

Public Abstract

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Title:Seeing Constructed Realities: Images and Law in the Contemporary American Novel

In the new digital era, novelists have developed new tools to aid them levy political criticism against targets that have traditionally fallen outside the reach of the novel. By examining four contemporary American novels, I seek to examine how novelists use embedded photography to levy political criticism against systems and entities that rely on verbal language. My chief argument is that the ambiguity of language, when compounded with the ambiguity of photographs, forces readers into a mode of active interpretation which allows them to question concepts they usually take for granted. The hope is that by better understanding how these authors convey their messages we can better understand not just the systems they criticize, but build a model for future activist writing and criticism.