

Form and Desire: O.J. Simpson and the Trajectory of Colorblind Racism

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From the moment that Orenthal James Simpson led a slow-speed police chase in his notorious white Bronco, the case captivated national and worldwide attention. CBS News reported that 95 million watched the live police pursuit in 1994. As more and more viewers followed O.J.'s arrest and subsequent trial for the murders of estranged wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ron Goldman, the case burgeoned into the "trial of the century,"<sup>1</sup> "the murder case that enthralled America,"<sup>2</sup> and a "crime that gripped the world."<sup>3</sup> In prison during the trial, O.J. Simpson received over 400,000 letters.<sup>4</sup> An estimated 150 million viewers watched when the October 3, 1995 "not guilty" verdict was announced.<sup>5</sup> On the one-year anniversary of the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman, the *Washington Post* announced: "the public thirst for details has been exceeded only by the willingness of the media to slake it."<sup>6</sup> *Newsweek* also reported on the public circulation and uptake of the O.J. Simpson trial: "For more than two and a half years, the O.J. Simpson saga was the most important domestic story in many American lives, consuming enough newsprint to sink a large fleet of ships."<sup>7</sup>

While the intense popular investment in the Simpson case was widely acknowledged, many commentators wondered why this particular case captivated Americans' attention. *The Economist* reported: "At first sight, especially to a foreign observer, the extent of America's obsession with the Simpson case is quite baffling."<sup>8</sup> Many editorialists suggested that this investment was disproportionate to the significance of the case. For example: "It's as if this case was what it certainly is not: the most important event in the world."<sup>9</sup> Others pointed out the major news stories that the O.J. Simpson coverage displaced, a list including the national health care plan, the war in Bosnia, and the invasion of Haiti.<sup>10</sup> In an especially striking example, Simpson's civil verdict was announced during the State of the Union address by President

Clinton. Some networks carried only the Simpson verdict; others split the screen between O.J. Simpson and the President of the United States.<sup>11</sup> Either completely supplanting the president or framed side-by-side with him, O.J. Simpson was positioned as figure of national political significance. A *Washington Post* interviewee asked pointedly: “The bigger issue is why is this such compelling news? Why? Why?”<sup>12</sup>

The aim of this project is to account for the intense public desire evoked by Simpson trial coverage. Following Kenneth Burke, desire can be read through textual form. Burke explains, “Form ... is an arousing and fulfillment of desires. A work has form insofar as one part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence.”<sup>13</sup> Coverage of O.J.’s criminal trial traced a formal arc: a rise to fame that produced public anticipation of and gratification in O.J.’s fall into infamy. In media reports, Simpson’s case followed what Burke calls a qualitative progression, in which “the presence of one quality prepares us for the introduction of another.”<sup>14</sup> Simpson’s rise and fall marked the contours of American racialized desires: evoking desire by disavowing race and satisfying that desire through Simpson’s re-racialization.

Often the “American obsession”<sup>15</sup> with the case was chalked up to sensationalism. A statement by Johnnie L. Cochran, Simpson's lead defense attorney, is indicative: “This case has everything: It's got sex, glamour, Hollywood, an icon falling from grace.”<sup>16</sup> However, the O.J. Simpson case was not only portrayed as generally salacious, but furthermore was said to whet some specifically American appetites. A *Washington Post* article asserted that the Simpson case was “burdened by the American dilemmas of race, class, celebrity and justice.”<sup>17</sup> The *Economist* echoed: “The Simpson case touches on three great American obsessions: celebrity, crime and, above all, race.”<sup>18</sup> According to these accounts, the O.J. Simpson trial hooked Americans by

tapping into their primary national dilemmas and obsessions: problems of race, class, and criminal justice.

While the O.J. case certainly articulates with race, class, and American justice, it is important to note that Simpson had been and continued to be formulated as an exception to American racial injustices based on his class position. According to reports, there was something unique about O.J. Simpson: “Is there another black man who could stand accused of the same crime O.J. Simpson has been charged with—murdering a white woman—and not be hanged and then fried—metaphorically speaking, of course?”<sup>19</sup> O.J. Simpson is constructed here as an exception. Commentators acknowledged that he is a black man, but insisted that he is treated differently than any other black man, who would be subject to the American history of lynching —“metaphorical” or otherwise. A *Washington Post* interviewee similarly suggests that O.J. is not treated as just any black man: “If it was just a regular black man, none of this would be on TV, and that guy would be in jail.”<sup>20</sup> This is seconded by another black man interviewed after the O.J. verdict: “If that was me instead of O.J. they would've locked me up forever.”<sup>21</sup> Although the Simpson case certainly remains implicated in American race relations, many observers suggested that O.J. is not treated as a “regular black man,” but as an exception to those relations. bell hooks argues:

Let us not be led by spectacles like the O.J. Simpson trial to believe a mass media, which has always betrayed the cause of racial justice, to think it was all about race, or it was about gender. Let us acknowledge that first and foremost it was about class and the interlocking nature of race, sex, and class. Let's face the reality that if O.J. Simpson had been poor or even lower-middle-class there would have been no media attention.<sup>22</sup>

O.J. Simpson achieves his exceptional status, in part, by being cast as an American hero, a rising star who overcomes racial poverty. Even during the Bronco chase, an anchor on Fox affiliate KTTV said: “O.J. was loved by so many people. He is truly an American hero.”<sup>23</sup> The

*Washington Post* described Simpson as “America's archetypal Football Hero—the wayward kid from the projects who made good through sports.”<sup>24</sup> Overwhelmingly, descriptions attributed O.J.’s heroism to this rise from poverty to financial success, what one commentator dubbed “the All-American rags-to-riches fairy tale.”<sup>25</sup> Accounts of O.J.’s success often attribute it to a pivotal moment in his adolescence, when 16-year-old Simpson was arrested for his involvement in a gang fight:

But all the trouble seemed to end after that weekend in jail. First came a visit from Willie Mays (arranged by social workers) who took Simpson on a drive that included a stop at the baseball great's home. The experience transformed Simpson, convincing him that a black man with athletic talent could conquer the world.<sup>26</sup>

Here, Simpson’s “rags to riches” transformation starts with a car ride, beginning in jail and then arriving at Willie Mays’ estate. The statement above establishes a parallelism between this car ride and Simpson’s career rise, beginning as a “black man” and then “conquer[ing] the world.” Simpson later told *The New Yorker*: “Willie Mays was the single biggest influence on my life. I saw how he made white people happy. I wanted to be like Willie Mays.”<sup>27</sup> Simpson can conquer the world by making white people happy; he does not rise up to just any world, but the white world in particular.

O.J.’s “All-American” rise from rags to riches is often described as a rise from blackness.<sup>28</sup> During the 1994 trial, the *Washington Post*, the *Economist*, and *Newsweek* reprinted a quote from a 1969 Simpson interview, when he stated, “My biggest accomplishment is that people look at me like a man first, not a black man.”<sup>29</sup> Here, achievement is marked by the rhetorical disavowal of blackness. In their careful tracing of Simpson’s pre-trial popularity, Leola Johnson and David Roedinger argue: “However tragically Simpson believed that such a crossover also involved a movement beyond race, his success rested on appeals strongly rooted in his race, in the presence of movements for racial justice, and in the history of race and gender

in the U.S.”<sup>30</sup> Coverage of the O.J. Simpson case routinely depicted him rising out of blackness in his early career. For example: “He was the tough black kid from the streets of San Francisco who got to the top on ability, brawn and charm.”<sup>31</sup> Notice that both O.J.’s race and lower-class status are talked about in the past tense—he *was* “black” and “from the streets.” Note also that this divestment of blackness is characterized as an upward trajectory from blackness: O.J. “got to the top.” In a *Washington Post* interview, critical race theorist Henry Louis Gates said: “O.J. Simpson is larger than life, but he's also larger than race.”<sup>32</sup> As larger than race, O.J. is pictured as both greater than and above race. Commentators described O.J. as not only moving above, but also past race: “O.J. was beyond race.”<sup>33</sup> O.J. is thus rhetorically divested of his particular racialized identity.

In the stories of his rise to fame, O.J. Simpson functioned as a signifier of the “e-raced” American; the disavowal of his blackness was said to exceed racial identity categories. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw coins the term “e-raced” to “identify both the ‘outing’—the summoning and undiscovering of race—and its suspension” in the O.J. Simpson case. Using the term “e-raced” to describe O.J. Simpson reads his putative transcendence of racial categories not as a subtraction of race, but a paralipsis that marks race in the very disavowal of it.<sup>34</sup> Larger than, above, and beyond race, Simpson was portrayed as transcending race: “At the start, Mr. Simpson was presented as a hero who transcended colour: a sportsman at home in a world of white millionaires.”<sup>35</sup> His heroism is linked to his transcendence of race. Tellingly, however, this transcendence of race is linked here with whiteness—O.J. transcends color by finding a home among rich whites. O.J. is formulated as transcending race by moving above black poverty to white affluence: “Mr. Simpson, with his blonde wife and his easy mingling and golf-playing with corporate America, seemed to have transcended racial barriers.”<sup>36</sup> Here, O.J. is both identified

with whiteness while race is disavowed. While whiteness is not explicitly mentioned here, O.J. rises above racial difference by mingling with the “blonde,” the “corporate,” the “American.”

Such formulations simultaneously position whiteness as the superior and transcendent race and as the disavowal of race itself. This formulation also subtly links whiteness to Americanness: in rising “above race” to whiteness, O.J. becomes an American hero. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw explains, “Simpson’s image was not grounded in ‘race neutrality’ as such, but in an apparent ability to neutralize his blackness by acquiring the accoutrements of whiteness.”<sup>37</sup> The pre-Bronco figure of O.J. Simpson portrayed white America as the universal race, yet in so doing denied the category of race altogether. As Michael Eric Dyson explains that in the discourse surrounding the O.J. case “race, in its deliberate denial, was made even more present. Like Poe’s purloined letter, race lay hidden in plain sight.”<sup>38</sup>

This “All-American fairy tale” travels through metaphors of mobility. While a car ride from jail to Willie Mays’ mansion kicks off Simpson’s transformation from blackness to (white) Americanness, Hertz Rent-A-Car sustains his upward trajectory toward a race-free American identity. 1980s marketing surveys by his employer, Hertz Rent-A-Car, found that Americans considered O.J. “race-neutral” or “colorless.”<sup>39</sup> A Hertz advertising executive explained, “people thought of O.J. Simpson as O.J. Simpson, not O.J. Simpson, the black athlete.”<sup>40</sup> Put otherwise, O.J. was not considered black; he was simply considered a person. Michael Eric Dyson describes O.J.’s “Teflon racelessness” to account for his success as a corporate sponsor for Hertz.<sup>41</sup> Again, the movement of O.J. Simpson, or “Mr. Hertz,”<sup>42</sup> from blackness to personhood traces an upward pattern. A Washington Post headline is especially illustrative: “O.J. and Hertz: The Rise and Fall of a Rent-a-Star.”<sup>43</sup> The pun between rent-a-car and rent-a-star plays precisely on his upward (and later downward) mobility—Hertz was figuratively O.J.’s vehicle to fame. Commentators

suggested that O.J. ‘rode’ Hertz to popularity: “He had made himself popular on TV, advertising Hertz rental cars.”<sup>44</sup> In 1977, *Advertising Age* named Simpson the Star Presenter of the Year; in 1984, a consumer research company identified O.J. as the most popular athlete spokesman.<sup>45</sup> Early Hertz ads featured Simpson running through the world’s largest airport to catch a plane; later Hertz ads depicted Simpson flying “Superman-style” through an airport.<sup>46</sup> In addition to depicting Simpson rising upward into the air, both commercials play on Simpson’s speed. In fact, Hertz advertising executives chose the former running back because “O.J. Simpson was the human embodiment of speed.”<sup>47</sup> Hertz’s slogan “Go, O.J., Go!” performs the American public rooting for O.J.’s ability to move fast and to move up—to move out of poverty and above race.

However, after the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman, O.J. was rhetorically refigured. Moreover, that refiguration sparked a corollary reconfiguration of the American racialized desire. O.J.’s police chase in the white Ford Bronco completed his automotive round-trip from e-racialization to re-racialization, the American public cheering all the while. Where O.J.’s journey upward started in jail and arrived at a Los Angeles estate, his trip back down began at his Los Angeles estate and ended back in jail. While in jail, O.J. received the following letter: “I cried when you were on the L.A. expressway. My heart was pounding, my palms were sweating, and I was screaming ‘Get away, O.J.’...When O.J. pleaded not guilty, I cheered. I was at my university and people hugged each other and high-fived.”<sup>48</sup> Many, like this letter writer and her friends, cheered for O.J. as he evaded police in the White Bronco with his longtime friend Al Cowling, screaming—and later, hugging and high-fiving—like fans at a football game. Patricia J. Williams similarly compares the Simpson trial to a sporting event: “‘O.J.’ (the trademark) was pure Hollywood spectacle, a bread-and-circus superbowl where ‘the blacks’ and ‘the whites’ cheered their sides.”<sup>49</sup> As O.J. drove by, broadcast



on national television, fans gathered on overpasses holding signs cheering, “Go, O.J., go!” Hertz dropped O.J. as a spokesman immediately, but too late: “Hertz's well-known slogan ‘Go, O.J., Go!’ now is a national joke after the bizarre police chase.”<sup>50</sup> That once-sincere, now sardonic national cheer indexed a national dilemma. A *Washington Post* headline sums it up: “Why We Really Root for O.J.: The Superstar Suspect Embodies the Illusion of a Colorblind America.”<sup>51</sup> This headline suggests that Americans’ investment in figuring O.J. as “colorless” marks an investment in disavowing American racism.

Americans’ investment in producing O.J. as an e-raced figure was an investment in producing America itself as a non-racist nation. While the pre-Bronco O.J. was touted as embodying a “Colorblind America,” the post-Bronco O.J. problematized that vision of the United States as an e-racialized and non-racist nation. Although O.J.’s rags-to-riches, black-to-white story is often described as the rise of an American hero, his trajectory after the murder allegations is often described as a fall. When O.J. falls, he returns from the figure of a race-transcending hero back to a raced figure. As a result, the American public also becomes rhetorically re-racialized.

Michael Eric Dyson writes of the O.J. Simpson trial: O.J. was “an honorary white who had fallen from grace.”<sup>52</sup> Simpson received the following letter in prison: “I know that deep black bottomless pit you live with everyday. Now, it is even blacker & deeper than anyone can imagine.”<sup>53</sup> Not only does O.J. fall into a pit, the pit is deep and black. Later in the letter, blackness is used as a metaphor for O.J.’s “depths of despair” and “daily hell.” Here, blackness is the endpoint of O.J.’s painful downward trajectory. The deep, black pit can be compared to the celestial light of O.J.’s former status as a shining star. O.J. received the following poem from a 15-year-old fan:

*A Shining Star*

A shining star has fallen,  
And in his eyes I see,  
A man who once was there,  
But no longer will he be...

Remember, you may have fallen to them, but to me, you're still shining!<sup>54</sup>

Even though O.J. is still a star from the writer's viewpoint, this letter at first writes from the position of the public "them" for whom O.J. has fallen and who even disappears—he is no longer "there." As Michael Eric Dyson writes, "It may be that O.J. Simpson is a black hole, a collapsed star of such immense gravity that no light can escape."<sup>55</sup> Another letter to O.J. similarly describes his fall from shining white star status to blackness: "I dream to rise in a society that sees me as 'just another black child.' See, you were a superstar, now the media 'wants' us to see you as just another blackman accused of killing two members of the Anglo-Saxon race."<sup>56</sup> The letter mirrors O.J.'s parabolic trajectory, describing the writer's own goal to rise from "just another black child," then O.J.'s fall from stardom to "just another blackman." This letter implies that it is not only O.J. who risks falling from the bright white heights into racialization—it is also the letter-writer herself and "society" as a whole. Armond White writes:

You can feel for the man's manipulation—even if you disapprove of his doings—because his downfall, perhaps more than his out-of-reach "success," resonates with the common black plight (O.J.'s failure is bound to the prospect of Black achievement in his country, evoking the passions of those who have felt the oppressive stress of white society).<sup>57</sup>

White suggests that the "downfall" of O.J. Simpson as an American hero marks a parallel downfall of the prospect of black achievement in America, the prospect of overcoming racial oppression.

The title of the first best-selling book about the Simpson case, published a mere two weeks after the murders, encapsulates this arc of the fallen hero: "O.J. Simpson: American Hero, American Tragedy."<sup>58</sup> *USA Today* reported that during the Bronco chase the public watched "the

precipitous fall of this American hero.”<sup>59</sup> Once a story of national triumph, O.J. became a story of national tragedy after the Bronco chase. *Newsweek* declared: “The Simpson case is an American tragedy in every respect.”<sup>60</sup> Importantly, the Simpson case is described here not merely a personal tragedy, but as a tragedy for the nation. Another letter sent to O.J. in prison marks the relationship between O.J. and the nation: “This country we live in is supposed to be the best in the world, the land of opportunity. You are living proof of that! Why then do we build heroes, just to tear them down at the first chance we get?”<sup>61</sup> Here, O.J., as a hero, is evidence of America’s status as a “land of opportunity.” This letter writer writes as the American public, as the “we,” that builds such heroes through opportunity. However, the letter writer also laments the American “we” responsible for the fall of those heroes, tearing heroes “down.” According to these formulations, the downward arc of O.J. as an American hero challenges the greatness of America and requires a recharacterization of the American public as racialized.

O.J. Simpson was often used as a signifier of America. Commentators suggested not only that O.J. transcended race, but that America transcended race along with him. For example, both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* described O.J. as an “American icon,”<sup>62</sup> an image of the nation. *Newsweek* referred to America as “O.J. land.”<sup>63</sup> The O.J.’s tragedy was a national one, according to reports, because his fall was the fall of America itself. Like O.J.’s, the fall of America was a fall from racial transcendence. For example, one editorialist wrote: “O.J. Simpson, more than any other black hero or celebrity, embodies the idea, the dream, the illusion—call it whatever you want—that we as a nation have transcended race.”<sup>64</sup> Once a symbol of American racial equality, the racialized figuration O.J. transformed America’s transcendence of race from an idea, to a dream, to an illusion. One letter writer regretfully tells O.J. that before his arrest and the media coverage of the trial: “I always thought this was the land of the free, home

of the brave.”<sup>65</sup> According to this letter, the treatment of O.J. shows that America is no longer the place of liberty that its national anthem proclaims it to be. As many commentators noted, the Simpson case “demonstrated that America wasn’t as racially tolerant as many people may have thought.”<sup>66</sup>

Tracing a parabolic path from fame to infamy, O.J. operated as a figure that reconfigured the American public’s racialized desires. As Burke explains, textual form both points to and organizes the affective investments of its audience. He explains that the lure, or rhetorical appeal, of a text can be read by attending to its form: “The appeal of the form in this sense is obvious: form *is* the appeal.”<sup>67</sup> The formal features of a text thus mark the affective investments they coordinate. In this case, the racialized arc of O.J.’s popular figuration marked a shift in American public investment. No longer the “colorblind” disavowal of racial inequality, the appeal of O.J. coverage was the reformulated vision of America as thoroughly racialized. The qualitative progression of O.J. coverage—from rising to falling star—aroused and fulfilled the public desire for a reimagination of race in America.

Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Tony Mauro, "Fairness on Trial: Simpson Case a Challenge for System," *USA Today*, January 20, 1995, A1.
- <sup>2</sup> Steve O'Baugh, "Crime that Grippped the World," *Hobart Mercury*, October 4, 1995.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> "The Juice Box," *Washington Post*, June 12, 1995, D1.
- <sup>5</sup> Jefferson Graham, "O.J. Verdict Watched by 150 Million," *USA Today*, October 5, 1995, D1.
- <sup>6</sup> "The Juice Box," D1.
- <sup>7</sup> Ellis Cose, "Getting Past the Myths," *Newsweek*, February 17, 1997, 36.
- <sup>8</sup> "One Nation Under O.J.," *Economist*, July 16, 1994, 30.
- <sup>9</sup> Ann Jones, "I Want To Tell You: My Response to Your Letters, Your Messages, Your Questions," *Women's Review of Books* 12 (1995): 1-3.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 3.
- <sup>11</sup> "The Simpson Verdict: If at First You Don't Succeed," *Economist*, February 8, 1997, 29.
- <sup>12</sup> David Montgomery, Eugene L. Meyer, Philip P. Pan, and Lisa Frazier, "Simpson Verdict Prompts Debates on Justice," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1995, M1.
- <sup>13</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Counterstatement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 124.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 125.
- <sup>15</sup> "The Great O.J. Replay," *Economist*, November 30, 1996, 23.
- <sup>16</sup> Marc Fisher, "Letters from L.A.: A City's Unquenchable Thirst for O.J.," *Washington Post*, May 25, 1995, C1.
- <sup>17</sup> Sharon Waxman, "At Long Last, O.J. Simpson Under Oath: He Will Testify Today In Court but Not on TV," *Washington Post*, November 22, 1996, A1.
- <sup>18</sup> "The Great O.J. Replay," 23.
- <sup>19</sup> Meri Nana-Ama Danquah, "Why We Really Root for O.J.: The Superstar Suspect Embodies the Illusion of a Colorblind America," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1994, C1.
- <sup>20</sup> Montgomery et al., "Simpson Verdict Prompts Debates on Justice," M1.
- <sup>21</sup> "From a Texas Jail to New York City, Plenty of Room for Views," *Washington Post*, October 4, 1995, A32.
- <sup>22</sup> bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 7.
- <sup>23</sup> Kurtz, "Media Largely Ignored Faults of Football's 'Dream-Come-True,'" A18.
- <sup>24</sup> Christine Spolar and Lloyd Grove, "Nicole and O.J.: Scenes from a Volatile Relationship," *Washington Post*, June 24, 1994, A1.
- <sup>25</sup> Danquah, "Why We Really Root for O.J.," C1.
- <sup>26</sup> Richard Price and David Leon Moore, "No. 32 to No. 4013970: A Hero Topples," *USA Today*, June 20, 1994, A4.
- <sup>27</sup> Pat Jordan, "The Outcast: Conversations with O. J. Simpson," *New Yorker*, July 9, 2001, 42.
- <sup>28</sup> The aim of this essay is not to further a theory of blackness as such, or to promote a universal conception of blackness, but rather to trace the deployment of "blackness" as a rhetorical figure at this localized conjuncture.
- <sup>29</sup> Jonathan Alter, Mark Miller, Karen Springen, and Pat Wingert, "Black & White & Read All Over," *Newsweek*, August 1, 1994, 18; Danquah, "Why We Really Root for O.J.," C1; "One Nation under O.J.," 30.

- <sup>30</sup> Leola Johnson and David Roedinger, "'Hertz, Don't It?' Beoming Colorless and Staying Black in the Crossover of O.J. Simpson," in *Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script, and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case*, ed. Toni Morrison and Claudia Brodsky Lacour (New York: Random House, 1997), 199.
- <sup>31</sup> Lloyd Grove, "Race and the Simpson Case: As the Story Unfolds, Debate Simmers Over the Color Question," *Washington Post*, June 27, 1994, D1.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Danquah, "Why We Really Root for O.J.," C1.
- <sup>34</sup> See "Colorblind Dreams and Racial Nightmares: Reconfiguring Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era," in *Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script, and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case*, ed. Toni Morrison and Claudia Brodsky Lacour (New York: Random House, 1997), 161.
- <sup>35</sup> "Two Nations, Divisible: The Intolerable Lesson of the O.J. Simpson Trial," *The Economist*, October 7, 1995, 18.
- <sup>36</sup> "One Nation Under O.J.," 30.
- <sup>37</sup> Crenshaw, "Colorblind Dreams and Racial Nightmares," 111.
- <sup>38</sup> Michael Eric Dyson, "Obsessed with O.J.," in *Postmortem: the O. J. Simpson Case: Justice Confronts Race, Domestic Violence, Lawyers, Money, and the Media*, ed. Jeffrey Abramson (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 49.
- <sup>39</sup> Danquah, "Why We Really Root for O.J.," C1.
- <sup>40</sup> Kara Swisher, "O.J. and Hertz: The Rise and Fall of a Rent-a-Star," *Washington Post*, July 10, 1994, A1.
- <sup>41</sup> Michael Eric Dyson, "When You're a Credit to your Race, the Bill Will Come Due: O.J. Simpson and Our Trial by Fire," in *The Michael Eric Dyson Reader*, ed. Michael Eric Dyson (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004), 50.
- <sup>42</sup> Swisher, "O.J. and Hertz," A1.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Patricia Highsmith, "The Mystery in the Juice: Detecting Delusion in the Case That Grips a Nation," *Washington Post*, June 26, 1994, C1.
- <sup>45</sup> Swisher, "O.J. and Hertz," A1.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>48</sup> Orenthal J. Simpson, *I Want to Tell You: My Response to Your Letters, Your Messages, Your Questions*, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, & Co., 1995), 188.
- <sup>49</sup> Patricia J. Williams, "American Kabuki," in *Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script, and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case*, ed. Toni Morrison and Claudia Brodsky Lacour (New York: Random House, 1997), 280.
- <sup>50</sup> Swisher, "O.J. and Hertz," A1.
- <sup>51</sup> Danquah, "Why We Really Root for O.J.," C1.
- <sup>52</sup> Dyson, "When You're a Credit to your Race," 53.
- <sup>53</sup> Simpson, *I Want to Tell You*, 6.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 45-6.
- <sup>55</sup> Dyson, "Obsessed with O.J.," 47.
- <sup>56</sup> Simpson, *I Want to Tell You*, 87.

<sup>57</sup> Armond White, "Eye, the Jury," in *Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script, and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case*, ed. Toni Morrison and Claudia Brodsky Lacour (New York: Random House, 1997), 339.

<sup>58</sup> Mary B. W. Tabor, "An O.J. Biography: Is There Anyone Who Hasn't Milked the Trial of Juice?" *New York Times*, October 1, 1995, D7.

<sup>59</sup> Price and Moore, "No. 32 to No. 4013970," A4.

<sup>60</sup> Tessa Namuth, "When Did He Stop Beating His Wife?" *Newsweek*, June 27, 1994, 21.

<sup>61</sup> Simpson, *I Want to Tell You*, 76.

<sup>62</sup> Walter Goodman, "Television, Meet Life. Life, Meet TV," *New York Times*, June 19, 1994, D1; Tom Shales, "Seeing the Unbelievable; The Simpson Coverage: Tough to Watch, Impossible to Turn Off," *Washington Post*, June 18, 1994, G1.

<sup>63</sup> Ellis Cose and Michael Isikoff, "The Silly Season," *Newsweek*, October 16, 1995, 63.

<sup>64</sup> Danquah, "Why We Really Root for O.J.," C1.

<sup>65</sup> Simpson, *I Want to Tell You*, 69.

<sup>66</sup> Andrew Ryan, "Remember O.J.?: The O.J. Verdict Looks Back at the Sensational Trial that Divided America," *Globe and Mail*, October 1, 2005, 6.

<sup>67</sup> Burke, *Counterstatement*, 138.