

not teach to any test. A test like the SAT is a test of aptitude-- basic intelligence in English or Math. It is would be like tutoring someone for an IQ test. Even if it could be done it would be training someone to appear more intelligent than they actually are. But there seems to be a lot of tutors in my area teaching students for the SATs. The website the conversation.com reports, "In a survey of 24,000 students at 70 high schools, [researcher Don] McCabe found 64% of students admitted to cheating on a test, 58% admitted to plagiarism, and 95% said they participated in some form of cheating, whether it was on a test, plagiarism or copying homework."

<https://tinyurl.com/void-why-cheat>

School cheating has, of course, always been with us. But it would be wrong to walk away from the problem saying that the problem is nothing new. The Tech Age has empowered students with better (in a sense "better") and better cheating tools.

The wikiHow site lists twelve ways to heat with electronics--ways there were not yet even possible before the tech revolution.

See <http://www.wikihow.com/Cheat-on-a-Test-Using-Electronics>.

The question is what is to be done? Does, in fact, anything need to be done? If students can retrieve information with a few keystrokes into a device that fits in their pockets, that capability is not going to go away any time soon. Perhaps tests should all be aptitude tests rather than memorization. It might make sense to test not the facts and formulae but understanding of the concepts. I don't even know if that can be done. But, we need have to find a way to avoid rewarding dishonesty. Or we may want to eliminate testing and grades and even diplomas altogether. Let the student pick up what information he/she wants. School is, after all, for the students' benefit. We could shift the responsibility to the student to make the best use of that information.

If we do have a system with knowledge testing, it is not going to be possible to stop students across the country keeping up with the latest forms of electronic cheating, to recognize where they have taken place, and to block them. This is one more place where the environment is changing faster than we can keep up with and will be possible to defend. If that sounds familiar it is very much like my attitude about computerizing voting systems in a recent column. Entering the tech age is entering a new world. We need to keep up with a changing world as best we can and sadly that is going to be- -in fact already is--impossible.

In the film THEM! Dr. Medford says "When Man entered the atomic age, he opened a door into a new world. What we'll eventually find in that new world, nobody can predict."

What he is saying could as well be about the information age. And I can partially answer that question. What have we found in the information age? A whole lot of more doors. [-mrl]

UNDER THE TURBAN (film review by Mark R. Leeper):

CAPSULE: This is a rarity. UNDER THE TURBAN is a documentary about a religion and the film is purely informational and is non-political. (Well, mostly anyway.) Nor does it try to win converts. Instead, it is a primer on what Sikhism is. It compares and contrasts Sikhism to other religions. The film takes a Sikh family and us on a tour of Sikh communities in several countries. We meet people from the communities, see how they live, and see how their faith influences them. Satinder Garcha, Mike Rogers, and Meghan Shea direct the film. The film implicitly is an attempt to counter race hatred from people who do not even know who Sikhs are, but only know they look different. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4) or 6/10

Sikhism is said to be the fifth largest religion in the world. [Most Internet sources I saw listed it as the ninth largest.] Yet in spite of the size of the religion and fact that Sikhs give themselves a very characteristic look few Americans seem to recognize a Sikh when they see one. Early in the film about a dozen people on the street are asked to identify the religion of a man in a photograph. People of several different cultures guess wrong. Finally a man in a Jewish yarmulke identifies the man in the picture as "some kind of Sikh." That was acceptable, though there may be even different kinds of Sikh. One Sikh says that there is only one kind of Sikh but then says that he is a Khalsa, which seems to mean he is from a warrior brotherhood of Sikhs calling back to a military tradition. One Sikh interviewed says that Sikhism is special since it is the only religion whose adherents do not try to win converts. [I don't know how much consideration he has given to Judaism, which also has a policy not seek conversions.]

A Sikh does several things to make sure that he is recognizable as a Sikh. Adult males wear a turban. Most wear a big moustache and beard. Not as obvious but each adult male carries five items, each has a name that starts with "K". They are Kesh (uncut hair), Kara (a steel bracelet), Kanga (a wooden comb), Kaccha (cotton underwear), and Kirpan (a steel sword).

The inspiration for the journey that the film documents came when Zara Garch, a Sikh girl aged 9, begins asking questions about her religion. Her parents decide to show her rather than just tell her. They build a monumental tour going to countries

that have major Sikh communities. In each they ask the local Sikhs what being a Sikh means to them and more basically what is a Sikh. They visit Italy, India, Great Britain, Argentina, Canada, and the United States.

There is some discussion of the spiritual underpinnings of the religion, but there is insufficient time in a film this short to really do them justice. The filmmakers also look at phenomena like a Sikh motorcycle club.

The most important mission of the film is to educate the public on what Sikhs are and spread the word to not confuse them with terrorists. Sadly, this may not be the best way to educate the American public who Sikhs are, and perhaps more importantly who they are not. But the film is at least a good introduction. I would rate UNDER THE TURBAN a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale or 6/10.

UNDER THE TURBAN is on DVD and is available on streaming.

Film Credits: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5700402/combined>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/under_the_turban_2017

[-mrl]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

I just bought a copy of the CD audiobook for ONE OF OUR THURSDAYS IS MISSING, maintaining my record of having the entire "Thursday Next" set in unmatched volumes (almost):

- 1 The Eyre Affair, US Viking hardback
- 2 Lost in a Good Book, US Viking paperback (Book Club edition)
- 3 The Well of Lost Plots, British NEL paperback
- 4 Something Rotten, US Penguin trade paperback
- 5 Thursday Next: First Among Sequels, Playaway audio
- 6 One of Our Thursdays Is Missing, CD audio
- 7 The Woman Who Died a Lot, US Viking trade hardback (ex-library)

I recently read "Your Life in 1977" by Willy Ley (written in 1964). In it, Ley writes, "A device much talked about in the past, the "personal communicator" (Dick Tracy's wrist radio to those who don't write or read engineering reports) breaks down on point two [whether it will bring in a profit]. Of course it can be built but its general introduction would probably lead to general unhappiness. There just aren't enough wavelengths to accommodate personal communications for fifteen million people. The crowding is bad enough as it is. [examples deleted] Personal communicators will be fine in Antarctica and may have a place in Arizona or Alaska, but won't do any good between Boston and Washington D.C. on the East Coast, between San Francisco and San Diego on the West Coast or around the great lakes in the middle of the continent." [Willy Ley, "Your Life in 1977", 1964]

To which one can only put down one's cell phone long enough to respond with Arthur C. Clarke's First Law: "When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong." [Arthur C. Clarke, "Hazards of Prophecy: The Failure of Imagination", 1962]

[-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

The covers of this book are too far apart.
--Ambrose Bierce

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