

Bill Wolff

Writing, Research, and Technology, Spring 2008

Essay 2: Images and Evidence

texts

Sante, Luc. *Evidence*

Bolter, Jay David, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print* chs. 1 - 4

the assignment

In “Documentary” Luc Sante describes the crime scene photographs: “As evidence, they are mere affectless records, concerned with details. . . . They are bookkeeping entries, with no transfiguring mission, and so serve death up raw and unmediated” (p. 60). But is Sante correct? Are they really “unmediated”?

Sante presents the images as unique plates, one to a page, and as readers we read them one after another—a series of black and white images of people endlessly in the process of dying in various environments. Yet, despite (and, perhaps, because of) his announcement of the photos’ rawness Sante is compelled in “Corpus Delicti” to attempt to (re)contextualize the images by providing ekphrastic commentary containing, in some places, archival news reports and, in others, speculation.

Bolter observes that ekphrasis “sets out to rival art in words, to demonstrate that words can describe vivid scenes without recourse to pictures” (p. 56). Yet, Bolter argues, “as we have seen in digital media and even in print, we get a reverse ekphrasis in which images are given the task of explaining words” (p. 99). Furthermore, “[p]rint managed to establish an equilibrium with representational painting, but that equilibrium began to erode perhaps with the invention of photography. Just as photography contributed to a crisis in painting, so it and technologies that followed . . . called into question the power of prose” (p. 58). Photographs, Bolter implies, became writing spaces.

For this essay, then: **Using Sante's ideas on documentary and evidence and Bolter's discussion on the relationship between image and text, I would like you to consider how the crime scene photographs challenge conceptions of writing spaces and come to a conclusion about whether they perform better as evidence with or without Sante's “Corpus Delicti.”**

When putting this essay together, please do not go from one photograph to the next summarizing what is shown within. Be sure to have a clear point that you are trying to make and lead up to it throughout the essay, using Sante's and Bolter's ideas as well as no more than two photographs to support your ideas. Rough and Final versions of the essay are to be written double spaced using Microsoft Word, Times New Roman font size 12, and with 1 inch margins all around. Use APA citation format.

due dates and page requirements

Rough Draft

Wednesday, 12 March; 4 - 6 pages; electronic and one print version due at start of class

Use the following format when saving the file: “wrt-s08-yourlastname-essay2-rd.doc”

Draft will be submitted to openarea folder entitled “essay-2-rd.”

Final Draft

Wednesday, 26 March; 5 - 7 pages; electronic version due at the start of class

Use the following format when saving the file: “wrt-s08-yourlastname-essay2-fd.doc”

Draft will be submitted to openarea folder entitled “essay-2-fd.”