**Knowledge**

Dr. Brendan Myers Fall 2015

**Essay Assignment**

(20 possible points; 20% of the final grade)

By now you will have seen all four films in John Berger’s “Ways of Seeing” series. We have discussed in class his various themes: that context and reproducibility changes the meaning of paintings; that we look upon representations of women, and of wealth, differently than the way we look on other things. By now, hopefully, you have grasped the idea that the meaning of things depends very greatly on how we see and represent them, and that things can be seen and represented in more than one way.

This essay asks you to discuss a set of images of your choosing: a set of images consistent with the themes discussed in Berger’s films, but not one which he discussed already. Then, discuss how the images of that set can be seen and represented in more than one way, and how those different ways of seeing them changes their meanings.

For example, you could look at images of:

* People in visible-minority communities
* Syrian refugees
* Arabs and Muslims, and life in Islamic countries
* Characters from fiction and poetry
* Robots, aliens, and science-fiction images
* Animals, landscapes, and nature
* Another theme of your choosing (but discuss this with your instructor first.)

This is not, however, a mere book report. This is a philosophical essay, and as such it requires a question, a thesis, an argument in support of that thesis, a counter-argument, and a reply (as per my remarks in class a few weeks ago). The point of asking you to study two or more ways of seeing and representing something, is to explore the idea of modernity. **Use your chosen theme, and the various ways it can be seen and represented, to defend a thesis about what it is to be modern.** To put it another way: your thesis statement will be a discovery about modernity, and your chosen theme and the images related to them will be the evidence you will bring in favour of your discovery.

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**Due date**: Friday, 4th December, in class.

**Length**: Around 1,000 words.

**Other notes**: It must be double-spaced, computer-printed, and stapled or paper-clipped together. The text must be printed in a standard font, left-justified, and 12 point sized. I do not accept electronic copies. *I will reject papers which do not meet these requirements.*

The paper must also include, either in the midst of the text or as an attachment at the end, the collection of images you have chosen to study: include no less than five of them.

The essay must include a bibliography with no less than three entries.

And finally, the paper must be submitted on paper to me, and electronically to Turnitin.com.

**Papers will be graded as follows:**

7 points for the strength of the main argument

7 points for the counter-argument and reply

3 points for good organization and structure

3 points for good use of research resources

Also: ½ point will be deducted for each spelling and grammar error found, to a maximum of 3 points.