

# **Selected Essays of John Berger: Vintage International - A Window into the World of Art and Society**

**: Unveiling the Visionary Mind of John Berger**





## Selected Essays of John Berger (Vintage International)

by John Berger

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 963 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 627 pages



John Berger's seminal work, *Selected Essays of John Berger: Vintage International*, stands as a testament to his profound insights into art, photography, and the intricate tapestry of human experience. Published by Vintage International in 1991, this compilation encompasses a selection of Berger's most influential essays, delving into the depths of visual culture, social criticism, and the transformative power of art.

### **Chapter 1: Ways of Seeing - Unlocking the Visual Language of Art**

# Ways of Seeing John Berger



Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.

But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.

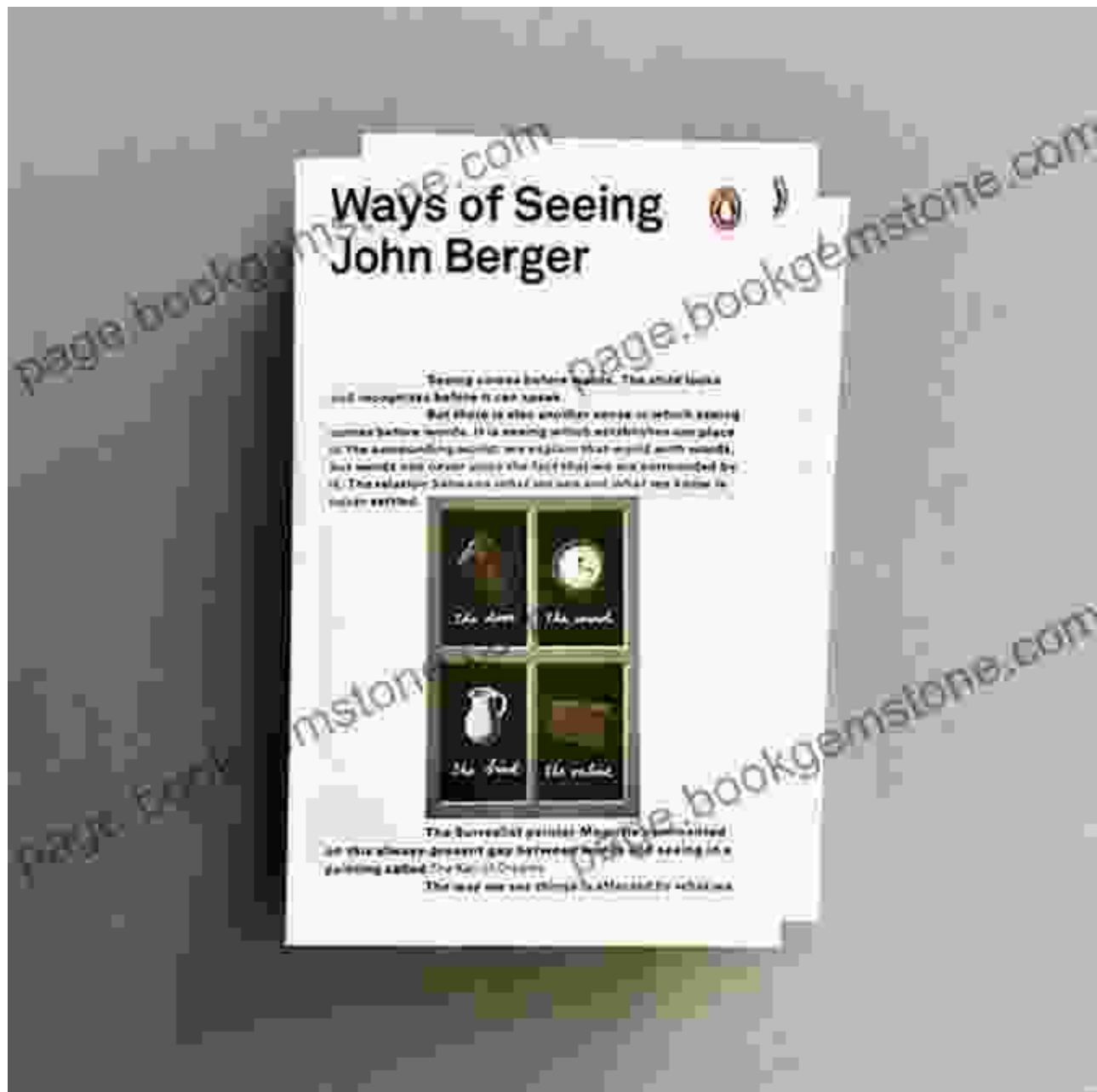


The Surrealist painter Magritte commented on this always-present gap between words and seeing in a painting called *The Key of Dreams*.

The way we see things is affected by what we

Berger's renowned essay "Ways of Seeing" serves as a cornerstone of the book's examination of visual language. Originally a BBC television series, this essay translates the complex world of art history and criticism into an accessible format, opening up new avenues of understanding for a large audience. Berger argues that art is not merely a reflection of reality but an active force that shapes our way of seeing and perceiving the world.

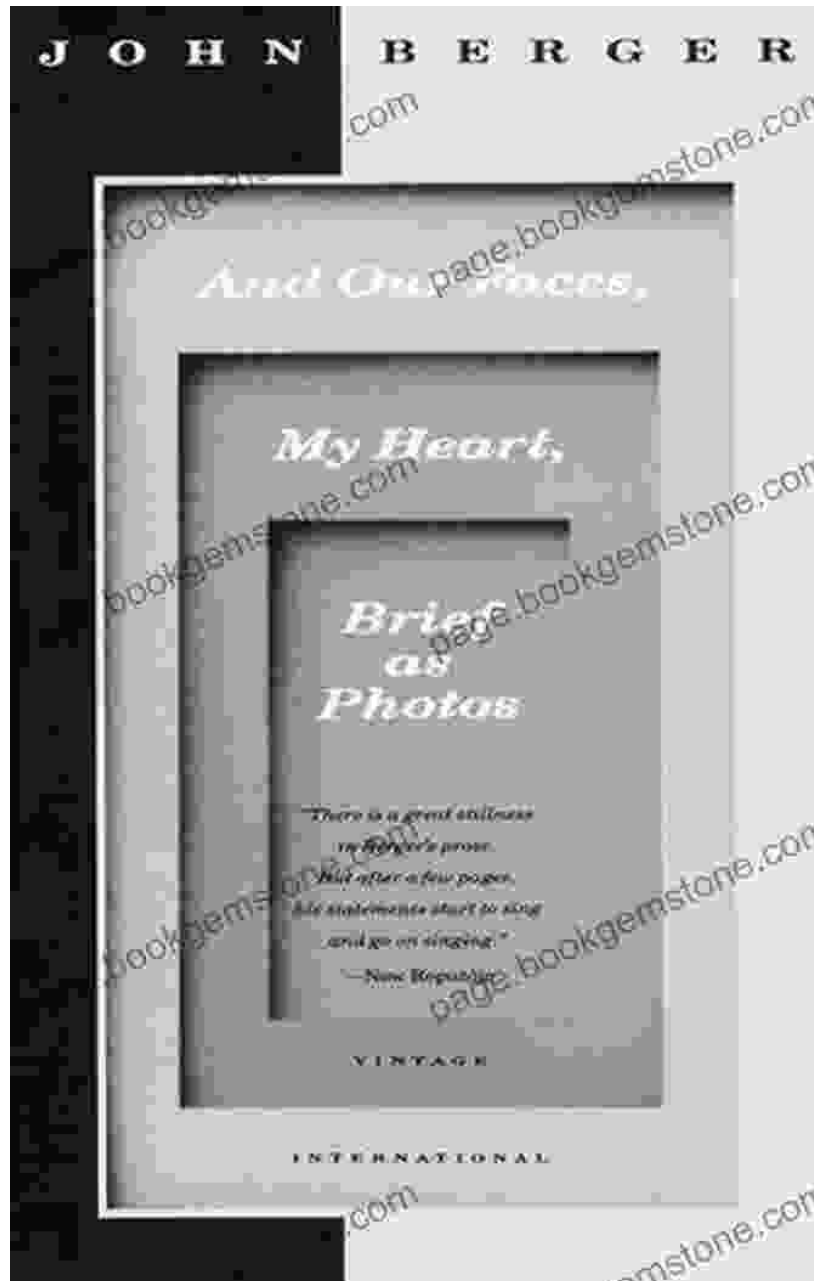
## Chapter 2: About Looking - Photography as an Art of Testimony



In "About Looking," Berger turns his attention to the revolutionary medium of photography. He probes the ways in which photographs capture and communicate moments of human experience, transcending mere documentation to become powerful testimonies of life itself. Berger's analysis of iconic images, such as Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother,"

illuminates the profound impact that photography can have on our understanding of society and the human condition.

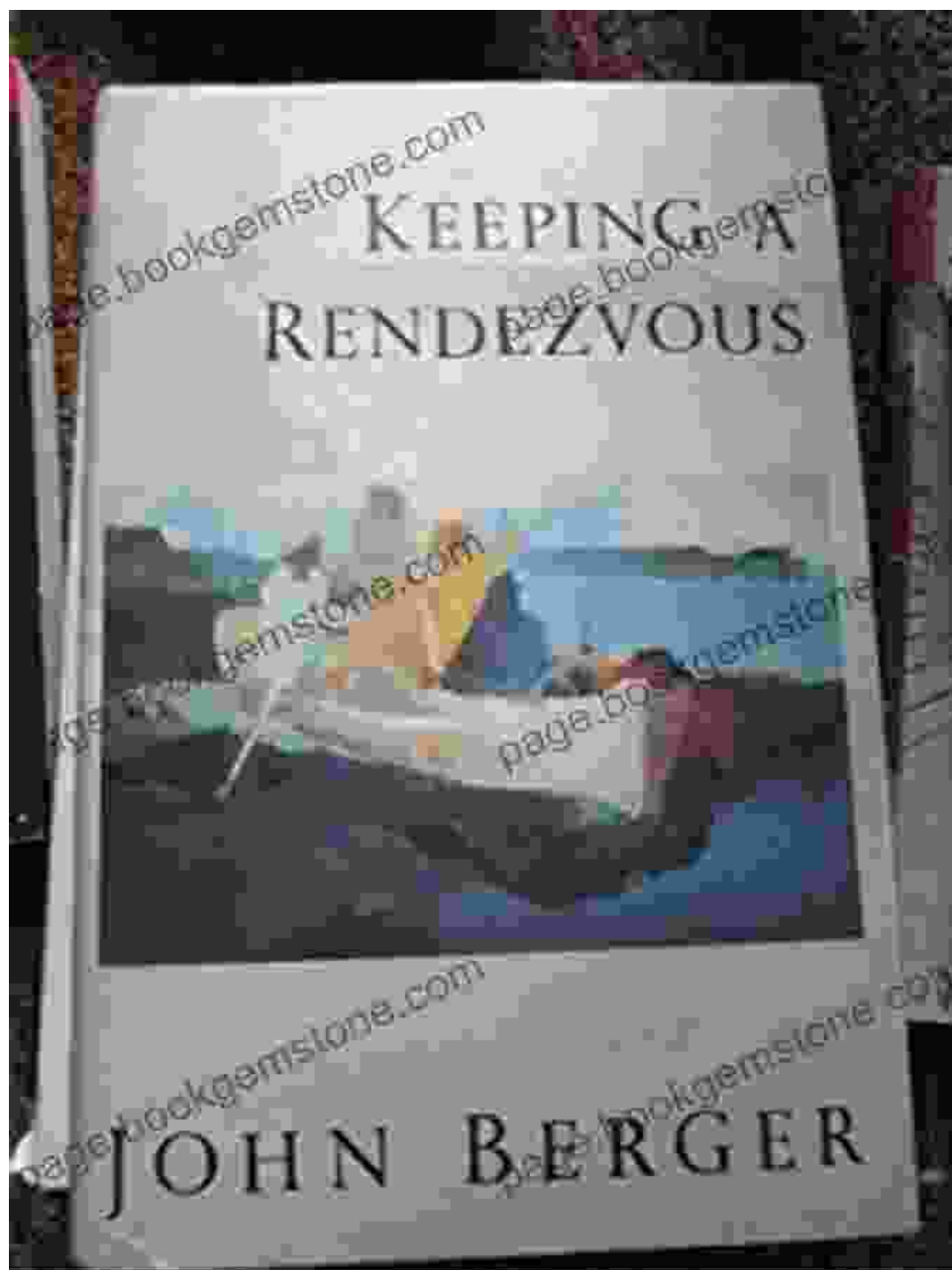
### Chapter 3: And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos - Exploring the Aesthetics of Absence



Berger's essay "And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos" delves into the elusive yet compelling realm of memory, loss, and the aesthetics of

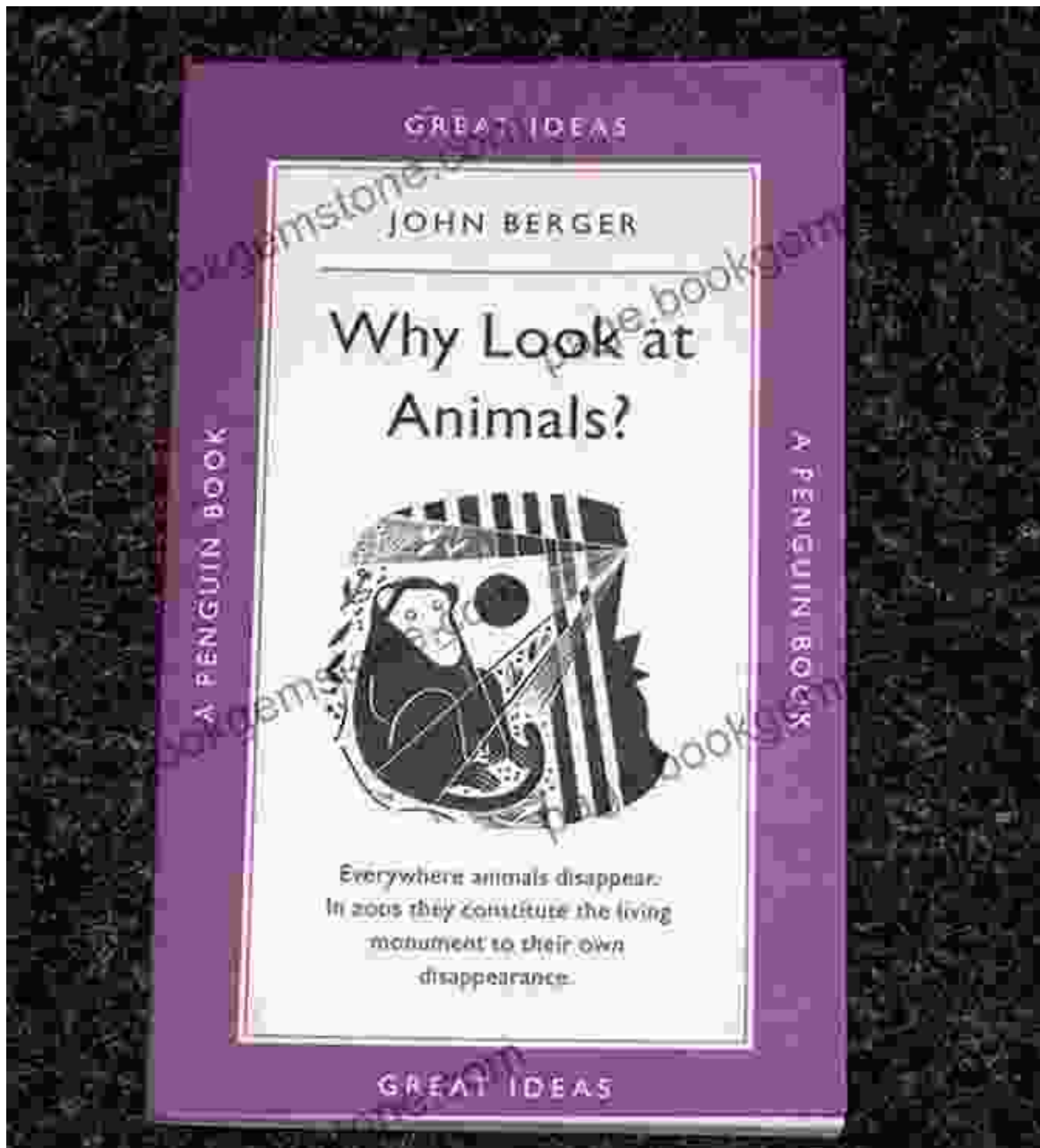
absence. Through a series of personal reflections, he explores how the faces of loved ones, once vibrant and familiar, become cherished relics of the past. Berger's poetic prose captures the bittersweet beauty of remembrance, examining the ways in which we hold onto the past through the evocative power of images.

#### **Chapter 4: Keeping a Rendezvous - The Power of Tradition and Belonging**



In "Keeping a Rendezvous," Berger shifts his focus to the transformative power of tradition and the sense of belonging it fosters. Drawing upon his experiences in rural France, Berger examines how traditional rituals, such as the grape harvest, connect individuals to their community and provide a profound sense of meaning and purpose. Through vivid descriptions of everyday life, Berger celebrates the resilience and enduring spirit of rural communities.

## **Chapter 5: Why Look at Animals? - Confronting the Animal-Human Divide**

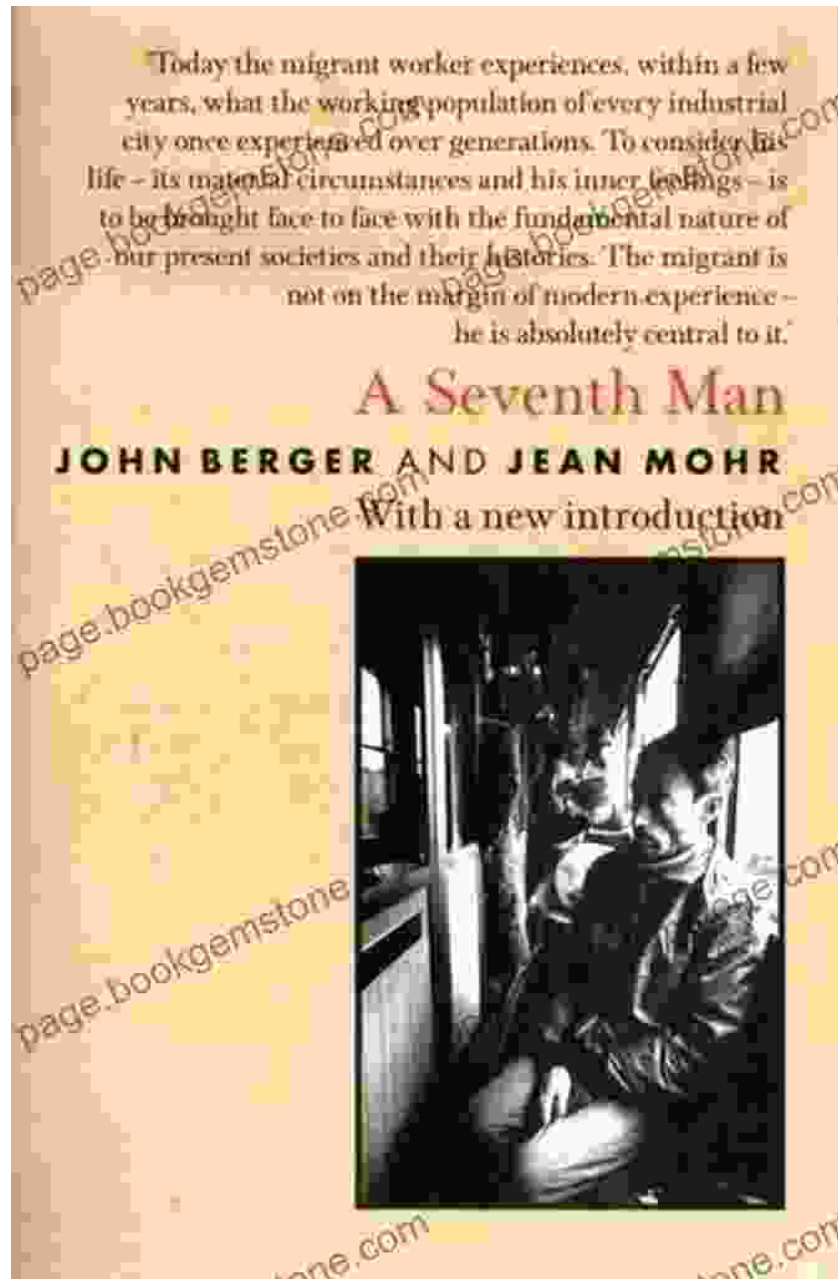


"Why Look at Animals?" is a profound exploration of the complex and often fraught relationship between humans and animals. Berger argues that our dominant cultural perspective has created a deep divide between these two worlds, resulting in a distorted understanding of our own humanity. Through a series of poignant reflections, Berger challenges us to reconsider our



treatment of animals and to recognize their inherent value and significance in the intricate web of life.

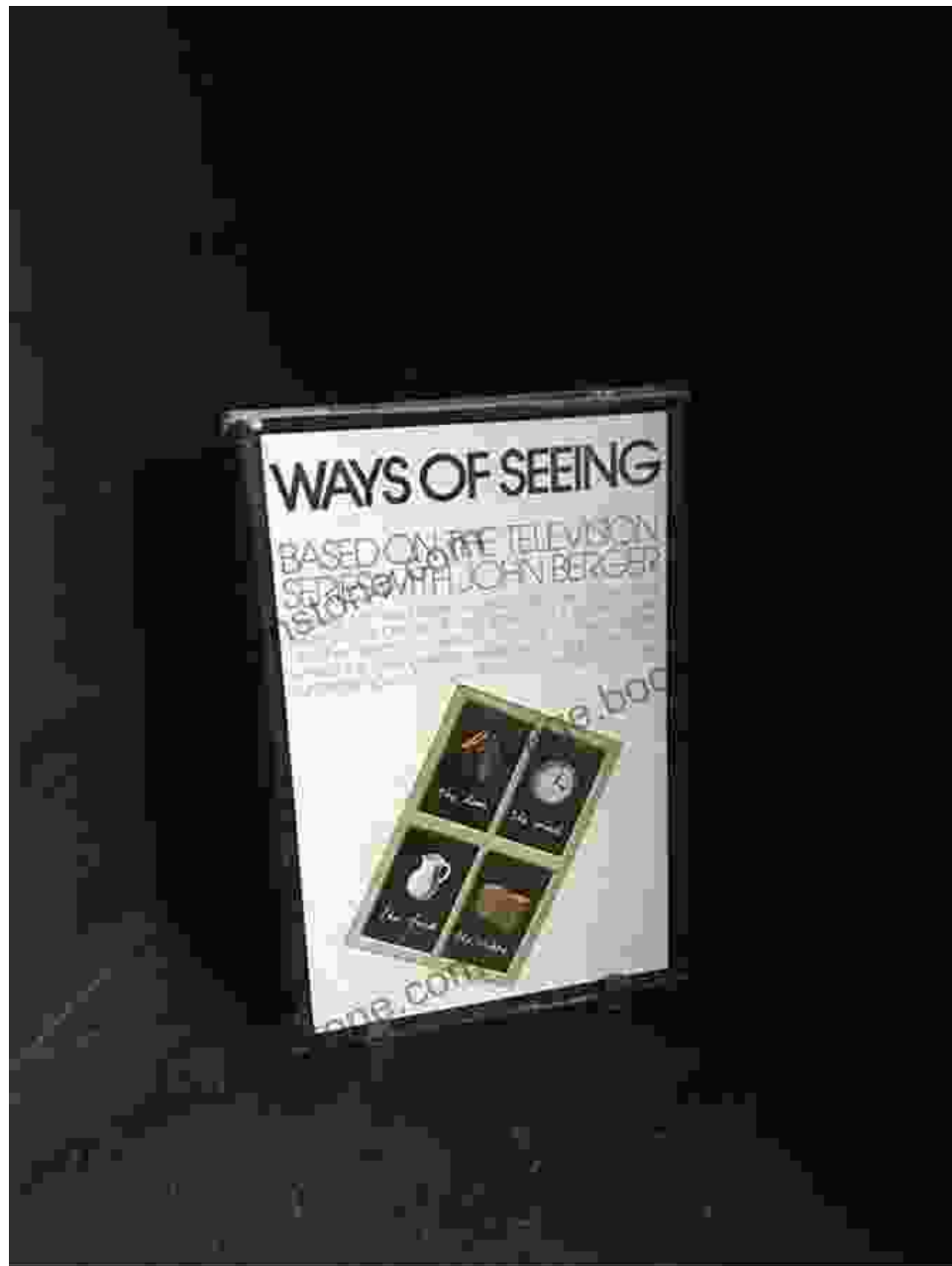
## Chapter 6: A Seventh Man - The Plight of Migrant Laborers and Global Inequality



"A Seventh Man" is a hard-hitting account of the plight of migrant laborers in Europe, exposing the systemic exploitation and social injustices they

face. Berger's powerful narrative follows the journey of seven Turkish men as they navigate the harsh realities of manual labor in foreign lands. Through their experiences, Berger exposes the dehumanizing conditions endured by these workers and the deep-rooted inequalities that perpetuate global economic disparities.

## Chapter 7: Notebooks - A Tapestry of Reflections and Observations



"Notebooks" offers a glimpse into Berger's personal thoughts, observations, and artistic practices. Drawing upon diverse sources, including film, literature, and his own experiences, Berger weaves a rich tapestry of reflections on art, culture, and the human condition. These intimate and often fragmentary entries provide a unique window into the mind of a master observer, revealing his profound insights and unwavering commitment to truth and beauty.

## **: The Legacy of John Berger - A Visionary of Art and Social Justice**



*Selected Essays of John Berger: Vintage International* is a testament to the enduring power of Berger's ideas, a timeless collection that continues to provoke, inspire, and challenge our ways of seeing and understanding the world. Berger's profound insights into art, photography, and social critique

have left an indelible mark on our collective consciousness, establishing him as one of the most influential and respected cultural figures of our time.

Through his words, Berger has taught us to see beyond the surface of images, to recognize the hidden narratives and social dynamics that shape our visual experiences. He has challenged us to confront the injustices and inequalities that continue to plague our societies, and he has reminded us of the transformative power of art to bring about change.

*Selected Essays of John Berger: Vintage International* is an essential resource for anyone interested in the realms of art history, photography, and social criticism. Berger's incisive wit, poetic prose, and unwavering commitment to justice make this collection a must-read for anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of the human experience and the role of art in shaping our world.



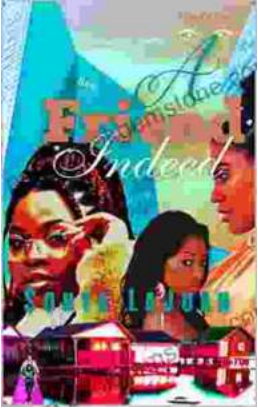
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