

# Who do you think you are?: Race, Representation, and Cultural Rhetorics in Online Spaces.

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## "Who do you think you are?": Race, Representation, and Cultural Rhetorics in Online Spaces

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### Abstract

This essay looks at the articulation of Black identity in personal and online contexts. Following Omi and Winant's argument that racial formation is a matter of racial representation within social structures, I examine the Internet as a "third place" for the online representation of Black identity by Blacks and by non-Blacks following two critical incidents in recent public culture: Kanye West's Hurricane Katrina speech and the Rev. Joseph Lowery's inauguration benediction. As a third place, the Internet encourages intimate discursive interaction, similar to the way Black barber shops and beauty salons allowed private spaces for identity discourses between Black men and women. The Internet also opens these formerly private spaces to non-Blacks, who contribute to the articulation of Black identity online.

**Keywords**

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**ADDITIONAL**

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*HTML version*

 **INCLUSIVE**

Critical and  
Studies Co-  
Commons

 Altmetric 1

## Comments

Revised version to include complete quotation which had been  
accidentally cut off in formatting.

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