

there been a convenient bonfire the poetry books would likely have been burned immediately. John Keating is not just disagreeing with a textbook editor; the editor's thought is being censored with extreme prejudice. No future students will be able to read that introduction. Keating is murdering thought. He is indeed a groovy, likeable guy, but he is a groovy Nazi.

In the course of the story one of the boys, inspired by Keating's teaching and example, stands up to the teachers of the school and is angrily punished. When the boy tells Keating that he was just doing what Keating taught him to do, Keating backs away and says that the student should also beware the consequences of standing up to too strong a bully. In short, he crumbles rather than defending the boy who took Keating's philosophy to heart.

I have always wanted to see DEAD POETS SOCIETY on a double feature with THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE. This is much the same story as DEAD POETS SOCIETY, but it is told from the opposite point of view. In this film the power that Jean Brody has over her loving students is seen for the insidious force that it can be. Both films look at the damage that teachers can (unintentionally) cause.

But you know cinema heroes often are not as heroic as they may seem at first brush. Let us think about RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. Its hero is the much-larger-than-life Indiana Jones. He was the hero who saved the world when the Nazis were going to get their hands on the lost Ark of the Covenant. Well, wait a second. Indy obviously was a nuisance to his foes, and had he not been there the Nazis would have opened the Ark. And then they would have died horribly and perhaps worse than they did. Indy made the game more interesting, but the ending would have been the same. Well, that is not quite true. Instead of Indy getting the Ark, it ended up in storage by people whose laziness left it undisturbed. Let me ask you, which end is better for mankind? Would you feel safer with the lost Ark lost or with Indy taking possession of the Ark? I know what I think I would prefer.

So there you have it, two heroes of the movies. You have John Keating and Indiana Jones. I think the world is better off that they are both fictions. [-mrl]

Grammar (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

I know a preposition is okay to end a sentence with, and I know that it is okay to sometimes split an infinitive. Nevertheless, I try to make prepositions words with which not to end a sentence, and to split infinitives only rarely. [-ecl]

EL MINISTERIO DEL TIEMPO (television comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

EL MINISTERIO DEL TIEMPO is a Spanish television show similar to (but made before) TIMELESS. So similar are the two, in fact, that EL MINISTERIO DEL TIEMPO sued TIMELESS for plagiarism, as well as making a snide comment about it in the episode I describe below.

Because it is made for Spanish audiences, I sit watching it with my tablet and look up everything that seems to mean something I don't get. For example, in the first episode of Season 2 (the episode with El Cid), when the temporary member of the team shows up, we are clearly supposed to recognize him. It turns out he is Ambrogio Spinola and he would be as recognizable to a Spaniard as George Washington is to us. (Not surprisingly, everyone looks exactly like their famous portraits. For example, Velazquez is always dressed in the clothes from his self-portrait rather than other 17th century garments.)

In that episode, I also like the idea that what exposes the El Cid impostor is that he knows the legends about El Cid but not the facts. I remember going to see the film EL CID with my father. My father had a Master's Degree in Spanish, and so was presumably familiar with both the history and the legend, but was appalled by the film, which apparently stuck to neither. So now we really have *three* stories of El Cid.

in the episode, Charlton Heston goes to a scholar to ask for background on El Cid, but asks questions like, "Did they have rifles in El Cid's time?" Given that El Cid lived in the 11th century, this is a singularly stupid question, and the scholar asks his translator in Spanish, "Don't they have basic education in the United States?" Given Heston's position on the right to bear arms, I wondered if it was also a jab (I was going to say "shot") at the idea that the people who are so enthusiastic about firearms know practically nothing about them. But unbelievably, one commentary site claims that Heston did visit Ramon Menendez Pidal and ask this very question

Other references in this episode include Viriatus, the Rif War, and "Naranjito". Oh, and the character who cries, "Yippie kai yay, hideputas" is played by the actor who dubbed Bruce Willis in the Spanish release of the "Die Hard" movies! [-ecl]

THE HYPNOTIC EYE (1960) (film retrospective by Mark R. Leeper):

CAPSULE: In an unnamed major city there is a baffling series of incidents of beautiful women inflicting agonizing self-mutilations on their own faces. Dave, a police detective, investigates by searching for a common link. He ties the case to the visit of a popular stage hypnotist. The film's plot is rather straightforward and flat. The short 79-minute story would be even shorter if it wasn't padded with so called "Beatnik" music and poetry which helps the film reach a releasable length. The film gets its thrill (if that is the word) from cinematic misogyny and sadism. Rating: 0 (-4 to +4) or 4/10

If you are big into hating the female gender in movies, then 1960 was the year for you. In addition to PSYCHO (1960) being released, there was HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM with its eye- piercing binoculars, and there was THE HYPNOTIC EYE. 1960 was also the year of PEEPING TOM. These are somewhat mean-spirited compared to the sort of horror from 1959 when horror films were more on the level of A BUCKET OF BLOOD (1959), HOUSE ON THE HAUNTED HILL (1959), and THE TINGLER (1959). That is one small interval of time for there to be so many woman-hating films.

In THE HYPNOTIC EYE Det. Sgt. Dave Kennedy (played by Joe Patridge) is the police detective investigating the case of eleven women who have all mutilated themselves by burning their faces with flame or chemical. The incidents happen to coincide in time with performances of a popular stage hypnotist, Desmond (played by Jacques Bergerac) whose talent for hypnotism makes him suspected of hypnotizing the beautiful audience members he calls up on the stage and secretly implanting into their minds the post-hypnotic suggestion to disfigure and self-mutilate themselves. Desmond boasts that he can hypnotize anybody in just a few seconds. To do this he uses a little ball the size of a tennis ball with luminescent circles so it looks like glowing mechanical eye.

From early in the film during performances the camera picks up Desmond's assistant Justine signaling to him whom in the audience she wants him to pick for special treatment. What is her connection to crimes? Justine was played by Allison Hayes, the title character from ATTACK OF THE 50 FOOT WOMAN. But there is little such drama here. This film was nearly as flat and bland as an old episode of DRAGNET.

Dave enlists the help of Phil, a police psychologist who hates stage hypnotists for the damage they do and the damage that they can do. Dave takes his girlfriend Marcia and her friend Dodie to see Desmond on the stage. (The act hardly seems to be enough to satisfy an audience.) The two women become psychically linked with Desmond who uses post-hypnotic suggestion to enslave them. The police work is fairly humdrum. One could find better stories on TV police shows.

The film was directed by George Blair from a screenplay by Gitta Woodfield and William Read Woodfield. There are several hints that the two writers came up with a short script and Blair had to stretch to make a film of even B-movie length--79 minutes. That includes a visit to a beatnik coffee house where Lawrence Lipton, the self-styled King of the Beatniks reads one of his beatnik poems recites a longish and totally irrelevant beatnik poem. Elsewhere an expert on hypnosis demonstrates his skill on a live audience. After that the doctor in the film breaks the fourth wall and tells the live audience to never play with hypnotism. Which is a rule that the audience had just broken.

I rate THE HYPNOTIC EYE a 0 on the -4 to +4 scale or 4/10

The film carries a strong message that hypnosis is serious business and must not be used as a plaything.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0053931/reference>

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

[-mrl]

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE (letter of comment by Rincewind):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on William Shakespeare](#) in the 08/10/18 issue of the MT VOID, Rincewind writes:

I remember Asimov, in his book on Shakespeare, pointed out that Willie's version of "Merchant" was actually the "happy" ending. In the original play, Shylock was put to death for daring to threaten the life of a Christian. [-rw]

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

THE NEW ANNOTATED H. P. LOVECRAFT with stories by H. P. Lovecraft (duh!) and annotations by Leslie S. Klinger (ISBN 978-0-871-40453-4) has 850 oversized pages, includes nineteen stories and two novels (THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD and AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS), and weighs over five pounds. This makes it difficult to read sitting on the couch or at the table while having a snack.

One learns, for example, that Lovecraft's Dunwich is based on the Massachusetts towns of Wilbraham, Monson, and Hampden.

On the other hand, what is one to make of an annotation that says, "Congregationalism is a body of independent churches (independent, that is, from the Protestant, Episcopalian, Baptist, and Catholic churches)." Although apparently some Baptists claim not to be Protestant, so far as I can tell the overwhelming opinion is that Baptists are Protestant.

Lovecraft's writing is distinctive. It is archaic in word choice, style, and in spelling. He favors the British spellings (or should that be "favours"). He uses "shewn" for "shown", but "strown" for "strewn".

To give you a taste of Lovecraft, here is the beginning of "The Call of Cthulhu":

"The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

"Theosophists have guessed at the awesome grandeur of the cosmic cycle wherein our world and human race form transient incidents. They have hinted at strange survivals in terms which would freeze the blood if not masked by a bland optimism. But it is not from them that there came the single glimpse of forbidden eons which chills me when I think of it and maddens me when I dream of it. That glimpse, like all dread glimpses of truth, flashed out from an accidental piecing together of separated things--in this case an old newspaper item and the notes of a dead professor. I hope that no one else will accomplish this piecing out; certainly, if I live, I shall never knowingly supply a link in so hideous a chain. I think that the professor, too intended to keep silent regarding the part he knew, and that he would have destroyed his notes had not sudden death seized him."

Later we see that Lovecraft seems to have a knowledge of non-Euclidean geometries. While his descriptions do not totally match spherical or hyperbolic geometries, there are certainly hints of them in his comments about convexity and concavity:

"Without knowing what futurism is like, Johansen achieved something very close to it when he spoke of the city; for instead of describing any definite structure or building, he dwells only on broad impressions of vast angles and stone surfaces--surfaces too great to belong to anything right or proper for this earth, and impious with horrible images and hieroglyphs. I mention his talk about angles because it suggests something Wilcox had told me of his awful dreams. He said that the geometry of the dream-place he saw was abnormal, non-Euclidean, and loathsomely redolent of spheres and dimensions apart from ours. Now an unlettered seaman felt the same thing whilst gazing at the terrible reality.

"Johansen and his men landed at a sloping mud-bank on this monstrous Acropolis, and clambered slipperily up over titan oozy blocks which could have been no mortal staircase. The very sun of heaven seemed distorted when viewed through the polarising miasma welling out from this sea-soaked perversion, and twisted menace and suspense lurked leeringly in those crazily elusive angles of carven rock where a second glance shewed concavity after the first shewed convexity.

"Something very like fright had come over all the explorers before anything more definite than rock and ooze and weed was seen. Each would have fled had he not feared the scorn of the others, and it was only half-heartedly that they searched--vainly, as it proved--for some portable souvenir to bear away.

"It was Rodriguez the Portuguese who climbed up the foot of the monolith and shouted of what he had found. The rest followed him, and looked curiously at the immense carved door with the now familiar squid-dragon bas-relief. It was, Johansen said, like a great barn-door; and they all felt that it was a door because of the ornate lintel, threshold, and jambs around it, though they could not decide whether it lay flat like a trap-door or slantwise like an outside cellar-door. As Wilcox would have said, the geometry of the place was all wrong. One could not be sure that the sea and the ground were horizontal, hence the relative position of everything else seemed phantasmally variable.

"Briden pushed at the stone in several places without result. Then Donovan felt over it delicately around the edge, pressing each point separately as he went. He climbed interminably along the grotesque stone moulding--that is, one would call it climbing if the thing was not after all horizontal--and the men wondered how any door in the universe could be so vast. Then, very softly and slowly, the acre-great lintel began to give inward at the top; and they saw that it was balanced.

"Donovan slid or somehow propelled himself down or along the jamb and rejoined his fellows, and everyone watched the queer recession of the monstrously carven portal. In this phantasy of prismatic distortion it moved anomalously in a diagonal way, so that all the rules of matter and perspective seemed upset."

I have enjoyed Klinger's annotations to Sherlock Holmes, and am looking forward to his annotations of FRANKENSTEIN. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

The oldest books are only just out to those who have not
read them.

--Samuel Butler

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