

AHVS121 WINTER 2020

Abbreviated Summary of Material for Week 11

Censorship, Expurgating, Expectations & Alternative Facts

REALLY?



You know we all have the internet right?

We don't always control
access to images/
information.
We might not even know it.

THURSDAY, 29 November 2012 **AL ARABIYA NEWS**

Home Last Updated: Thu Nov 29, 2012 23:42 pm (KSA) 20:42 pm (GMT)

Internet blackout across Syria reported amid Damascus fighting

Thursday, 29 November 2012



A view seen through a sniper's scope held for the photographer by a Free Syrian Army fighter shows a Syrian flag fluttering in an area controlled by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad. (Reuters)

Tweet 112 Like 73 +3 Pin it Share

By AL ARABIYA WITH AGENCIES

Two U.S.-based Internet-monitoring companies say Syria has shut off the Internet nationwide.

Activists in Syria reached Thursday by satellite telephone confirmed the unprecedented blackout, which comes amid intense fighting in the capital, Damascus.

Note: Treat this first section — all the stuff on the grey background — as if it's in-class lecture.

The questions are like clicker questions. Ones that aren't clearly rhetorical (i.e. answered on the same page) you should think through, because they will come up again later. But you don't necessarily have to include them as part of your assignment, which is a separate thing (on white background) at the end of this document.

Keep in mind this is a summary of the material from several classes & tutorials. I hope there aren't too many missing links, but this should give you the key issues.

Which has more people? Why do you think that?
(Hint: this is not a trick question)

Please look at the following two photos: Photo A and Photo B.



Which photo has more people?

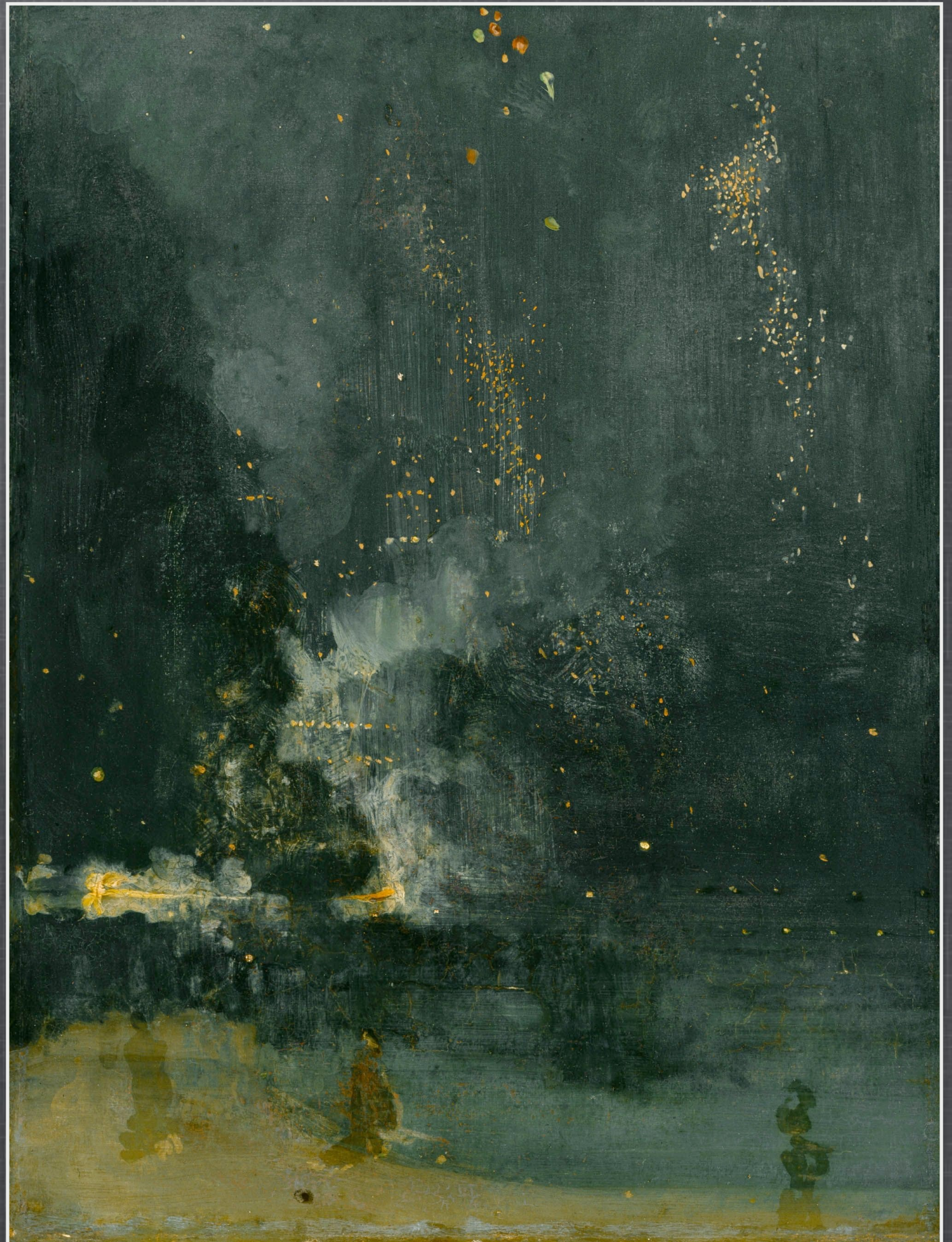
Photo A has more people

Photo B has more people

Going to start with a
story:

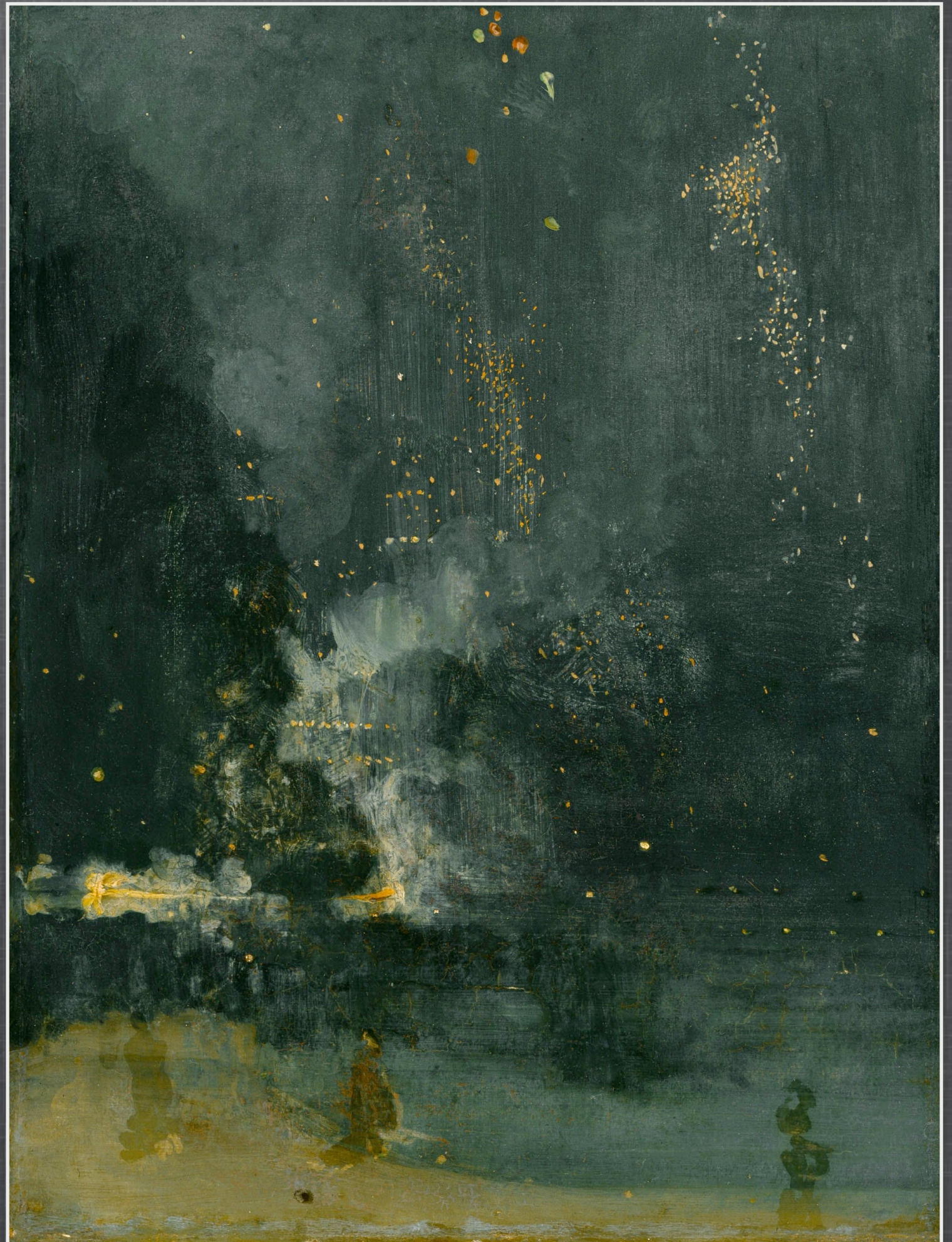
This is Whistler's
painting
*Nocturne in Black and
Gold: The Falling Rocket*.
It was exhibited in
London's Grosvenor
Gallery in 1877.

Take a moment to
decide if you like it
and why or why not.



An art critic named
Ruskin hated it.

He published a letter
describing the
exhibition in which he
said: 'I have ... never
expected to hear a
coxcomb ask two
hundred guineas for
flinging a pot of paint
in the public's face.'



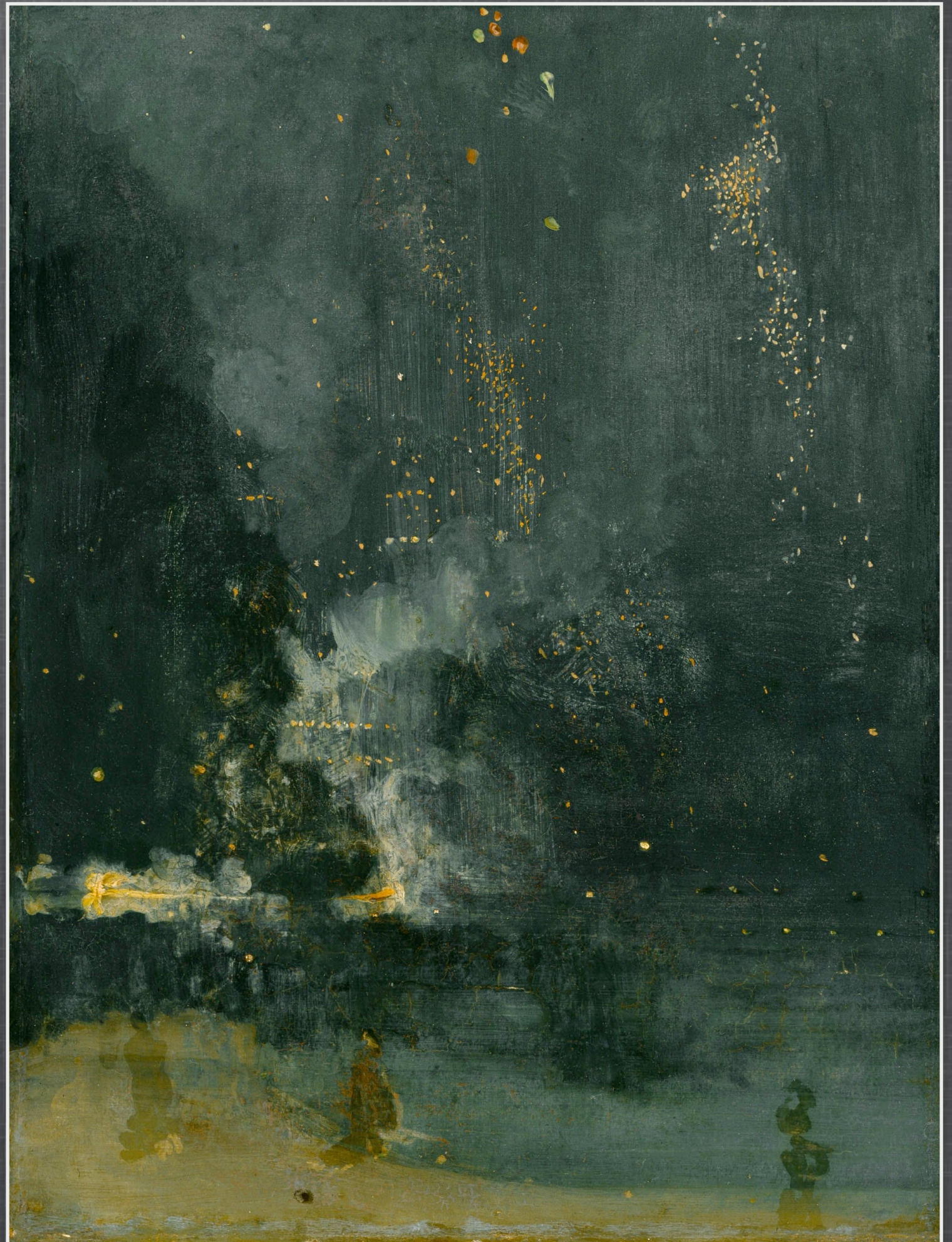
It wasn't about the abstract style.

Ruskin was a strong supporter of Turner — part of what he didn't like here was similar effects used to beautify an industrialized modern landscape. He saw industrial pollution as symptomatic of moral degeneracy, while Whistler thought aesthetics was something independent of subject matter.



It's also not about the
cultural *status quo*:

Ruskin was a socialist
– much more
politically progressive
than Whistler. He
strongly believed that
art should be for
everyone. Whistler
despised this idea – he
believed that art was
for the intellectually
superior.



So many people accepted Ruskin's point of view, Whistler went bankrupt and decided to sue Ruskin for libel. There was a long court case, widely reported in the press, with many discussions about art, how to define it, and what it is for. But at the heart of this was Ruskin's idea that the painting wasn't worthy to be seen.



And then there's Hector Charlesworth, "Pictures That Can Be Heard," *Saturday Night*, Mar. 18, 1916 saying: "... The chief offender seems to be J. E. H. MacDonald, who certainly does throw his paint pots in the face of the public *Rock and Maple* ... might just as well have been called "Hungarian Goulash" and "Drunkard's Stomach."



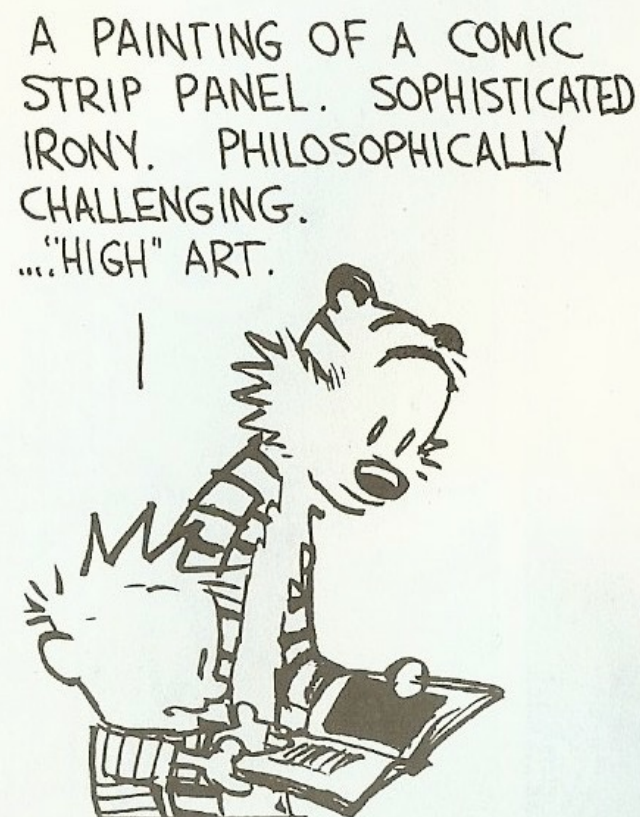
And of course one of the main criticisms of Abstract Expressionism, was that it was just paint being flung around.

Jackson Pollock, #1 (detail)



If you think back to the film *Side by Side*, it's clear that despite decades of opening up, of expanding the boundaries, of changing art history to visual studies -- the concepts of high art/low art are still prevalent, still carry status, are still contentious. The argument over what is worthy of our attention, worthy of being seen.

So: WHY?



It's because images carry meaning.
And people and cultures want them to:

- a) tell stories
- b) tell stories they approve of.

Which is the point about the suppression of images.

Where someone, for some reason, doesn't want other people
to see something.

Egyptian
c14thC BC
Erasure of a deity
fallen from favour.



c1-2nd C copy of 4thC statue. Both versions are repaired. Left 16thC restored and censored version. 21stC version (right) removes all 16thC additions



Reformation
(16th&17thC)
religio-political
destruction in
Utrecht



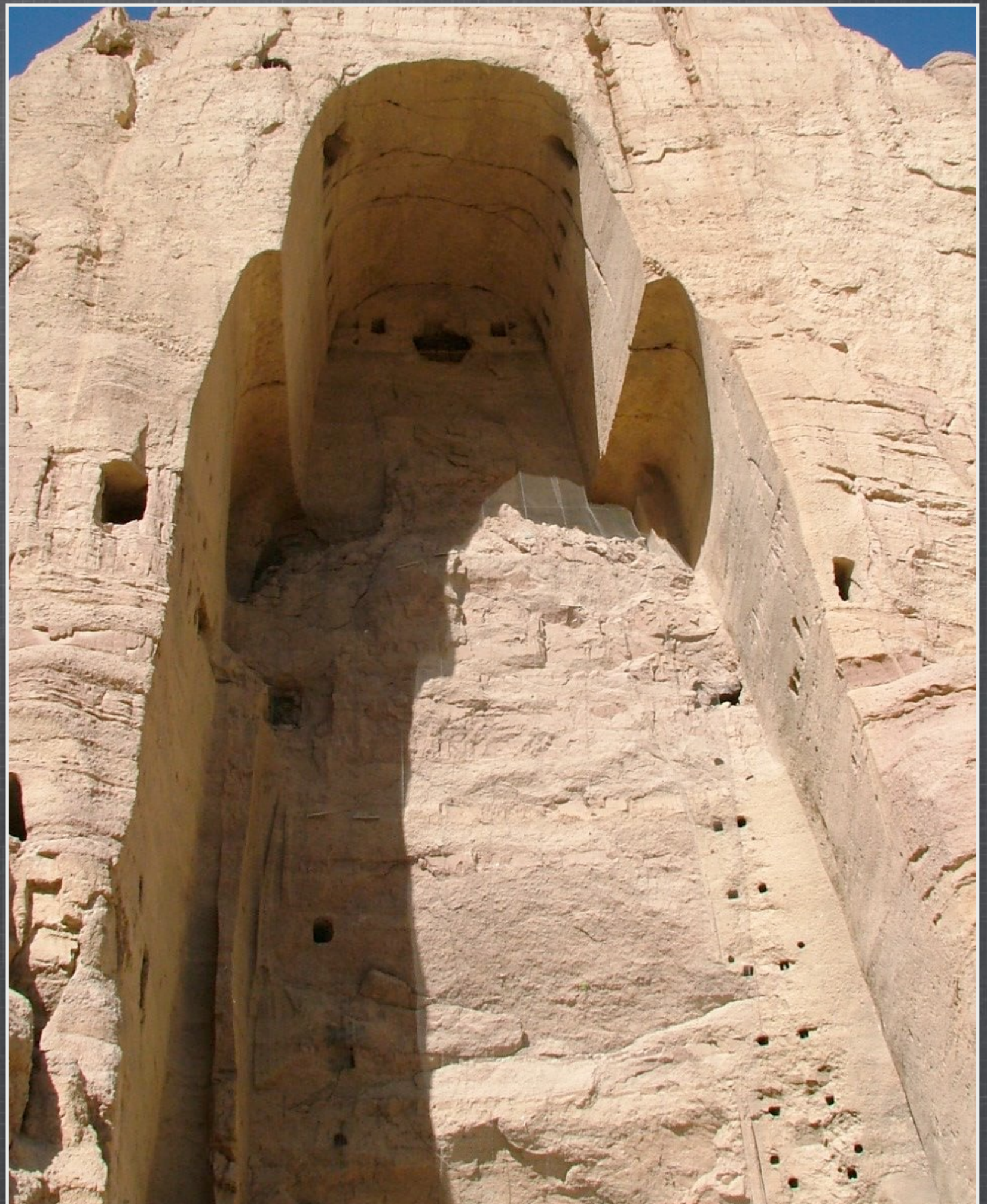
Michelangelo's *Pieta*
after suffering damage
by a man wielding a
hammer. (note broken
arm and nose)
1972



Curator cleans
off anti-war-
slogan spray-
painted
across
Picasso's
Guernica.
1974



6thC Buddha at
Bamyam,
Destroyed by the
Taliban using
dynamite. 2001



In Sweden October 2007 a group of individuals broke into a gallery with crowbars and axes and damaged a series of works by Andres Serrano. They posted their video on YouTube, which referenced their rationale, stating: “We don’t support this” and “Against decadence and for a healthier culture”. It is assumed that the explicit sexuality of the images was their target.



Every news report I saw called this vandalism; most did not address the issue of censorship (ie. the group’s assumption of the right to control what other people see)

Statue of
Marianne
(19thC symbol
of democracy
from the French
Revolution)
damaged
during political
protests 2019.



Thus, the question of 'acceptable imagery' is not separate from that of power. Who gets that control and how we define these actions are important issues.

And there are serious implications.

In 1930s and 40s Germany, the Nazi party regulated what was acceptable in the arts. The Nazis preferred more traditional, accessible arts which were easier for conveying state messages, 'positive' messages. Many examples of 'degenerate' images were considered to be critical of the government, or to contain messages that were counter to state ideologies. These were then banned, suppressed, and destroyed. You were either 'with' the program, or you were against it.

Nazi Exhibit of “Degenerate” Art



Otto Dix's *War Cripples* is an example of what the Nazis considered 'degenerate'. It shows veterans of WWI with damage that they suffered as a result of the war emphasized by the artistic style. Works like *War Cripples* were considered to be demoralizing and thus unpatriotic and therefore 'bad' for people; not 'positive' like the example of their 'acceptable' state art on the right.



Nazi Book / Art / Music-Recording Burning Event



We make our future.

Mid-century concepts of the future of phones



Some people want to control what that is and who it is for.

Sometimes it's done in the name of protection.

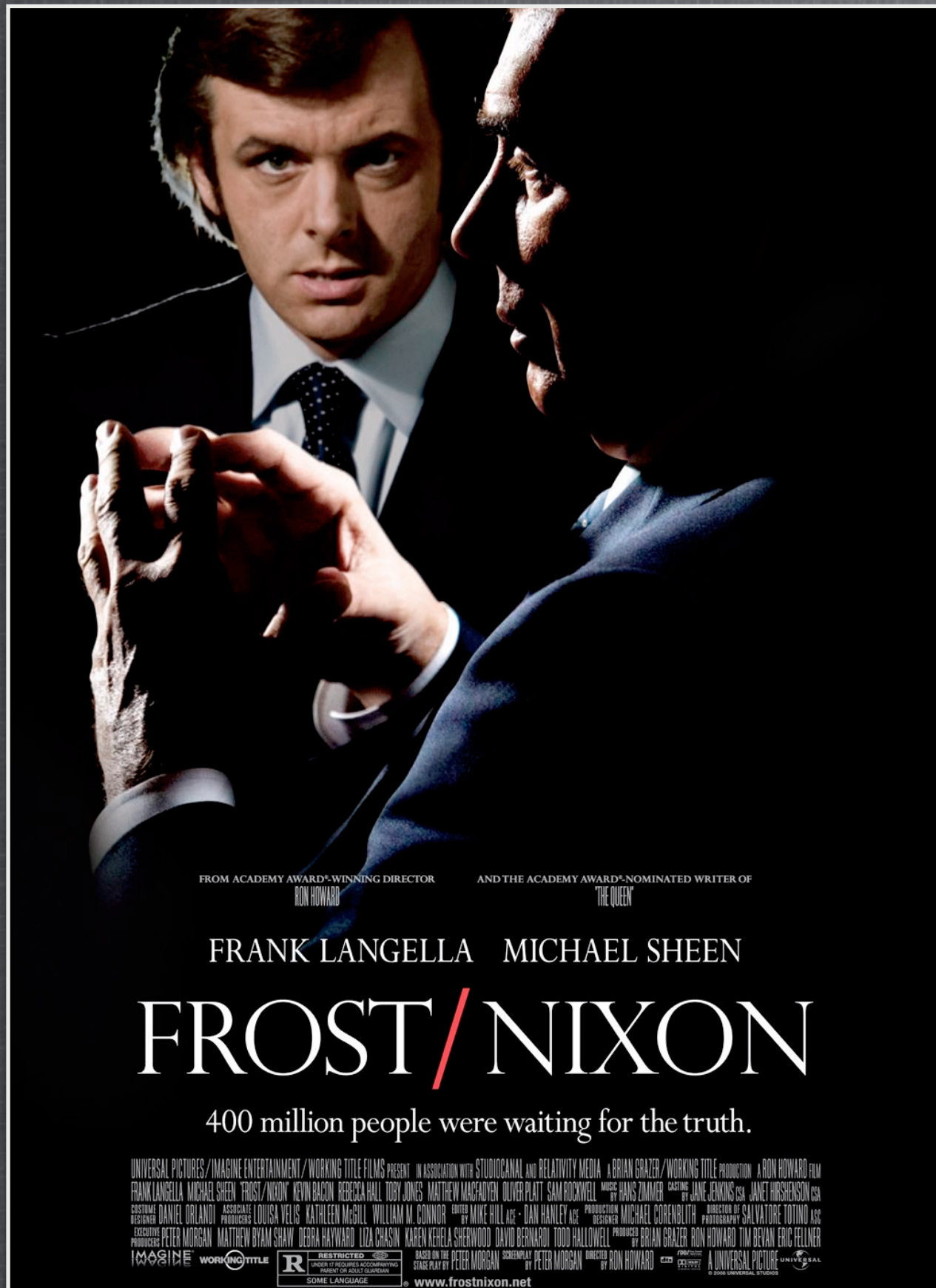
Not always clear about what you're being protected from.

(Note: I'm skipping over a section here on respecting sensitivities, for example in not showing people's deaths in media reporting. Nor am I suggesting image suppression is NEVER a good idea. This is about general concepts.)



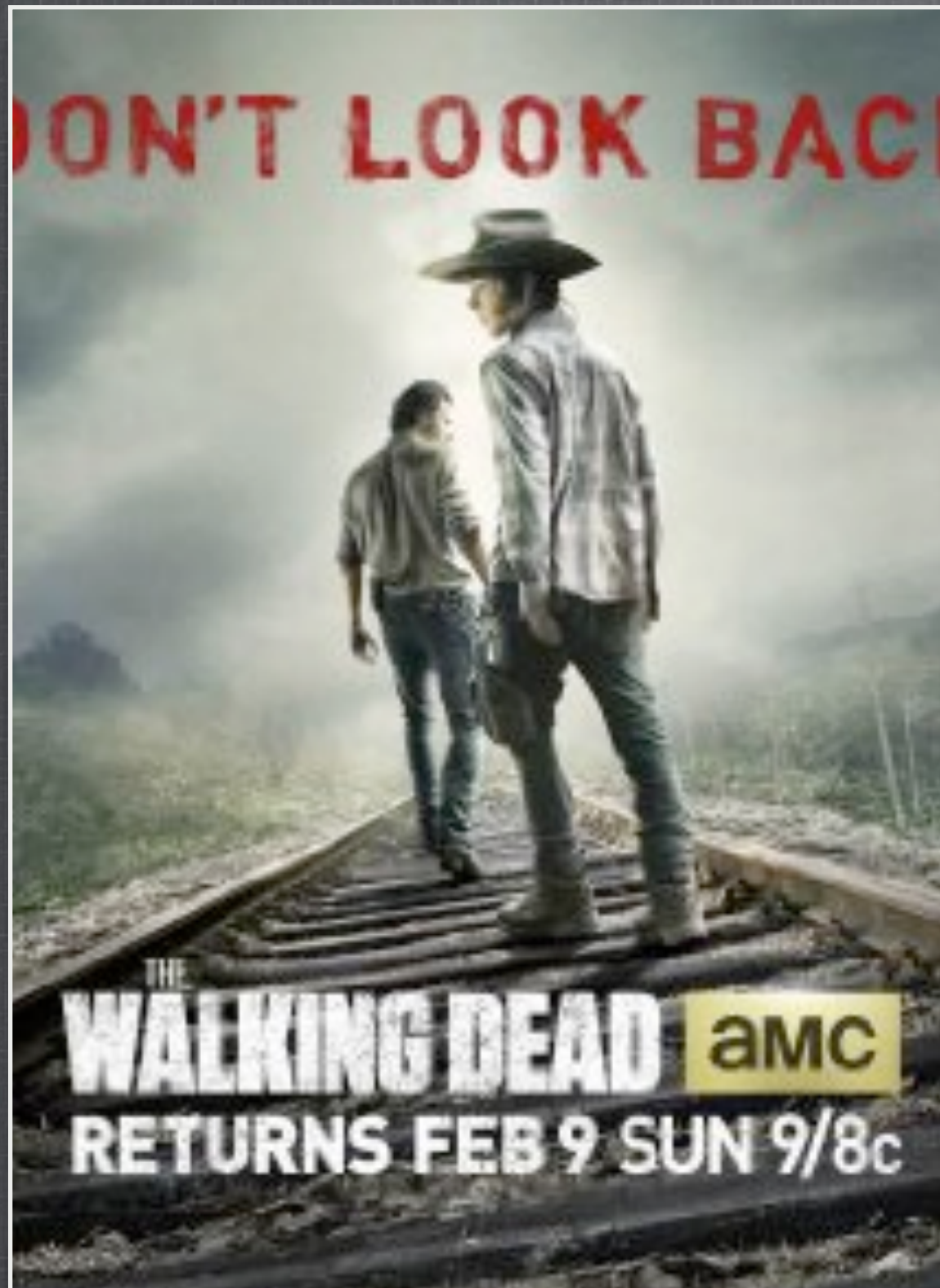
Non-violent, non-sexual films.

R-rated because the word “fuck” is used more than once.

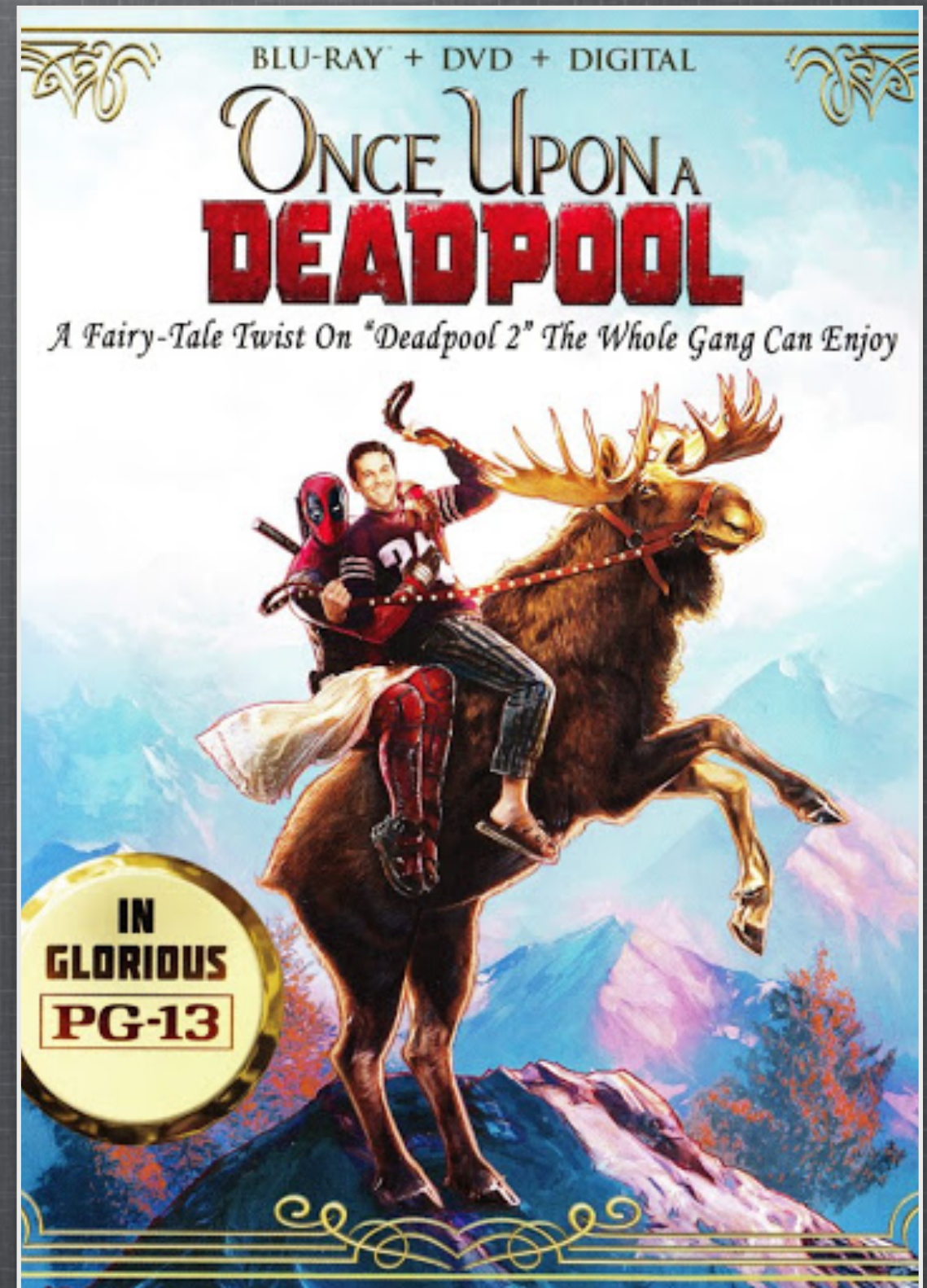


Not R-rated.

Way over my personal limits;
& I only watched the (MPAA approved) trailer for *Mirrors!*

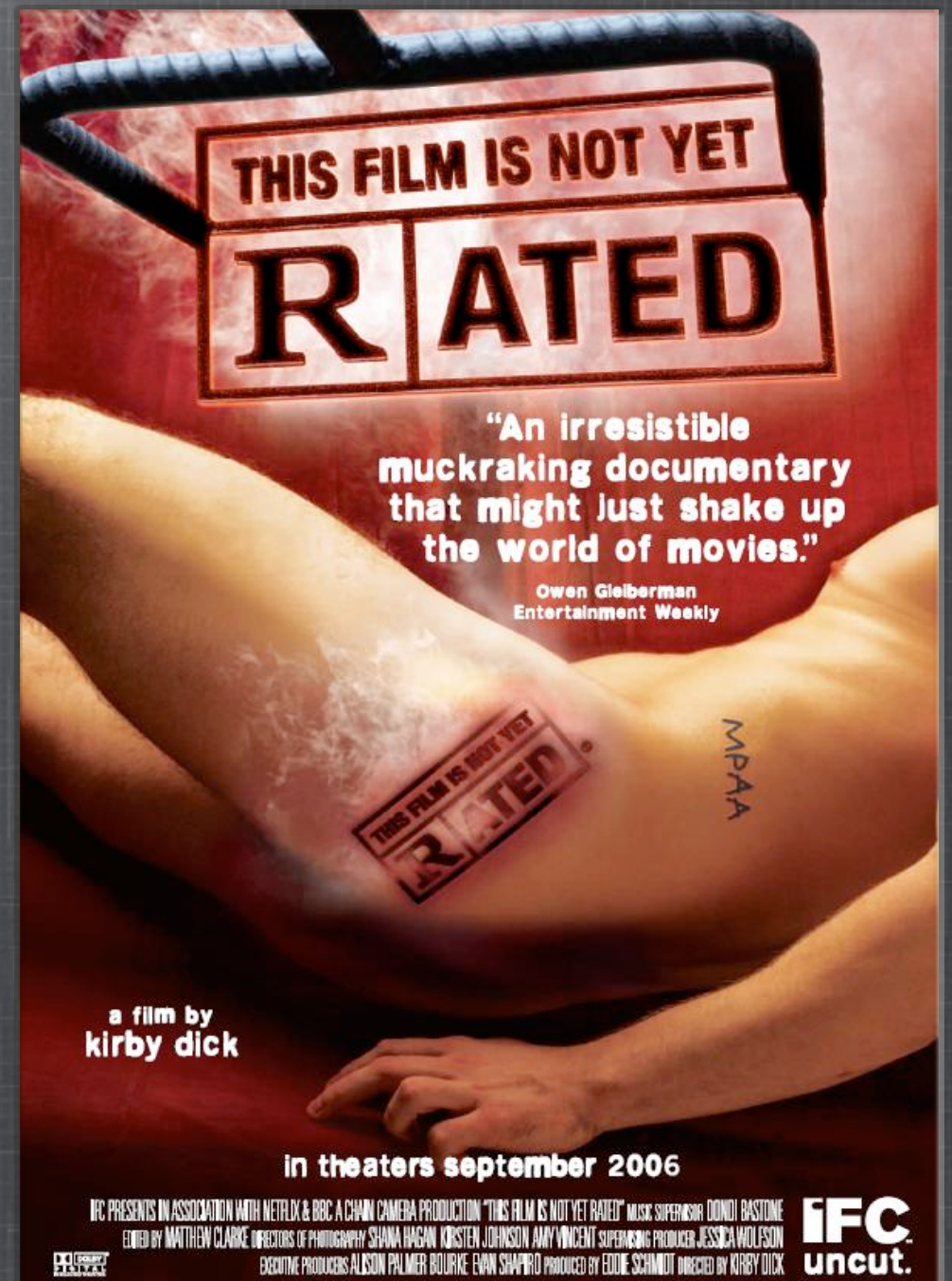


This was overt. But plenty of films are self-censored in order to get the PG rating; you'd never even know.



One of the case-studies in this documentary explained how the film *Boys Don't Cry* was denied a general release not for the violent rape/ beating/ murder scene, but for the one that showed a woman's face while she had pleasurable sex.

Scenes of those identified as women being 'punished' were socially acceptable to the MPAA board. Reference to female orgasm was not.



It's because images carry meaning.
And people and cultures want them to:

- a) tell stories
- b) tell stories they approve of.

And if you remember back to the class on
Reception Theory.

People don't just see with their eyes.

They are filling in all kinds of detail around the images.
Personal and cultural.

There's nothing inherently wrong with that.

But sometimes it means people don't see at all.

What is happening here?



Back to our original image:
It seems pretty clear, right? You'd expect 100% to answer B.

Please look at the following two photos: Photo A and Photo B.



Which photo has more people?

Photo A has more people

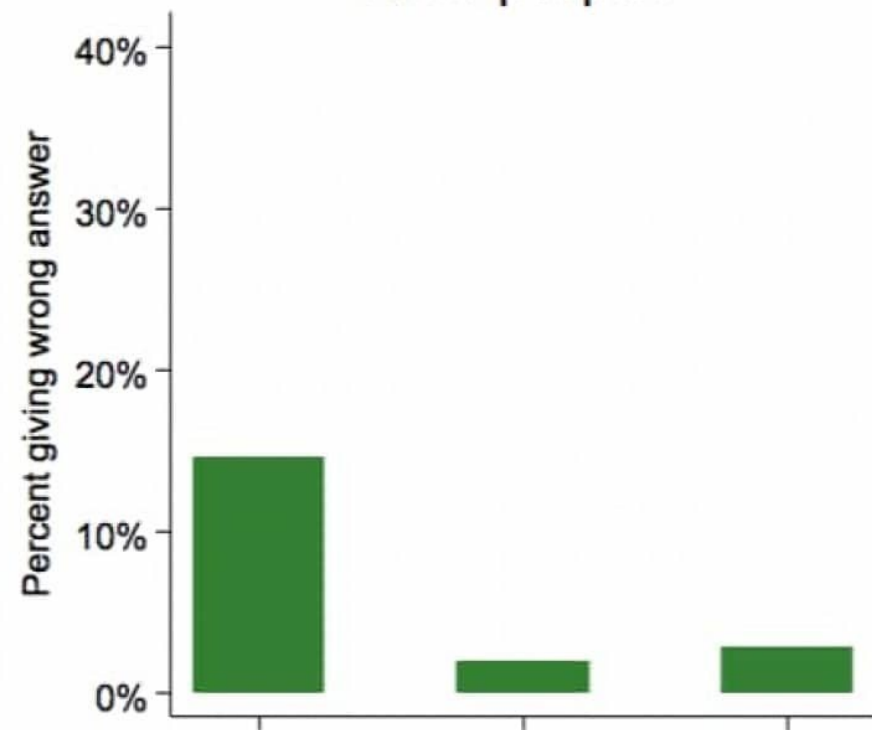
Photo B has more people

Nope. Here's the results to the survey in 3 groups of people.

Please look at the following two photos: Photo A and Photo B.



Which photo has more people?



people?

Photo A has more people

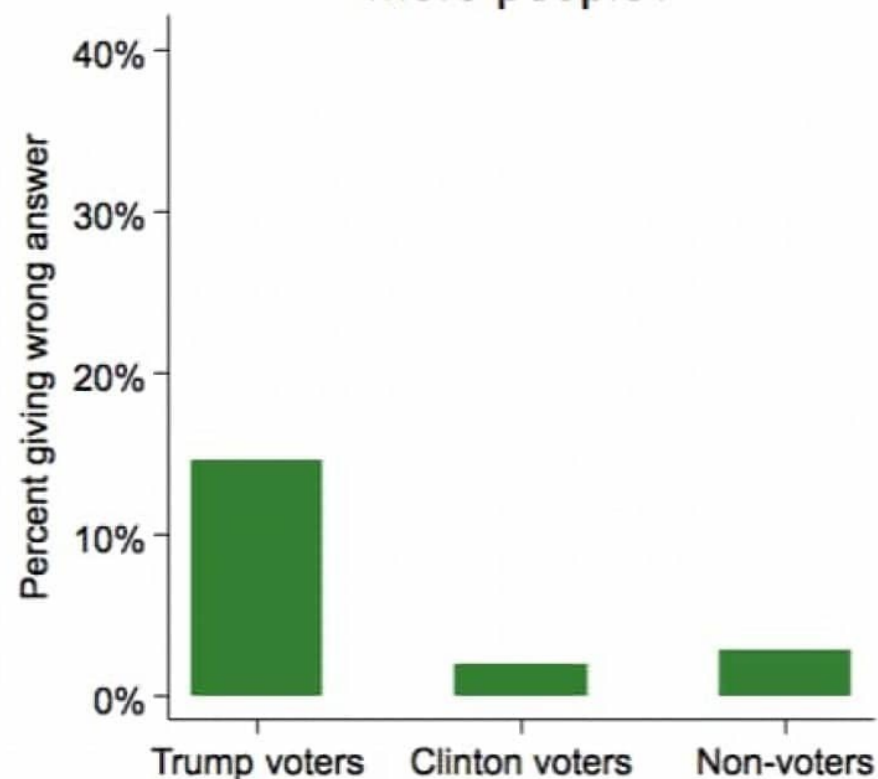
Photo B has more people

Some people chose their answer based on political affiliation.

Please look at the following two photos: Photo A and Photo B.



Which photo has more people?



people?

A has more people

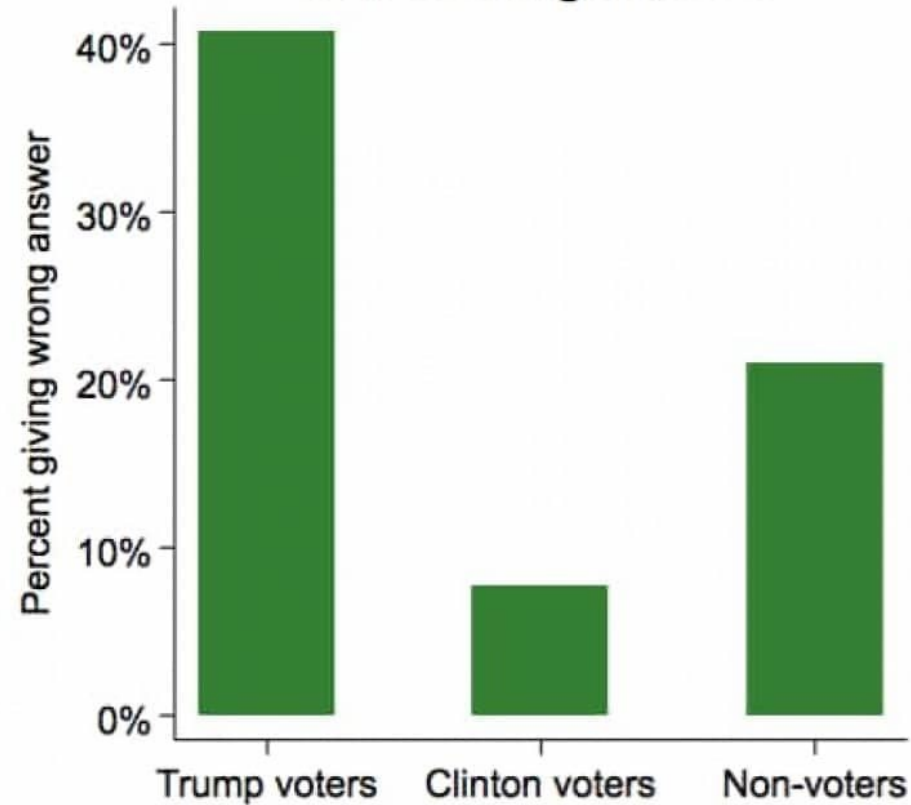
Photo B has more people

They also made assumptions about which event was shown in each photograph

Please look at the following two photos: Photo A and Photo B.



Which photo is from which inauguration?



Which photo has more people?

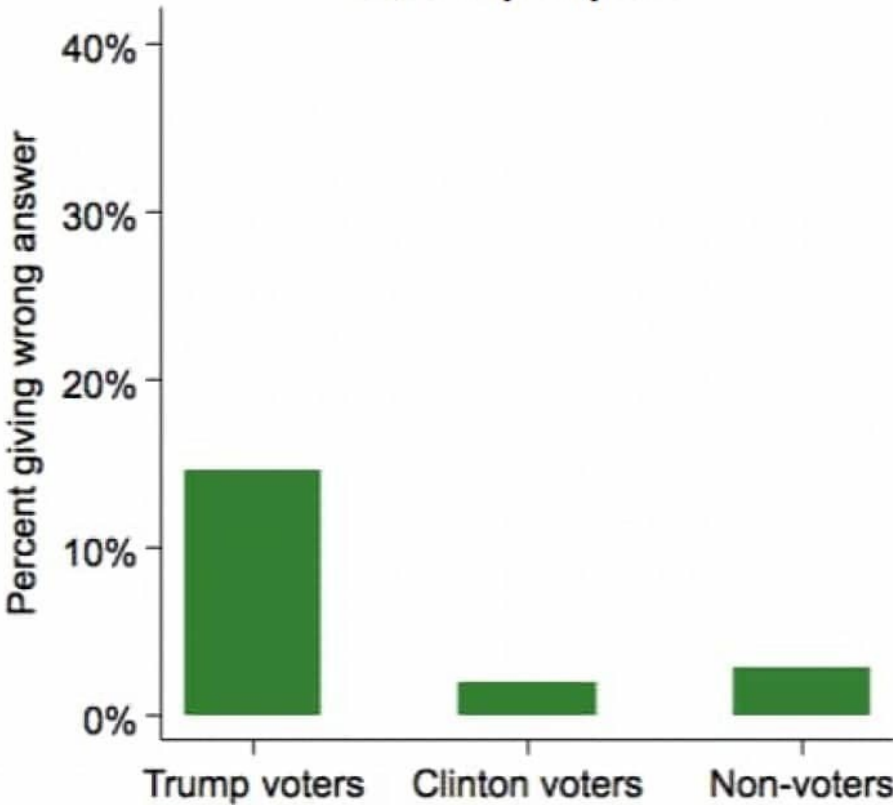


Photo B has more people

Results from YouGov survey of 1,388 respondents fielded 1/22 - 1/23/2017. Weighted to be representative of American adults.

Monkey Cage • Analysis

This is what Trump voters said when asked to compare his inauguration crowd with Obama's

By Brian Schaffner and Samantha Luks January 25, 2017

Study was reported in *The Washington Post* if you want to go look at it.

But what's even more noteworthy is that 15 percent of people who voted for Trump told us that more people were in the image on the left — the photo from Trump's inauguration — than the picture on the right. We got that answer from only 2 percent of Clinton voters and 3 percent of nonvoters.

Even when the photographic evidence was directly in front of them and the question was straightforward, one in seven Trump supporters gave the clearly false answer.

Why did this happen?

Because their personal identities are bound up with their political allegiance, to the point where they will ignore what is in front of their eyes if it contradicts their inner vision.

And their inner vision was shaped by political directive.

The National Parks Service, which photographs all events on the Washington Mall Park, was censored.

Note: “mistaken”



NationalParkService @NatIParkService

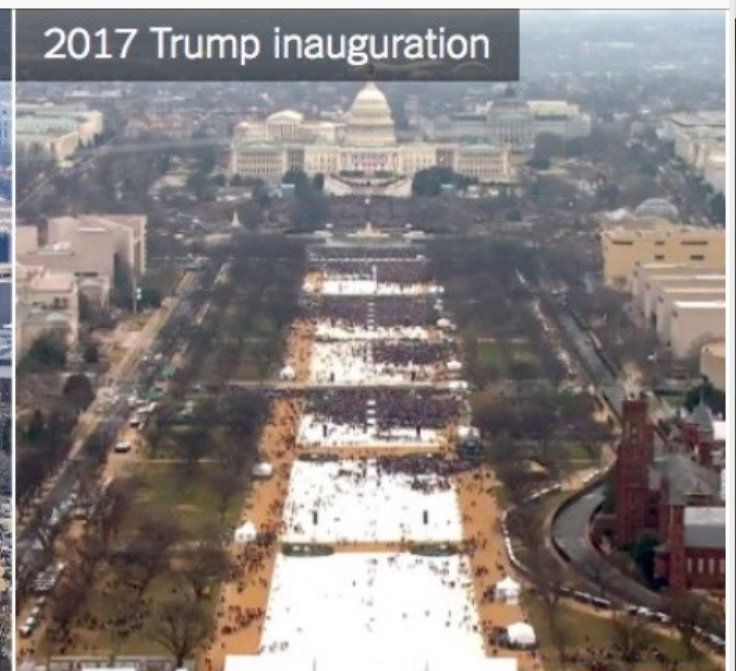
We regret the mistaken RTs from our account yesterday and look forward to continuing to share the beauty and history of our parks with you



mobile.twitter.com



2009 Obama inauguration



2017 Trump inauguration





43 119 257

Talking Points Memo Retweeted

David Kurtz @TPM_dk · Jan 21

Spicer's numbers do not match Metro's
talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/sean-...

Spicer hit the assembled White House press corps with some different numbers, though: He claimed that 420,000 people used the D.C. metro on Trump's Inauguration Day, compared to 317,000 for Obama's 2013 inauguration.

Those numbers simply don't match up with what Metro has reported. According to the Washington Post, Metro said 570,557 people took trips on Friday in total, compared with 1.1 million trips at Obama's 2009 inauguration and 782,000 at his 2013 inauguration. It's unclear where Spicer got the numbers he relayed to reporters Saturday afternoon or what measure they were based on.



The White House
went to great
lengths to argue
against the photos.



Talking Points Memo @TPM · Jan 21

White House spokesman assails media for "misrepresenting" crowd size at inauguration:



Spicer Assails Media For 'Misrepresenting' Inaugur...

White House press secretary Sean Spicer on Saturday accused the media of misrepresenting the crowd at Donald Trump's inauguration in order to dampen enth...

talkingpointsmemo.com



Alastair Jamieson @alastairjam

Kellyann Conway tells @chucktodd Sean Spicer was offering "alternative facts" not falsehoods
#alternativefacts



16



144



463



You Retweeted



Garry Kasparov @Kasparov63 · 13 Dec 2016

The point of modern propaganda isn't only to misinform or push an agenda. It is to exhaust your critical thinking, to annihilate truth.



580



25K



29K

There was also the deliberate misuse of other images to reconstruct what “should” have happened (in their minds).



Mere Smith
@EvilGalProds

 Follow

NARRATOR: It wasn't Trump's crowd.



Spitfire @SpitfireSuzy

CHRIS Wallace it's important for media to report, not distort, the truth. This was Trumps crowd. It wasn't wimpy.

RETWEETS

38

LIKES

50



1:03 PM - 22 Jan 2017



2



38



50



Reply to @EvilGalProds



Jessica Vera @veratopia · 5h

@EvilGalProds @SpitfireSuzy Uhh, does someone want to tell them that we all memorized what the Obamas were wearing (right side, second row)?



1



Mere Smith @EvilGalProds · 5h

@veratopia I don't think it will help. #alternativefacts, y'know.



1



This sparked a lot of discussion about empirical evidence, truth and ideology. And a lot of memes about what the White House was trying to say. This is one of my favourites.



You Retweeted



John Green @johngreen · 21h

There are five lights, period.



78



513



2.2K

The reference comes from a Star Trek NG episode (*Chain of Command*) which in turn is based on George Orwell's *1984*. It's about being psychologically tortured until you no longer believe the evidence of your own senses.



The day after the 2017 inauguration there was a big crowd in Washington, DC.- for the first Women's March.

That's the context for this image. Even when the image Luntz took clearly doesn't show what he says it does; he can't see the message he's putting out. (This looks like any Starbucks on any afternoon before last week.)



Frank Luntz ✓
@FrankLuntz

+ Follow



Marriott Marquis lobby is full of drunk, angry protesters harassing paying customers.

If you're still in DC, avoid this area.

#WomensMarch ♀



2. Increasing the separation between Trump's base (1/3 of the population) from everybody else (the remaining 2/3). By being told something that is obviously wrong—that there is no evidence for and all evidence against, that anybody with eyes can see is wrong—they are forced to pick whether they are going to believe Trump or their lying eyes. The gamble here—likely to pay off—is that they will believe Trump. This means that they will regard media outlets that report the truth as "fake news" (because otherwise they'd be forced to confront their cognitive dissonance.)

From a 2017 discussion about why there were so many false photos and interpretations circulating.

The point about cognitive dissonance is my main purpose here.

Note: cognitive dissonance is not limited to any particular political affiliation, but affects any strong sense of identity or validity.

And the implications go far beyond crowd size photographs.



Mark Murray @mmurraypolitics

But maybe the biggest story in the NBC/WSJ poll is the partisan divide when it comes to the coronavirus

Worried a family member will catch it?

All voters: 53%

Dem: 68%

GOP: 40%

Indie: 45%

Yes, worst is yet to come:

All: 60%

Dem: 79%

GOP: 40%

Indie: 57%

by @ddale8 thread

4h • 2020-03-15 • 6:00 AM

Note: I don't think ANY of these numbers are high enough

CORONAVIRUS PARTISAN DIVIDE

	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS
FAMILY WORRIES	68%	40%
AVOID GATHERINGS	61%	30%
TRAVEL PLANS	47%	23%
RESTAURANTS	36%	12%

NBC NEWS/WSJ, MARCH 11-13, +/- 4.9-5.5%

Even though visuals of the data have historical precedent well outside of present day politics,

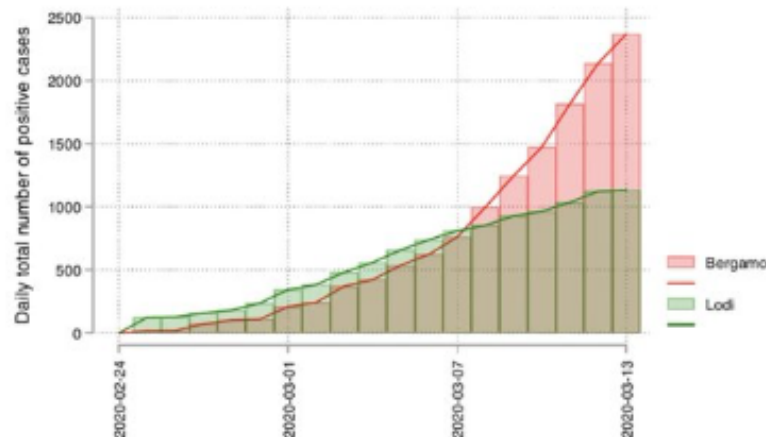


Don Moynihan @donmoyn

Real-time evidence of flattening the curve. Lodi had the first Covid-19 case in Italy, and implemented a shutdown on Feb 23. Bergamo waited until March 8.

Look at the difference.

Incredible research by @drjenndowd, @melindacmills & co-authors. osf.io/fd4rh/?view_on...



5h • 2020-03-15 • 10:17 AM



charliemansell @charliemansell

@donmoyn, @drjenndowd & 1 other

Blimey, Bergamo/Lodi is the modern version of Philadelphia/St Louis

Effects of social distancing on 1918 flu deaths



Sources: "Public health interventions and epidemic intensity during the 1918 influenza pandemic" by Richard J. Hatchett, Carter E. Mecher, Marc Lipsitch, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences May, 2007. Data derived from "Public health interventions and epidemic intensity during the 1918 influenza pandemic" by Richard J. Hatchett, Carter E. Mecher, Marc Lipsitch, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences May, 2007.

TIM MEKO/THE WASHINGTON POST

by @simon_schama

5h • 2020-03-15 • 10:56 AM

some people only see what
they want to.



**Social distancing during
a pandemic saves lives.**

Stay home.

#KeepYourDistance
#FlattenTheCurve
#CoronavirusBalt
health.baltimorecity.gov

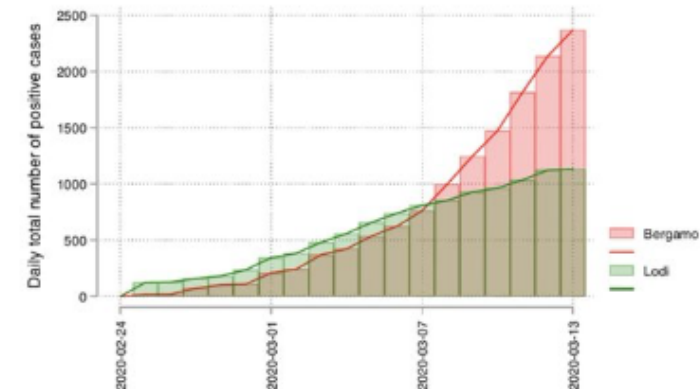


BALTIMORE
CITY HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

on Feb 23. Bergamo waited until
March 8.

Look at the difference.

Incredible research by @drjenndowd,
@melindacmills & co-authors. osf.io/fd4rh/?view_on...



5h • 2020-03-15 • 10:17 AM



David A. Clarke, Jr. @SheriffClarke

It is now evident that this is an
orchestrated attempt to destroy
CAPITALISM. First sports, then schools
and finally commercial businesses.
Time to RISE UP and push back. Bars
and restaurants should defy the order.
Let people decide if they want to go
out.

[axios.com/ohio-governor-...](https://www.axios.com/ohio-governor-...)

2h • 2020-03-15 • 3:31 PM

Footnote / disclaimer for previous page:

I 'm not suggesting Mr. Clarke had seen the specific image I show from earlier that same day. But similar images about flattening the curve had been circulating for well over a week and anyone on Twitter or following the news on most channels would have been hard pressed to miss them.

Further to my argument there were some USA news channels actively describing the diagrams as “a hoax”.
Empirical (measurable) evidence not being actually looked at for political purposes.
So he's not alone.

The final point here is if the information can't be hidden or ignored, attempts will be made to overwrite its narrative by those who don't want you to “see” it for what it is.



G. Elliott Morris @gelliottmorris

New polling on media attention and #covid-19 from YouGov and The Economist:

% who say they are worried about the virus, by media they most pay attention to:

MSNBC: 74%

National newspapers (NYT/WaPo): 72

CNN: 71

Broadcast news: 68

Local news: 57

Radio: 49

Fox News: 38

↻ by @darth

2h • 2020-03-18 • 7:21 AM

End of the 'lecture' part of the material.

Thanks for getting this far ;-)

AHVS 121 Understanding Visual Communication

Winter 2020 Assignment 8

Through the course, we've been looking at images, their creation and their reception as processes of that involve choice (what to create, how to create it, how to think about it when you see it). But there are a lot of underlying factors concerning what we actually get to see.

Different vocabulary words with specific definitions get used for this situation (for example: censorship, iconoclasm, vandalism, suppression) but essentially they all mean that someone did not want other people to have access to certain types of images. (or that specific images communicated the desired narrative "better"). And all of those circumstances can be self-perpetuating as well as imposed by outside forces.

This week, I'd like you to think about how conformity is shaped and presented through image selection as outlined in the case study on the following three pages. You should also consider the some of the other issues touched on in this week's material.

The broader goals of the assignment are to:

- 1) consider how individual identity is influenced by the types of images we see and how deeply we chose to engage with them.
- 2) comment on the levels of image control through various types of access to images.
- 3) discuss how cultures express ideology through the selection of what images are deemed "appropriate"; what are the pros and cons?

Reminder: You are not expected to do any further research beyond what is here in the assignment.
This is about your critical thinking on the issues, not anyone else's.

Write a short paper, minimum 750 words, due to me by email ddudley@uvic.ca

Before Monday March 30, 2020 at 3:30PM.

Please see course outline for important details on how to format & submit assignments.

And PLEASE title your documents correctly. The document should be titled: YourNameAssign8 (mine would be: DennineDAssign8)

Start with this image:

What do you see?

The caption reads: Feminine vanity still demands attention – even in the nation’s aircraft factories. At the plant in Wichita, Miss Mina Tabor takes a quick time out for a facial repair using a gleaming sheet of aluminum in the stock room as a mirror.

The photograph belongs to a series of images taken of women working in the aircraft industry during WWII. Despite its “snapshot” casual appearance, it has been carefully staged and angled so the photographer does not appear in the reflection.

Out of numerous images, this was one that was selected to go to national publication (hence the original caption show here). It was deemed the most suitable and appropriate for the purpose. (Note: I’m not sure if it did get published in the end, but it was intended to be).

Why?



A-143 Feminine vanity still demands attention -- even in the nation's busy aircraft factories. At Goosha Aircraft Company's plant in Wichita, Kansas, Miss Mina Weber takes a quick time out for facial repair, using a gleaming sheet of aluminum in the stock room as a mirror.

Here are some other examples taken as part of the same wartime effort and documentation. Any captions with these are modern captions and had little reference except location in their original form.

Most of these images ended up directly in archives and were not seen by the public at the time.

Why?

What narratives are being told, through the selection of images that are being shown or not shown?
Note that this does not have to have been a calculated decision even though it had to be a deliberate decision.

Discuss.



February 1943

A worker drills rivets on an A-31 "Vengeance" dive bomber at the Vultee factory in Nashville, Tennessee.

IMAGE: ALFRED T. PALMER/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

What impact does this have on our understanding of the past?

Of the present?

What do these choices tell us about how ideologies are perpetuated?

What are the implications of limiting representational imagery?

(You might want to think back the the Arts and Humanities lecture when we talked about how historic images shape how we feel about those eras).

Consider the broader goals of the assignment as well.