smith has already worked on the 911 tape and [defense attorney] F. Lee Bailey's cross-examination of Mark Fuhrman in the drama classes she teaches at Stanford" (63).
the inclusion of each letter in Simpson's memoir. Smith writes: "If more of us could actually speak from another point of view, like speaking another language, we could accelerate the flow of ideas" (xxv). The reader is presented with this opportunity in *I Want to Tell You*.

*I Want to Tell You* is Simpson's memoir. He is credited formally and legally as the author of the text. However, Simpson's authority while not challenged is certainly modified by the incorporation of the letters as narrative adjuncts. For each published letter writer is also an author. As the authorial, autobiographical, first person, subjective "I" of their own words, each published letter writer is an authoritative and autonomous agent who plays their part as a non-fictional narrator within Simpson's text. The signatory citation of their name and city of residence authenticates and witnesses their authority. Even the letters marked "[Unsigned]" and "[Anonymous]" are certified with a locating postmark. Yet it is the utterance itself, the mark on the page, that unreservedly recognises and authorises each narrative as the legitimate creative work of its narrator. Simpson's voice is the master narrative voice of the text. As the main feature, the feature presentation, he is the predominant, foregrounded, autobiographical, first person, subjective "I." However, Simpson only occupies the position of the dominant, authoritative and authorial "I" when he is speaking. When a letter writer speaks, when their epistolic monologue is in operation, they act as the dominant, authoritative and authorial "I" of the moment, and Simpson relinquishes the floor with a gracious acquiescence. He does not disappear but remains ever present as the silent, polite and attentive recipient of the epistle, the "you" of its address. His presence is invoked and denoted by the various epistolary greetings: "Dear O.J.;" "Dear Juice;" "To: O.J. Simpson," "Dear O.J.;" "Dear O.J. Simpson;" "Dear Mr. O.J. Simpson," "Dear Mr. O.J.;" "Mr. Simpson," "Hi, O.J.," "Hi, O.J.!" "Dear Mr. Simpson;" "Dear O.J. 'Juice' Simpson;" "O.J.;" "Mr.
O.J. Simpson, "O.J." and "O.J. Simpson:“. During the epistolary intercessions the text's interlocutory positions are realigned temporarily and Simpson's place within the narrative space shifts from an active to a passive determination; from addresser to addressee, from writer to reader, from author to audience, from speaker to listener, from producer to consumer.

Simpson's narrative speaks to a plural, public, heterogeneous, possibly limitless, textual audience of readers and listeners, anonymous and non-corporeal. We are inscribed by and included in Simpson's utterance as the "you" of his address. Our discursive and affective engagement with Simpson, our reception and imaginary negotiation of Simpson's address as we read and listen to his narrative involves us as the "you" of his address. Simpson is the "I" and we are the "You" identified in the memoir's title: *I Want to Tell You*. In Schiller's "Foreword," "Acknowledgments" and editorial interpolations we are connoted as a confidante. However, our position as reader is involuntarily adjusted when the various epistolary narratives are in operation. For they do not speak directly to us although they are reproduced for us. The "you" addressed by the "I" of each letter writer, by each epistolary utterance, is a designation reserved for Simpson alone. The exception being the letters addressed "To O.J.'s Mom," Eunice Simpson, "In Care of O.J. Simpson" (Simpson 177); to Johnnie Cochran via Simpson (Simpson 92); and to Al Cowlings "c/o O.J. Simpson" (Simpson 187-88). Simpson was the sole intended audience of each letter. The publication of the letters for public consumption was an opportunistic afterthought (Simpson 10; Schiller and Willwerth 318). The readers' role is reconstructed by the alternative intimate arrangement of these epistolary interludes. These words are not meant for us; we overhear them, we eavesdrop, or read over Simpson's shoulder. It is an illicit reading, an appropriated reading coerced by the text's construction. An invasion of privacy engages and entraps us, forcing us to
perform voyeuristically. Our textual investment is not recognised, it cannot have been foreseen. The letters seem to be written without the cognisance of a public intrusion and this is what bestows upon them an exemplary realism - a humanness that cannot be faked or forged, a compelling honesty and the integrity of a sincere banality. These qualities make them fitting and fascinating endorsements for Simpson.

Schiller's role within the framework of Simpson's text is polymorphous. He functions as Simpson's amanuensis, the editor of Simpson's narrative and memoir, a narrative voice and the author of the "Foreword" and "Acknowledgments." As the custodian of Simpson's narrative he penetrates the space of the text. Schiller assumes the position of the authorial and authoritative autobiographical, first person, subjective "I" in his "Foreword" and "Acknowledgments" as he narrates his experience of working with Simpson: interviewing Simpson in the visiting area of the Los Angeles County Jail and editing his oral narrative. In so doing, Schiller establishes his credibility as a witness to the production of Simpson's text. Claiming credit as an active participant in its production process, Schiller styles himself as a reliable narrator. His autonomous narrative also corroborates and substantiates Simpson's narrative as authentic and original. Writing himself into the process is an attempt to refute any suspicion he has ghostwritten Simpson's narrative. Implicating himself as a textual accessory, Schiller literally writes himself into Simpson's narrative in *I Want to Tell You* as a narrator who speaks when Simpson cannot, who witnesses what the reader cannot. Schiller's editorial insertion on page twenty-one describes and dramatises for the reader the *aposiopesis* that temporarily halted the flow of Simpson's narrative recording. Schiller captures for the reader the silent pause of Simpson faltering, overcome with emotion and grief. He represents Simpson's narrative break with a rhetorical gesture of *adynata*. His intrusion is more
than a figure of pathos. Schiller's narrative conveyance of Simpson's overwhelming inability to communicate is a first-hand account demonstrating his contribution to Simpson's memoir as an interviewer, a reporter and an involved eyewitness:

[Simpson:] One night, in my dreams, Sydney was grown up and getting married. Nicole and I were together in our back yard on Rockingham Avenue in Brentwood where we got married. But now, in my dream, Sydney was in Nicole's wedding dress and she was the one getting married there.

Interviewer: O.J. started to choke up and then wept openly as he spoke about these dreams. His head dropped into his hands and he slumped forward, burying his face between his knees. He began again to speak of his daughter, who now could never have a wedding with both parents looking on proudly.

He lifted his head and started talking softly about the house in Cabo San Lucas. [Simpson:] I had some land in Cabo, at the tip of the Baja Peninsula in Mexico, a big lot I was going to build on. Nicole also loved the beach, the sea, and there is a golf course just around the corner. (20-21)

The textual notation of "Interviewer" advises the reader it is Schiller who interrupts Simpson's utterance. Schiller's introductory briefing in the "Foreword" alerts the reader to his performance as amanuensis and editor. Schiller's presence as an official observer and his appearance as an autonomous narrator is denoted textually by the layout of his commentary on the page. A change of narrative voice is signalled graphically by an alteration in font style, the finer print of the characters and the indentation and double-spacing of his intercession from the arrangement of Simpson's narrative. Once more, on page 181, as discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, Schiller
breaks into Simpson's monologue on the death of his father, Jimmie to narrate the silent scene taking place before him: "Throughout this part of our conversation O.J. became emotional. His voice broke a few times, and then he wept." As Schiller's editorial interventions are not separated from Simpson's words by the prophylactic textual barrier of the elongated em dash that lies between each letter and each section of Simpson's narrative, Schiller's penetrating views seem like an unexpected and unnecessary intrusion. In fact they are affective supplementary and evidentiary rhetorical devices, *aposiopesis* and *adynata*, useful figures of pathos, indicative of emotion and persuasive in the evocation of emotion and emotive reasoning. Any possibility of objectivity Schiller or the reader may have anticipated is compromised by Schiller's disclosure of his proximity to Simpson and Simpson's narrative, by his position within the text and the writing space. In the audiobook, Schiller admits his interviews with Simpson took place in a "small glass cubicle."

Schiller is cited as a textual accomplice, "O.J.'s coauthor" (Schiller and Willwerth 437), in *American Tragedy*, a non-fiction account of the Simpson criminal and civil trials co-authored by Schiller. He is involved with Simpson, emotionally, professionally, financially, physically.

Simpson's mail expresses a desire for dialogue. In response to this call for conversation and discussion, a range of disparate voices is assembled in *I Want to Tell You* to question, inform and perform from their particular point of view. This assemblage of monologues forms a congregational dialogue, a sense of being in conversation with Simpson and each other. Halliday advises: "natural spontaneous conversation [is] the paradigm form [for spoken language]. In its 'ideal' form, this means dialogue; but we shall not need to insist on the distinction between dialogue and monologue, because a great deal of spontaneous conversation has a large amount of monologue embedded in it" (46). The polyphonic organisation of *I Want to Tell You* generates a dialogic
reciprocity and proposes a communal textual space. This *agora* is an open forum for the public practice of discussion, debate, conference, confession and communion amongst independent individuals; the articulation of personal and collective social activity. Simpson’s published mail encompasses a heterogeneous array of subjects, attitudes and testimony. It includes fan mail, hate mail and racist mail; letters supporting Simpson’s innocence, letters attacking him as a murderer and letters claiming no opinion. It represents what Simpson describes as the "good, bad, and indifferent" (10). The diversity of Simpson’s published mail suggests a democratic ethos, a policy of non-discrimination honouring freedom of thought and freedom of speech. Although the negative letter writers are in the minority, the positive majority of letters does not eclipse their dissent. Through the structural characteristic of inclusiveness, the examples of hate mail, racist mail and racist hate mail especially are foregrounded as undemocratic and discriminatory. They are maligned and vilified by their viciousness. The rhetoric of their vituperative blame is self-determining in that it is a self-portrayal of their evil and base qualities of character, their deficiency. The negative and racist letters reproach Simpson. However, their placing within Simpson’s memoir is a concession that diverts the rhetorical impact of their reproach. The publication of the negative and racist letters subjects them to the judgement and ethos of an *epitropic* delivery. Simpson turns these messages over to the reader for deliberation, for the generation of a particular rhetorical effect: the reproach of the negative and racist letters is reproached. The democratic ethos of Simpson’s memoir is a textual construct, simultaneously passive and aggressive in its implications, its reciprocal arrangements of allegiances, attitudes, thoughts and feelings.
The second chapter of *I Want to Tell You*, entitled "One Hundred Percent Not Guilty," opens with a hostile testimonial from an outraged Helen Stanton, whose scathing verbal assault confronts and disparages Simpson:

The incredible effrontery of your ‘100% not guilty' lie boggles the imagination. A chronic wife beater, coming from a violent 'sport' earning obscene money, is a pathetic excuse for a man. Now there's enough circumstantial evidence to convict a dozen people.

Get off our backs with your expensive lawyers trading on your celebrity. This circus costs us taxpayers too much.

See the light & plea bargain. (Simpson 13)

Resolute in response, Simpson answers Stanton's issue with an adamant, calm and firm resolve:

I am one hundred percent not guilty. In my open letter read on television on June 17, 1994, by my friend Robert Kardashian, I said I was innocent.

When asked at my arraignment, where the charges against me were first formally stated in court, I said, 'I am one hundred percent not guilty.' I said it again in Judge Ito's chambers and I say it again here. I will continue to speak this truth until the day I die.

Ms. Stanton, like the writers of some other letters I received (not all of them unsigned), believes I am guilty. [. . .] It is easy to make rumors and speculations and news reports fit a preconceived idea. It's difficult to erase those rumors and speculations from people's minds. (13-14)
Because Simpson's reply is addressed to the reader directly (overtly) and to Stanton indirectly (covertly) it is more of a rebuttal of her contentions than an outright retaliation. The editorial placement of Stanton's letter gives Simpson the right of reply. It frames Simpson's response as more of a self-defensive manoeuvre than a self-serving plea. Stanton's interlocutory provocation justifies the effect of Simpson's repetitive statement of innocence. Simpson challenges Stanton with a blunt defensive retort. His parenthetical aside connotes Stanton's negative letter as racist and so questions her credibility as a judge of his character. Compare Simpson's remark: "Ms. Stanton, like the writers of some other letters I received (not all of them unsigned), believes I am guilty" (14), with his previous observation: "There was obviously a small minority of racist letters, many of them unsigned" (9). The graphic parenthetical notation foregrounds the phrase and the association. The reproduction of Stanton's words (representing her thoughts, feelings and opinions) as part of Simpson's text reworks the possibility of her letter as a bad gift to Simpson. The usefulness of her hate is realised in its function for Simpson. It is a negative endorsement that works to Simpson's advantage. Turning this letter over to his readers, for deliberation and judgement is an epitropic rhetorical gesture that works in Simpson's favour. It is a kind of reasoning, a proof endorsing Simpson's right to speak out, to defend himself textually. This textual arrangement simultaneously reproaches and respects Stanton's contribution. Stanton's prefatory remarks are a challenge. Her energetic, denigrating attack on Simpson's character, her belligerent tone and angry posturing is indicative of behaviour designed to incite argument. It is an offensive, prosecuting performance. Followed by a defensive response from Simpson, the rhetorical structure of the textual arrangement enunciates the effect of the courtroom: the prosecution and defense perform for the judge and the jury. In this case the role of judge and jury is accorded to the reader. Although Simpson is the defendant being questioned (by his fan mail) or interrogated
(by his hate mail) he is always in control in the textual courtroom. Stanton's epistolary venting
denies Simpson the mere civility of a greeting or a parting salutation. She is rude, abrasive and
dismissive. Simpson cannot let it go unchallenged. He counters with documentation. Simpson
enters into evidence his narrative, which maintains his innocence to the reader, and samples of his
mail that reveal opposing and oblique points of view (13-17).

Simpson complies with the anonymous epistolary request from Goldsboro, North Carolina:
"Please say it's not true. Please say you didn't kill that woman like that" (Simpson 14). He denies
the double murder charge against him, steadfastly, predictably: "I want to state unequivocally that I
did not commit these horrible crimes" (Simpson 15). Simpson's performative utterance, his
illocutionary act, mixes the formality of a legal statement with the pathos of an emotional appeal.
Lanham notes in his definition of "pathos": "This term has been used both for techniques of stirring
emotion (especially in a law court) and for the emotions themselves" (Rhetorical Terms 111).
Contending the murder charge, Simpson makes a public confession that testifies to a lack of
motive: "I loved Nicole, I could never do such a thing" (15). Simpson's defense plea is reenacted
textually for the reader, the accusatory letter writers, everyone and anyone who believes him guilty
of murder, including representatives of the State of California (14). The jurors for the criminal trial
were sequestered by the time Simpson's memoir was released.

Responding compassionately, Simpson identifies what Anonymous from Goldsboro, North
Carolina cannot or will not. Simpson names "that woman" (Simpson 14), the female victim, as
Brown Simpson, and reminds the reader there was another murder victim, "Mr. Goldman" (16).
The formality of the title "Mr." is a show of courtesy and dignity, yet it is also suggestive of a lack of
familiarity or acquaintance with the man on Simpson's part; and indeed Simpson pays tribute to
Goldman as the "unknown soldier, courageous" (43).\footnote{Simpson's reference to "Mr. Goldman" as "the unknown soldier, courageous" (43), suggests a lack of acquaintance and an absence of animosity on Simpson's behalf. Simpson expresses his empathic sympathy for Goldman's family and a profound respect for Goldman as a tragically heroic, innocent figure, an unfortunate casualty: "I feel badly for Mr. Goldman's family. I feel his family's hurt and pain; but I had nothing to do with his death. To me he is the unknown soldier, courageous" (43). Simpson's use of a military or war analogy in his poetic figuration of Goldman as an anonymous everyman enlisted to fight, or compelled to do his duty in battle is disturbing. For Goldman and Brown Simpson were murdered in a suburban domestic setting. There may be something unconsciously indicting in the metaphoric honour Simpson accords Goldman. Simpson commends Goldman as someone who fought valiantly to protect Brown Simpson from an unwelcome aggressor. This image sits uncomfortably amidst the paratextual commentary that portrays Simpson's ongoing relationship with his ex-wife as an emotional and physical battlefield.}\footnote{Lanham defines occultatio as a form of negative narration: "L. 'concealment; insinuation, suggestion,' "[e]mphasizing something by pointedly seeming to pass over it" (Rhetorical Terms 104). He adds: "An erroneous reading in the Ad Herennium has led to the currency of occupatio as a synonym. After a thorough discussion of this error in the tradition, my colleague H. A. Kelly has urged that 'the term occupatio should be retired from present-day use as a rhetorical term.' Let us by all means do so; reducing the number even by one helps clarify the muddle" (Lanham, Rhetorical Terms 104).} It is a subtle exonerating gesture. Like
Anonymous from Goldsboro, Simpson refuses to name or specify the gruesome forensic details of
Brown Simpson's murder and Goldman's murder, as if it is taboo; too unpleasant or difficult to
comprehend and acknowledge; so strange and dreadful as to be unspeakable. Simpson mimics
the indeterminacy of Anonymous' reference "like that" (Simpson 14) with only slightly less discreet
euphemisms for the killings, such as "these horrible crimes," "such a thing," "such things,"
"something this terrible," and "this horrible crime" (15, 15, 15, 15, 16). This gothic occultatio, an
infectious textual recoil, insinuates a potent mélange of horror, fear and revulsion repressed by
politeness or caution, by a desire to not offend.\footnote{Lanham defines occultatio as a form of negative narration: "L. 'concealment; insinuation, suggestion,' "[e]mphasizing something by pointedly seeming to pass over it" (Rhetorical Terms 104). He adds: "An erroneous reading in the Ad Herennium has led to the currency of occupatio as a synonym. After a thorough discussion of this error in the tradition, my colleague H. A. Kelly has urged that 'the term occupatio should be retired from present-day use as a rhetorical term.' Let us by all means do so; reducing the number even by one helps clarify the muddle" (Lanham, Rhetorical Terms 104).} Keeping it clean and tidy, not getting dirty or ugly
is a way of playing it safe, a low risk, less terrifying practice that inadvertently heightens the
fascination and the mystery of the Brentwood murders. Simpson displays a manifest, obscuring
mystification rather than a probing insight regarding the murders, those responsible for the crime
and his seizure for the perpetration of such a heinous act: "I don't think I even know anyone who's
capable of doing such things. I can't think of anybody I've ever known who could have done something this terrible" (15); "I can't relate to why anybody would kill another person. I certainly can't relate to why someone would kill Nicole and Mr. Goldman. I have sat in my jail cell and asked myself what I would say to whoever did this horrible crime. The only thing I can think of is 'Why?'" (16). In his textual appeal and through his parenthetical rhetorical mannerisms Simpson asks that we trust him unconditionally, and yet he refuses to validate our trust with the provision of solid, irrefutable evidence. It is as if Simpson intends to convince his readers of his innocence by seducing us with the proof of the pathetic rhetorical reasoning of his questioning narrative and his baffled tone. Simpson appears perplexed, as astounded and confused as everyone else, if not more so, by the murders, the accusations made against him and his subsequent wrongful treatment in the media, the court of public opinion and by the law. Simpson's shock and disbelief is a persuasive narrative demeanour, an inventive, performative topos.

Charged with emotion, there is a strength and an anxiety to Simpson's praxis in this section of his narrative, in the "One Hundred Percent Not Guilty" chapter (13-17). The force of his oratory conveys the strength of his convictions as a persecuted innocent. Yet the introspective retreat of Simpson's rhetorical questioning suggests a very real and poignant existential concern, especially for his futurity. A deep anxiety or fear that he will be unable to endure or recover from the humiliation of his spectacular public condemnation and demonisation. It is not his shame, but a public shaming and the "blackening" of his name. This conflicting sense of stalwartness and apprehension is made manifest in the cross-section of letters included in Simpson's memoir. Whilst ninety-three of the 108 published letters are positive and supportive, the thirteen negative
and accusatory letters, sometimes brutal, abusive and shocking, have an overwhelming
defamatory effect.

I am intrigued by the fact that Simpson does not shy away from the publication of his hate
correspondence because, while it may be intended to, it does not make him seem courageous. It is as if
Simpson surrenders to its incursion on his thoughts, his feelings and his text, neither resisting nor
embracing it. Sharing his hate mail dilutes the force of its effect and reduces its power to hurt him.
Simpson uses it prescriptively, like an inoculation. He clinically, therapeutically exposes himself,
his narrative and his audience to its destructive, infectious strain in an effort to make himself, his
narrative and his audience immune to its harmful effects. There is a tactical discretion in Simpson's
utilisation of his hate mail. Publishing it in his fundraising memoir enables him to turn it to his
financial and rhetorical advantage. Simpson's published hate mail and racist hate mail is
epitropically affecting - startling, shocking, interesting, exciting, distressing, disgusting,
contemptible, frightening, terrifying, angering, shaming, humiliating, enjoyable.

The letter writers open up to Simpson emotionally to reveal their anger, fear, dismay,
consternation, disbelief, disgust and hope. And he reciprocates in kind with a sympathetic
exhibition of his own anger, fear, dismay, consternation, disbelief, disgust and hope. What comes
of this narrative movement, this mutual stimulation, is a discursive display of affective
responsiveness. The expression of dismay, as it accompanies claims concerning Simpson's guilt
and possible conviction, is damning and shaming. The expression of hope, as it accompanies
claims of his innocence and possible acquittal, is exonerating and vindicating. There is a didactic
instructive morality at work here as guilt elicits negative emotions and punishment, whilst
innocence elicits positive emotions and reward. This correlation occurs not only in Simpson's narrative, as it should, but in both accusatory and supportive letters as well, as the letters included in the chapter entitled "One Hundred Percent Not Guilty" reveal. Stanton is resolute in her position. She is undaunted, angry, offended, disgusted; she considers Simpson guilty, lying and unashamed (Simpson 13). The anonymous "average middle aged housewife (white) with a wonderful (black) husband of 12 years" screams her abuse at Simpson: "You scumbag and coward. You should have shot yourself in the Bronco - Coward!" (Simpson 15). She promises Simpson the retributive wrath of an almighty vengeance and the contempt of his children (Simpson 15). Her postscript is indignant. She is angry and disgusted with Simpson and herself, with her interest and her anger. She seems angered by the rage which moves her and motivates her to write her "first letter - ever - to a celebrity" (Simpson 15). She attempts to shame Simpson, damning him for his anger, fear and cowardice: "Beating up on women and killing two unarmed people in your selfish rage" (Simpson 14-15). She corroborates the righteousness of her convictions, her testimony, with the proof of her own experience of a happy interracial marriage (Simpson 15). Her "average"-ness is in contrast to Simpson's "celebrity" (Simpson 15). As a white woman married to a black man her affinity is with Simpson's ex-wife. She is horrified, outraged by Simpson's interracial misdeeds. As a Christian her compassion lies with the innocent victims of Simpson's alleged unrestrained violence. However, the very act of not signing a letter signifies a cautionary discretion, not a lack of commitment but a definite shyness or unease. Even if "[Anonymous]" is a protective nom de plume for the letter writers who were happy to have their letters published in Simpson's text but not their identity, exercising the option suggests a desire for secrecy or prudence.
The other two letters in this chapter reveal a sense of the tentative, despite their staunch opinions. The anonymous letter writer from Goldsboro, North Carolina, "believes" Simpson yet still seeks approval, confirmation, again, from the man himself (Simpson 14). There is a sense of trepidation in the first two sentences that appeal to Simpson for a denial of his guilt, an encroaching fear that the writer's belief in Simpson may be wrong. This trepidation lingers despite the confession of an affirmative belief in Simpson: "My friends all think you did it but I don't believe them. I believe you O.J." (Simpson 14). The support expressed by Pamela Howard in her letter is loud and clear, but it is conditional: "If you are innocent don't give up!" (Simpson 16). Howard's "If" is an indirect question. She requires an assurance of Simpson's innocence. Unable to commit with certainty to the belief that Simpson is innocent, Howard testifies overwhelmingly to what she can confirm, to what she does "know" for sure: "You have four children that need you more than anything. [. . .] I know that the media has crucified you but you're not dead and as long as you have breath in your lungs, breathe. You're stronger than you think" (Simpson 16). Barracking for Simpson, she commands him in the imperative to persist, to struggle for life. The bravado of Howard's confidence and determination inspires Simpson. With mimetic bravado, in his narrative following her letter Simpson expresses a confident faith in the inevitability of his legal acquittal (before the criminal trial has even begun). Howard's encouragement is at times tentative or provisional, and Simpson too reveals a hope tinged with hesitancy and despair in his contemplation of the more difficult hurdle – "total vindication" in the mind of the general public:

When the jury finds me innocent, when the evidence shows I am innocent and I am set free, I wonder whether the public will ever accept my innocence. I don't think some people will. Sometimes I think that the only way I can ever deal with that is to
tell myself I don't care. But I do care because I have family. I have kids. I do care.

(17)
The last paragraph of Simpson's narrative in this chapter is concerned with the capture of the "real killers" (17). Of the five sentences that comprise this last paragraph, two sentences begin with the phrase "I have no doubt," and the last sentence is, in its entirety, "I have no doubt" (17). This intonation is meant to reassure Simpson and the reader of his innocence, yet it is not an effective or convincing affirmation. This repeated phrase is a linguistic tic, an unconscious *echophrasia nervosa* or stammering (due to stress, fear or hesitation) that unwittingly reveals an uncertain certainty or surety, an anxious confidence.

Simpson's voice may be the cohesive force of the text, but there is something operating here beyond his control, beyond his authority and the generic conventions of the memoir. As the distinct expression of individual selves is brought together, asserted and avowed, a textual community is founded through the sheer vocalisation of narratives. Once established, this textual community proposes a network of contractual and interpersonal relations that incorporate and validate Simpson. Although his mail came from people he had never met, the writers have a legitimate claim to a familiarity with Simpson and an acquaintance with his public persona, no matter how mediated that may be. The address and tone of their letters reveal he is no stranger to them. Simpson's correspondents feel they know him, intimately. For example, Howie Alford writes:

Dear Juice:

How are you?

I am convinced that your life has been meaningful. How about you? As you look at your life what are you most proud of? Your accomplishments as an athlete are many,
but I imagine that in the context of your life there are other things much more important to you. What are they?

You are in my prayers every night asking the Lord to give you grace and strength in these days. Please keep in your heart and soul the knowledge that there are many of us who stand with you no matter what. Until next time, my friend. Vaya con Dios.

(Simpson 5-6).

And while on remand, Simpson forms more than a passing relationship with each letter writer as he engages with them and their concerns as they enter his world linguistically. He is liberated by the spiritual connections forged by an epistolary deliverance. He consciously reciprocates the familiarity and affection, the friendship demonstrated and declared by the letters and their writers: "To all those who wrote me, in a way you're my friends, friends I never knew I had. Thank you"

(Simpson 192).

The informal, responsive and conversational style of Simpson's narrative in *I Want to Tell You* evokes a sense of honesty and sincerity in its open and direct discourse. His tone of confessional candour seems genuine. Simpson speaks frankly about the very personal and private aspects of his life: the "pain" and "loss" of Brown Simpson (4); how and why he now prays at night before bed (20); his nightly, wish fulfillment dreams of Brown Simpson (20); his intimate relationship with Brown Simpson's mother, Judy Brown (30); his fear he will never see his two small children again (56); his fear of a conviction despite his innocence (56); his hurt and anger at his portrayal by the media (68-83); his concern about the feelings of hatred aroused in him by the unjust double murder charge (98); growing up "black [. . .] in a ghetto" (122); his teenage run-ins with police (117-18); how the baseball player Willie Mays had a profound impact on the course of
his life (156-57); his newfound commitment to a closer relationship with God, because "God was trying to get my attention and this trouble is God's way of getting my attention" (129); the last minutes spent with his dying father (180-81); and his slave heritage (114, 184).

Simpson explains how he spends his days in gaol, what he eats for lunch and dinner, how he sleeps and how much weight he has lost (163-64), in response to Kim Weisenberger's curiosity: "What kinds of food are they serving you? Do you have any choices? [. . .] I'm so curious as to what your day consists of" (Simpson 163). Simpson welcomes the everyday banality of Weisenberger's questions and her genuine interest in his welfare. For Simpson, these mundane interlocutory greetings provide a connection to the ordinary, commonplace motions of daily social life. Making conversation, talking about what is on television or what is for dinner, like talking about the weather, is a polite and sociable pedestrian activity. Weisenberger's curiosity and attention flatters Simpson, it shows she cares. The simplicity of her maternal concern elicits an unaffected and unpretentious child-like or naïve reply from Simpson. He whines. He sounds as if he is at camp or boarding school, as if he does not realise he is an inmate in gaol on remand awaiting a criminal trial for double murder. He takes her simple, naïve, almost child-like queries seriously and, without condescension, he helpfully provides the information she craves regarding the routine of his private moments. Simpson's dull, anthropological minutiae have an inescapably fascinating attraction because of their exemplary realism. What makes Simpson's everyday experience under duress compelling is it is exotic, experimental and real. It is neither glamorous nor enviable. Simpson's educational and entertaining response satisfies our fascination or our obsession as armchair anthropologists or armchair voyeurs. And yet I find the minutiae of Simpson's report extremely affecting, difficult to read, almost painful. Not because it can evoke the blasé attitude of
"who cares!" but because Simpson's complete guilelessness conveys a profound sadness, a nostalgic yearning and homesickness. His complete lack of autonomy terrifies me, especially as it has necessitated self-imposed, self-disciplining behaviour modifications. Simpson denies himself the physical and emotional release of working out, the "rushes of energy" (Simpson 164), the endorphins and the excitement because the conflict between its intensity and his containment is unbearably frustrating and infuriating. The incredible pathos of this physical self-penalisation is that Simpson was once a professional athlete.

Some letters to Simpson reveal the practice of social and collective activity prior to their function within the framework of his text. The result of a collaborative effort, they were produced by communal, familial or classroom discussion and composition, not by individual correspondents writing in private. For example, a letter from the "7/8 grade class of Trinity Lutheran School, Redding, CA" appears on page forty-seven of I Want to Tell You, in the chapter entitled "Kids." Although not all of the class members believe Simpson is innocent, it is their collective admiration and respect for his past achievements that compels them, as a group, to send their consoling messages of faith. Sparing time and energy for Simpson, someone they consider to be in need, their letter portrays an incredible kindness, an earnest and sincere altruism. Their youthful naïveté is apparent in the construction of their discourse. The advice they offer Simpson sounds rote-learned and not fully understood with any depth or maturity. For, on closer analysis, belied by the optimistic disposition of their vigour and the promise of salvation if Simpson believes in God, in Jesus, is the scare of a malevolent threat. To have to endure the eternal damnation of Hell is a punishment far worse than the mere earthly sentence of life imprisonment. There is a precocity to the phrase "your fascinating endorsements" (Simpson 47) that makes me suspect the care and
concern they express is prompted and guided by their Lutheran School teacher and by their parents, a point of contention for Simpson. As it is represented and reproduced in I Want to Tell You this letter becomes a fascinating endorsement for Simpson, for the exceptional quality of his character as a man. The fact it was written to Simpson is a testimony to his social importance and worth, and his innocence. This letter re-humanises Simpson as a man, as "Mr. O.J. Simpson" (Simpson 47).

Simpson's narrative response to this letter and the other letters from children included in this chapter is directed to adults, parents especially, whom, he lectures, are responsible for the moral and ethical attitudes of children (49-50). Simpson finds the letters from children "heartwarming" (49) and disturbing. Although he is grateful for their belief in his innocence, he does "not like" (Simpson 49) that twelve-year-old Lisa Miranda, amongst others, wrote: "I don't think you killed Nicole or Ronald. Even if you did, I would still be your fan and so would my mom because everyone makes mistakes" (Simpson 48). Ten-year-old Betsey Neal wrote: "If you did do it I will still care for you" (Simpson 52). Simpson is alarmed "that a kid would write about any kind of killing" (49). Passionately stating his strong moral beliefs on this point, Simpson sets himself up as an exemplar, as a conscientious parent and an accountable and responsible member of society. He conveys his awareness of the sacred office he is entrusted with as a public figure, a "person on TV," a "hero," a "football player," a role model and a parent (Simpson 49). Seeming helpful, sensitive, objective and wise in his commentary, Simpson offers useful advice on how to deal with such a tricky or questionable situation as "children writing a letter to someone they had seen on TV who had been accused of committing a crime, any crime" (49). The letters from children are used to endorse Simpson's ability as a parent and his character as unimpeachable.
Included in the chapter entitled "The Working Press," Simpson's letter from Jennifer Czawlytko and family bears witness to Simpson's testimony regarding his unfair pre-trial persecution in the media (Simpson 72). It also challenges the minority of letter writers who, like the media, believe Simpson is guilty prior to a legal conviction. Non-committal on Simpson's guilt or innocence, Czawlytko's comments are fair and rational. She certainly seems to be a credible, trustworthy and reliable narrator. A self-delegated spokesperson who claims to speak for herself, her family and "most of America" (Simpson 72), she is also put to use by Simpson to speak on his behalf. The title of Simpson's memoir, I Want to Tell You, is a direct quote from Czawlytko's letter and the purpose of Simpson's text as a defense narrative accords with Czawlytko's epistolary intention: "I want to tell you, contrary to what the media would have you believe" (Simpson 72). This agreement is registered as a textual ventriloquism or echolalia.\(^6\) In his narrative Simpson repeats, lines out, the words and sentiments expressed by Czawlytko. For example, compare Czawlytko's claim: "I simply believe you are innocent until proven guilty" (Simpson 72), with the following claims by Simpson: "There is something wrong with the jail system when it comes to holding prisoners like me, who are only accused and have no criminal record. After all, we are supposed to be presumed innocent. [. . .] I'm still innocent under the law" (161-62). Compare Simpson's exuscitatio, his facetious rhetorical question: "Sometimes I get the press and the prosecution mixed up. Who is who?" (82), with Czawlytko's comment: "I personally believe the media has been very biased, they give the prosecution more air time, etc.... I don't believe anyone

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\(^6\) The Dictionary of Psychology defines "echolalia" as: "an automatic repetition of words or phrases by mental patients; echophrasia" (Chaplin 146).
can make a judgment based on press releases when they don't give both sides" (Simpson 72).

In turn, assertions made by Jane Gentile, in her letter included in "The Working Press" chapter, support and reinforce the statements made by Czawlytko and Simpson: "The media are the worst offenders. They are robbing you of your 'presumption of innocence'" (Simpson 76).

Interspersed throughout Simpson's narrative is an epistolary chorus of vox populi comments endorsing his opinion of the media and his family's outrage "at what was being said by so many people in the media" (Simpson 71). For example, Howard writes: "forget about the MEDIA" (Simpson 16); Linda Davis writes: "You are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law" (Simpson 24); Mrs. Ray L. Newton writes: "It's amazing how little the media knows about this Country and our Constitution. Most wouldn't recognize the Fourth Amendment if it hit them in the face" (Simpson 67-68); Ashley Craig writes: "I never thought I would agree with Associate Justice Clarence Thomas on any issue, but his 'high-tech lynching' definitely applies to what is happening to you and I would like to know how the Press, Law Enforcement, and the Judicial system plan to give you and your family your life back" (Simpson 67); and Andrea Smith writes:

To an innocent man that the media has convicted before the courts have had a chance to view the case. I always thought this was the land of the free, home of the brave.

The media is blowing your case all out of proportion. All the coverage isn't necessary. The media acted like a pack of hungry dogs after one dog bone. They should be ashamed of themselves. (Simpson 69)

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7 *Silva Rhetoricae* defines "exuscitatio" as: "Stirring others by one's own vehement feeling (sometimes by means of a rhetorical question, and often for the sake of exciting anger)." Lanham defines "exuscitatio" as: "L. 'awakening, arousing’; [e]motional utterance that seeks to move hearers to a like feeling" (*Rhetorical Terms* 77).
Simpson rallies a public demonstration of strength and solidarity for his cause and his narrative assertions.

Simpson's published mail is supporting documentation for his narrative argument. It has an evidentiary function. Simpson's published mail also has a dramatic function. The writers are animated as their letters are read within the frame of Simpson's memoir. Simpson's presence is conjured in the "you" of their address. The polyphonic, first person narrative construction of *I Want to Tell You* initiates a role-playing exercise or a safe form of cultural tourism for the reader. Reading from the point of view of another, speaking to Simpson as his correspondent is an engaging rhetorical arrangement. The reader is enfolded into the flow of ideas, thoughts and feelings that consume Simpson and his textual interlocutors. The reader is one of Simpson's interlocutors. The inclusion of the letters exposes the reader to Simpson's other interlocutors. Reading Simpson's mail is recreational and educational, it is a practice conducive to an empathic response, an identification of self with the other that deconstructs pre-conceptions, ignorance and prejudice. We are able to "try out" the different personalities, attitudes and styles, to channel their thoughts and feelings through our own reading sensibilities, to make a virtual and safe cultural tour through the unfamiliar. Inhabiting the persona of each published letter writer - their character - distance is erased, even the proximity between speaker and audience, the letter writer and the text's reader, is abolished as we speak with the same voice, perform as one, act as one, momentarily. The reading ethos of a rhetorical *ethopoeia* enables the reader to imagine being other, to go beyond the sympathetic discursive exchange between self and other to an empathic collusion. Reading each published letter initiates a conversation with Simpson's text, with Simpson and his textual donors. The discussion generated by Simpson's text is a personal and social
activity for the reader. Depending on our persuasion, on our own opinions, thoughts and feelings, our level of comfort may be challenged, particularly by the racist hate mail writers; but also by Simpson, his effusive adoring fans and the children who wrote, and sent their allowance money (Simpson 53).

The letter from Earl and Pat Brown and family echoes, more succinctly, the thoughts and opinions expressed by Czawlytko and Simpson: "Hang in there! Please believe that there are people in America who still believe anyone is innocent until proven guilty. God bless you!" (Simpson 85). Included in the chapter entitled "Justice and Injustice," the Browns' letter reinforces the theme of Simpson's pre-trial persecution by the media and in the court of public opinion as unjust, unfair and un-American. The Browns aid Simpson emotionally and rhetorically; they affirm his feelings and his narrative reasoning. They also reiterate and authenticate the claims made by Czawlyto and family and other letter writers, and the feelings of Simpson's family. The Browns' exclamatory cries of "Hang in there!" and "God bless you!" are well-wishing calls that greet and hail Simpson (Simpson 85). These cheers of encouragement from the spectatorial, speculating crowd summon Simpson's attention and strengthen his resolve.

The letter from Audrey Lighter and family is confessional, supportive and strangely indicting: "You were provoked, and as usual by a white person. White people are good for provoking one to violence. I know you've probably gotten thousands of letters to this effect but I just couldn't sit still and not let you know you have one more supporter out here. Love ya!!" (Simpson 118). Its positive, up-beat manner and Lighter's use of double exclamation marks to punctuate her cheery sign off of "Love ya!!" (Simpson 118) seem out of place in a letter that condones racial intolerance
and racially incited violence, if not murder. It would seem Lighter believes Simpson guilty of murder, but "supports" him. Lighter and her family consider his (alleged) violent actions justified and forgivable by reason of racial provocation (Simpson 118). Lighter seems to suggest the deaths of Brown Simpson and Goldman were the result of Simpson acting in self-defense or in some sort of Othello-like jealous madness, or the fatal outcome of escalated domestic violence, unfortunate but predictable; a colour-coded crime of passion. Exhibiting Lighter's testimony in the "Racism" chapter, Simpson retorts her charge and uses the letter as a hostile witness to vilify violence and racial intolerance. He states: "Nobody should ever provoke anyone. To allow race to be an excuse for any provocation is simply wrong" (Simpson 119). Careful not to malign Lighter and her family directly, Simpson argues against the moral stance expressed in their letter, and, in so doing, argues against its assumption that he is capable of any sort of violent behaviour, justifiable or not, racially incited or not. He responds to the well-meaning anti-white racism of Lighter by denouncing racism in any form. Prior to Lighter's letter Simpson touts the merits of passive resistance and affirmative action, invoking Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "dream" that people "be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin" (117). Following Lighter's letter Simpson outlines his own motivational philosophy for achieving success, happiness and personal fulfillment as the committed intention to live a life that is self-defined and self-determined rather than racially-defined and racially-determined:

I decided not to make my life a no-win situation. I knew there were white people who would always see me as black, and black people who would see me as not black enough. I decided to do what I wanted to do and not let other people define my life. I would do my best with my abilities, and never allow my race to be used as a weapon against me. (Simpson 119)
Simpson's response to Lighter's letter is also a response to African-American community critiques of Simpson as an "Uncle Tom" (a tame black man, non-threatening to whites) and "an oreo" (black on the outside, white on the inside).

The letter from Linda Lewis and family consoles Simpson with words reminiscent of a compassionate greeting-card verse: "You need to keep your mental strength up and hold yourself together. You have a lot of people who love you and will continue to love no matter what. Remember this is only a detour" (Simpson 162). There is something deeply familial about this letter in its suggestion of the cohesive force of friendship and family, the strength it can offer during times of trial and its ability to forgive all. The commitment Lewis promotes conveys a depth of feeling that seems to come from the knowledge of lived experience. The concerned and phatic "How are you?" (Simpson 162) and the appraisal, "You are looking better" (Simpson 162), alert Simpson to the careful and watchful gaze of the Lewis family. Located in the chapter entitled "Where I Am," this letter is incongruous with Simpson's preceding narrative tirade on his wrongful and unjust pre-trial incarceration (161-62). The placement of this letter alters the mood and tone of the text, abruptly diverting the narrative flow. The Lewis letter is a sedative that calms Simpson's prior rage, soothes his frayed nerves and relaxes him temporarily. Its effect elicits from Simpson a soliloquy on the need for balance, self-control and inner fortitude, a psychological state attained through a connection to others and a trust in that support and connection. The reciprocity of a co-dependent network of relations between self and other, comprising their dependence on you and their expectations of you, your dependence on them and your expectations of them. Simpson writes:
Whatever my past was I know. I don't know about my future as I answer these letters in this book. I do know that when I'm low, my friends pull me up, and when I'm too high, they pull me down a little. You need to hold yourself together. Allow those who love you to stand by you. Don't let them down. I look around this jail and I see others who have the strength to live under incarceration. I think I'm as strong as these other guys. Besides that, I have the strength of being innocent. (163)

Simpson seems to be speaking to himself in this passage, in self-communion. He is both the "I" and the "you" of this meditation, although it is performed for the reader. His affirmations mimic the Lewis family's advice as if Simpson accepts, internalises and regurgitates their offering. For example,

Lewis: "You need to [. . .] hold yourself together" (Simpson 162)

Simpson: "You need to hold yourself together" (163);

Lewis: "You need to keep your mental strength up" (Simpson 162)

Simpson: "I see others who have the strength to live under incarceration. I think I'm as strong as these other guys. Besides that, I have the strength of being innocent" (163);

Lewis: "You have a lot of people who love you and will continue to love no matter what" (Simpson 162)

Simpson: "Allow those who love you to stand by you. Don't let them down" (163).

This repetition is not merely a rhetorical gesture. It enunciates a rhetorical commitment. This is more than reiteration or the intonation of another's words for effect, a mantra. This is the recapitulation of a vehement conviction, an incantation. These words do more than bolster Simpson's spirits. They nourish and sustain him with a confiding faith in the power of language to
effect change, shift perspectives and transform reality. They suggest the life force of an everyday practical magic.

The text's penultimate letter from Simpson's "Phoenix Friends" (Simpson 193), Jerry and Barbara Marlowe confirms his thoughts on Brown Simpson's friend Faye Resnick and his attitude to the publishing of her book, *Nicole Brown Simpson*. Tactically positioned in the chapter entitled "What It's All About," the Marlowes' letter demonstrates the theme of Simpson's commentary on friendship, loyalty and "kindness" (192) in the preceding paragraph. The Marlowes write: "I wonder about the woman that wrote the book about Nicole. Sometimes people that claim to be friends are the worst! I did not buy the book and don't plan to. A true friend keeps their mouth shut, about things that are not so nice about their friend" (Simpson 193). But more importantly the placement of this letter conveniently introduces the subject of Resnick for Simpson's response. Released mid October 1994, during jury selection for the criminal trial, Resnick's autobiographical biography, her "tell-all" account of her friend Brown Simpson's relationship with Simpson was very damaging for Simpson. Resnick portrayed Simpson as abusive, obsessive, violent and jealous, reporting a telephone conversation with Simpson in early May 1994 during which he threatened to kill Brown Simpson (*Nicole Brown Simpson* 173). The conversation is cited in the introduction to this thesis. Resnick portrayed Brown Simpson as fearful that Simpson would kill her (*Nicole Brown Simpson* 172). Answering the Marlowes' call, Simpson joins in their denouncement of Resnick and her textual licentiousness, her sensational public revelations about her relationship with Brown Simpson and Simpson. The Marlowes do not name Resnick or her book. Simpson contextualises their aspersions. He identifies "the woman that wrote the book about Nicole" (Simpson 193) as Resnick and discredits her as interfering, guilty of misrepresentation and the obstruction of justice:
A little more than two weeks prior to Nicole's death [ . . . ] we had reached a final decision not to go back together, a mutual decision. We were at peace with each other even though we were going down separate paths. Once again Faye Resnick interfered in our relationship. She was one of the people I thought of as peripheral friends of Nicole who have turned out not to be any friends at all. These people, pretending to be respectable, are hindering my right to a fair trial with how they present themselves and their relationship to my family. [ . . . ] I know in my heart that the answer to the death of Nicole and Mr. Goldman lies somewhere in the world that Faye Resnick inhabited. (193-94)

Simpson does not slander Resnick outright as a liar, rather his comments reiterate the Marlowes' rail: "Sometimes people that claim to be friends are the worst!" (Simpson 193). By seeming perplexed by Resnick's assertion of a close personal relationship with his ex-wife, Simpson attempts to raise doubt concerning the validity of Resnick's self-proclaimed "insider" status, her version of events and her unwavering testimony - her own literary evidentiary accusation - that Simpson murdered Brown Simpson and Goldman. Simpson's intention is to discredit Resnick as a reliable or credible witness. His plaintive retort endeavours to deny the premise of Resnick's narrative and to oppose her depiction of his relationship with Brown Simpson: "Everyone who saw us said we were a loving couple and a giving couple with two great kids" (Simpson 193). The inclusion of Simpson's family photographs in I Want to Tell You also argues the case for this "loving" appraisal of Simpson's relationship with his ex-wife. Simpson stages a quasi courtroom scene. As the Marlowes open the door for questioning, Simpson is given the opportunity to counter Resnick's published claims, especially that he is guilty, by positing that she
is somehow responsible for the deaths of Brown Simpson and Goldman, not him. Simpson's unsubstantiated conviction generates an air of secrecy. It is as if Simpson knows more than he is telling but is unable to elaborate, or he is bluffing. He can only intimate that there is something sinister and untoward about Resnick and her associations with the cryptic clue: "the answer [. . .] lies somewhere in the world that Faye Resnick inhabited" (Simpson 194). Bound by legal restraint or the burden of proof, Simpson is unable to make his reference more explicit. It hints to a defense theory that Brown Simpson was killed by drug-runners who mistook her for Resnick, a self-confessed cocaine user who was supposedly staying with Brown Simpson at the time, and that Goldman was an innocent casualty of the hit. According to In Pursuit of Justice, "jurors never heard that hypothesis, though, as [Judge] Ito ruled that the defense had no proof to back it up" (Los Angeles Times Staff 66). After the verdict in the criminal trial, this conspiracy theory was considered a real possibility. In “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man,” Cornel West claims: "I think he’s innocent, I really do [. . .]. 'I do think [the double murder] was linked to some drug subculture of violence. It looks as if both O.J. and Nicole had some connection to drug activity" (Gates 57). That connection was Resnick. Henry Louis Gates reports: “The widespread theory about murderous drug dealers [soprano Jessye] Norman finds 'perfectly plausible'" (58). Norman asked Gates: "Isn’t it interesting to you that this Faye Resnick person was staying with Nicole Brown Simpson and that she happened to have left on the eighth of June? Does that tell you that maybe there’s some awful coincidence here?" (58). Brown Simpson and Goldman were murdered on June 12.

The last letter published in I Want to Tell You, from Jacquelyn Lavine and friends has a suitably humbling effect. Their words signify a return, or a turning back to the reality of the tragic
circumstances which give rise to Simpson's narrative, the letters and the text – a woman is dead, two small children have lost their mother, and their father, accused of her murder, is awaiting trial in gaol. Lavine writes: "I do hope your two small children are not too frightened by the loss of their mother and the captivity of their father. I really feel for them and will keep them in my prayers for you" (Simpson 194). This letter asks nothing of Simpson. Instead it gives support, solace and comfort in its heartfelt recognition of the suffering of Sydney and Justin, his children with Brown Simpson. The offerings of hope, prayers, thoughts, feelings and love promised by Lavine and her friends bestow on Simpson and his children, who are complete strangers, an unconditional and humanitarian charity. These "friends," in their expression of sentiments profoundly different to Simpson's "Phoenix Friends," pacify Simpson with their rhetorical philophrones. As Lanham defines this term, their "kind treatment" is an "[a]ttempt to mitigate anger by gentle speech and humble submission" (Rhetorical Terms 115). Although welcomed by Simpson, the Marlowes' hostility toward Resnick would only have disturbed and agitated Simpson further, fuelling his outrage and seething anger. There is a soothing peace to the tone of Lavine's letter, despite its portrayal of a passionate concern for the wellbeing and care of his children. The passivity in its avoidance of judgement or blame reflects a Quakerish proclivity and practice. Indeed, the Society of Friends is the official name of the Christian sect known as the Quakers. Their choice and use of the word "captivity" to describe Simpson's pre-trial imprisonment is a subtle critique of the justice system that raises the ugly spectre of African-Americans in slavery. Simpson's slave heritage is hinted but passed over, not fully acknowledged by Simpson on page 114 and page 184 of
In response to the concerns of this letter and in concluding his narrative, Simpson provides a brief update regarding his "two small children" (Simpson 194). He advises his readers that he has finally confronted them with the truth of why he is in gaol, five months after his arrest: "On November 21, 1994, I told Sydney and Justin that I was in jail and had been arrested for the death of their mother. They told me they already knew. Some of their friends had told them. They said they knew I was going to help find the people who killed their mommy" (Simpson 194). In his finale Simpson protests his innocence once more in the very last sentence. His inclusion of his children in this parting gesture stresses that he is not the only one being punished, unfairly, by his incarceration. He leaves us with the thought of its devastating effects on his family and friends, on his youngest children in particular who have lost their mother through a horrible and senseless act of violence, and are now being denied their father, as a consequence. Simpson suggests that the end of the text is only the beginning for him and his family. Although he seems determined to clear his name, to solve what he considers to be the mystery of his ex-wife's murder, there is a helplessness evident in his inability to act or perform with anything other than a captive agency. Simpson may captivate the reader for the duration of the textual encounter, but we are free to depart, he is not. His concluding rhetorical utilisation of the words of his children is meant to arouse sympathy and compassion. However, their parting role as convincing character witnesses for their father, a man they trust implicitly, is a little too tenuous. Their endorsement of Simpson as

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Historically, the Quakers were responsible for hiding fugitive slaves who were on their way north to the free states. See *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. 
their hero is not a conclusive or vindicating closing remark.

The aforementioned group-written letters to Simpson privilege and identify the individual voices of Jacy C. Krogh, Justin Krogh, Jason Collins, Jennifer Czawlytko, Earl Brown, Pat Brown, Audrey Lighter, Linda Lewis, Jerry Marlowe, Barbara Marlowe and Jacquelyn Lavine. Each named author speaks to Simpson individually, selfishly, but also claims responsibility for writing and speaking for and on behalf of others, known and unknown, named and unnamed, in a consensus of sentiment and a consensual utilisation of each other’s thoughts and feelings. Krogh, Krogh and Collins represent their fellow class members (Simpson 47); Czawlytko believes her opinions speak for her family and the nation (Simpson 72); Lighter "knows" Simpson has "probably gotten thousands of letters" similar to hers (Simpson 118); and Lewis confirms for Simpson: "You have a lot of people who love you and will continue to love no matter what" (Simpson 162). Yet even though each of these letters is signed by more than one person, the body of the letter demonstrates an individual consciousness in its use of the singular, autobiographical, first person, subjective "I." This pattern or style of delivery signifies a group of individual voices speaking alone and in unison, a communal expression that allows the utterance of the individual to be heard as a single, autonomous component amongst a collective whole; regardless of whether the societal whole be homogeneous or heterogeneous. Reliant on the possibilities, allowances and determinations of oral discourse as it is spoken and heard in the social presence of interlocutors, it is this topos of antiphony, a call and response dynamic, that composes *I Want to Tell You* narratively, textually and ethically.
Called by the excessive and phatic address of the letters, the collaborative style and structure of Simpson's memoir is an intuitive, creative and tactical response to the trajectories they propose. In a display of community, Simpson allows the voices of others to transect, traverse and infiltrate his memoir as individuals. Simpson inserts himself into this textual community. He asserts himself through his narrative, which intercepts, negotiates, interrogates and traverses the epistolic utterance of each individual expression of public thought and opinion. Careful not to abuse the privilege and power of his position as the dominant authorial "I," Simpson's narrative is a self-determining and self-affirming intervention that stands equally beside the insertions and assertions of others. Entering into the conversation, textually and publicly, Simpson inscribes himself in the continuous dialogue of cultural, social and legal debate that surrounds him and his role in the Brentwood murders. He participates in the proliferation of gossip and hearsay that concerns him. Inseparably a public document and a private account, Simpson's *I Want to Tell You* is a vehicle for the delivery of work produced by "simultaneous individual and communal creativity" (Levine 33). Its structure supplies "simultaneous outlets for individual and communal expression" and "place[s] the individual in continual dialogue with his [or her] community, allowing him at one and the same time to preserve his [or her] voice as a distinct entity and to blend it with those of his [or her] fellows" (Levine 33). Through publication, this antiphonal exchange becomes a display of public behaviour and a highly visible public performance of self, for Simpson, for Schiller and for each published letter writer. It is not only a social phenomenon, it is a civic matter; and for some, it is an act of civil disobedience.

The spirit and logic of an operational reciprocity is implicit in the interposing interjections of the call and response narrative patterning of *I Want to Tell You*, and in the allowances and
provisions of its collaborative structure and conversational style. Simpson contributes his narrative because the phatic address of the letters invites him to do so. There is a generosity and indebtedness in the perpetuating rhythms of this textual exchange of words. The letter writers instigate and initiate narrative as they give their epistolary narratives to Simpson (initially) and to the text (when asked). Simpson makes an obligatory, reciprocal return with his thanksgiving narrative packaged by the text. There is a strong sense of ritual in this giving-taking narrative exchange, in its rhythms and relations that honour, acknowledge and credit the self and the other simultaneously. In financial terms, all published letter writers are essentially Simpson supporters. Their epistolary contribution aids his defense fundraising drive. This may be why Simpson seems to never condescend, condemn or attack any of the letter writers directly. Even if their words are racist or hateful Simpson is able to use them illustratively (artfully and creatively). In his narrative, Simpson takes up the call of Weisenberger's remark: "It seems your press coverage is messing up the soaps. I think that's great, I hate the soaps" (Simpson 163). He denigrates the values espoused by soap opera television programs and the popularity of the "contriving and conniving" characters (Simpson 164). He includes the then-screening Beverly Hills 90210, but highlights Dallas and the character of J. R. Ewing (played by Larry Hagman) as exemplary of the genre and its antagonists. The irony of Simpson's response is that he fails to differentiate between "values" in reality and "values" in fiction (164), and to grasp the art of viewer discernment and enjoyment.

Whilst villains and misdeeds are exciting in fiction, neither villains nor misdeeds are popular or rewarded in real life as his own personal position and experience should elucidate, be it wrongful or just: "In jail all I see is the negative and the misery of man" (Simpson 163). There is an unwitting bathos in the self-righteous seriousness of Simpson's complaint that he is "forced to watch shows like Beverly Hills 90210 and stuff like that" (163), as if it is inhumane and cruel treatment, not only
part of his punishment but torture. Simpson does more than reciprocate Weisenberger's regard. He pays her the greatest compliment a celebrity can profess to a fan. He confesses that they share a personal dislike, a mutual interest and passion: they both hate watching soap operas on television. In the momentum of this giving-taking exchange between Weisenberger and Simpson, performed for the reader's entertainment, something trivial and inconsequential becomes significant and valuable, symbolic and treasured.

Not all published letters give to Simpson without the anticipation or expectation of some return. Some letters do not simply ask questions in the hope they are answered, but demand a response be supplied. For example, Rosie Conover writes: "Maybe someday I'll get a note from you, that'll make my day for the rest of my days" (Simpson 8); Valerie Summers writes: "Could you ask someone, like Rosie [Grier], to drop me a note or call if my letters are making your life better in any way? I need to know that the efforts I'm putting out are not in vain" (Simpson 9-10); Nadine Bynum writes: "I have one question for you. Is it true that you don't like black women? Or should I say, we don't interest you romantically, or that you don't find us attractive? I'm curious. I await your reply" (Simpson 120). To confront Simpson, as Bynum does is to demand a response. And perhaps in light of the hate mail, the accusatory and confrontational mail Simpson receives, we could say that writing to Simpson initiates and instigates narrative, actuates and necessitates his narrative by way of provocation. The fascinating endorsements included in Simpson's memoir as testimony reveal generosity, reciprocity, acceptance and allowance. However, there is also a defensive tension in the instances of epistolary provocation and Simpson's reaction, his restrained retaliation. Simpson's text as a whole is a defensive retort, a retaliatory strike provoked by his confinement, his "wrongful" incarceration and his pilloried position in the media; the imposition of
his public absence and public silence. And yet as I Want to Tell You was released prior to the juridical verdict of the criminal trial, it was also a preemptive strike. Simpson defends himself when confronted but any anger he displays is directed towards the media, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Prosecution and social issues; never the letter writers, no matter how abusive they may be. Simpson deflects the phatic racial rebukes made by Jacqueline Marquis (Simpson 119-20) and Bynum (Simpson 120-21) with a calm, wistful rebuttal:

[Marquis]: O.J., I don't have any facts at all on your history with Nicole. But why is it that whenever a Black man reaches the height of a successful venture of some sort he chooses to share that success and fame with a White woman? What was going on in your mind years ago when you started to cheat on your faithful wife for some 18-year-old White female? It was bad enough to cheat on her, but then you had to leave her for a younger, white blond. Oh, O.J. Now look at who's coming to your support - Black women! I'm amazed!!!! In case you don't know, a series of polls have been conducted regarding your guilt/innocence, and your biggest and most consistent supporter has been overwhelmingly the Black female - GO FIGURE!!!!!!!

So you see, you really screwed up by abandoning your own race of people to be with what you perceived to be better(?). You succumbed to what the media, and society told you was the epitome of beauty - the Blond. [. . .]

[Simpson:] The press has created this image of me as being a playboy. As Marquerite and I were just splitting up, I met Nicole and we were together for the fifteen years. When I split up with Nicole in January of 1992, I wasn't looking for anybody. There were some other girls and there was one particular black girl that I was interested in, but I was trying to work things out with Nicole. One day a friend
introduced me to another girl, a very spiritual girl. This was Paula. Except that they're both Caucasian, Nicole and Paula don't even look anything alike – Paula has dark hair. I was impressed with Paula's spiritualness and I needed some spiritualness in my life at the time. Earlier there was another girl that I was working with on the set of the TV series *First and Ten*. And she was a black woman, but I was married to Nicole at the time, so that didn't go any further. If I had met this black girl when Nicole and I were separated, who knows. (Simpson 119-21)

The direct questions asked by Marquis and Bynum are not questions at all. They are offensive statements calling Simpson to account, rhetorical questions that provoke Simpson, daring him to deny what they confirm. Rather than reacting to their criticism of his miscegenation with anger or frustration, Simpson willingly and methodically provides evidence, the very personal details of his private life, to refute their claim of his sexual preference for white women. The dramatic importance of Simpson's refutation is that although his testimony is given in response to Marquis and Bynum, it is intended for the reader. The reproach expressed by the letters from Marquis and Bynum is reproached by the rhetorical effect of their presence in Simpson's text and their placement in the chapter on "Racism."

The postscript to Andrea Smith's letter suggests the practice of writing, the giving of self through narrative has its own emotional, spiritual and therapeutic rewards: "P.S.: Even if you never receive this letter I feel better because I wrote it!" (Simpson 70). Articulated by Smith's comment and the collective largesse of Simpson's mail is that even prior to the inception of *I Want to Tell You* as a text writing to an incarcerated Simpson was both a personal and political act. A self-determining and self-affirming practice signifying autonomy and interest. An assertion and
insertion of the self into the call of the continuous public dialogue surrounding Simpson and his alleged perpetration of the murder of Brown Simpson and Goldman. Writing to Simpson allowed the ordinary citizen to respond as a witness and an experiential "I" to a very public national event, and to testify to that experience in the first person, authorial "I." Their epistolary inclusion in Simpson's text, writing to Simpson and for Simpson, allowed the ordinary citizen to produce an unofficial official version, a personal account of the heterogeneous O.J. Simpson story and to take part in the "great Simpson conversation" (Thaler xvi). Reading dramatically as the "I" and the "you" of each personal account by Simpson, Schiller and the letter writers allows the reader to transgress the boundaries that relegate us to a passive consumption of the textual product. Through a performative *sermocinatio* and a rhetorical *ethopoeia* we encounter a productive, animating textuality. Reading Simpson's memoir forces us to become involved in the personal and political acts of strangers, to become actively engaged with the practical consciousness of social history as a dynamic flow of unrelenting thoughts and feelings in process, as they are "actively lived and felt" (Williams 132).