

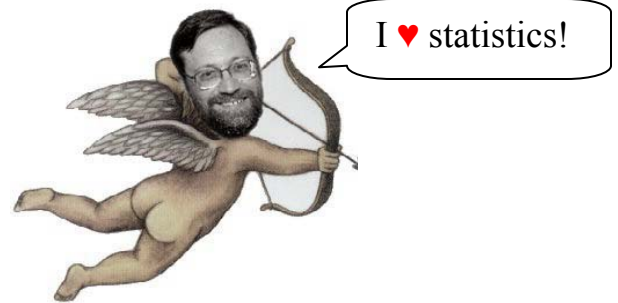
# PSYCHO? LOGICAL? BULLETIN

February, 14, 2004

Volume 2, No. 13

## The Graduate Student Edition

Co-editors: Stefani Nellen and Joan Knihnicki



### Graduate Student Team Wins Big at Annual Holiday Party

By GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATED PRESS



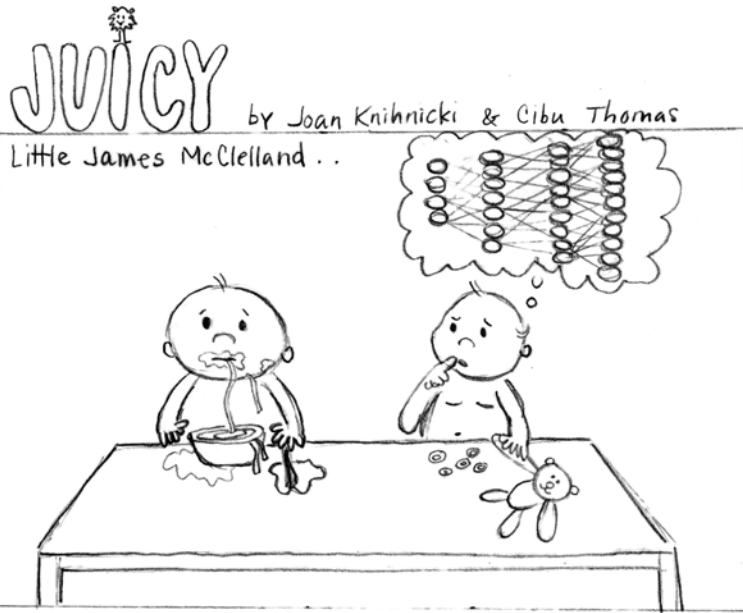
The graduate student team “Teen Girl Squad” defeated professors, staff, and post-docs alike at the department’s annual Holiday Party in December. They showed their vast knowledge by solving anagrams like “An evil snoring” (Erin Ingvalson), recognizing lyrics to popular songs (ex. Madonna’s Vogue), naming national flags (ex. South Africa), and much more. Congratulations to Team Girl Squad!

## Comics



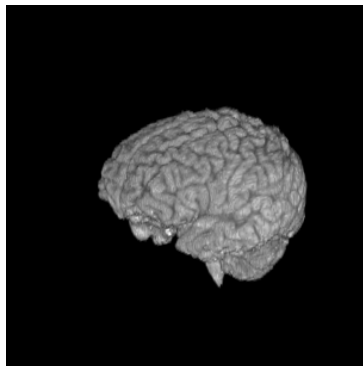
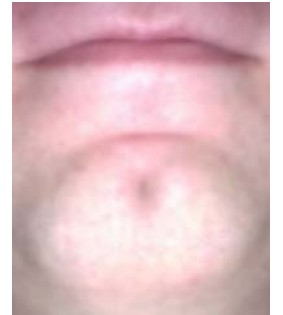
“Pervasive myths to dispel”  
contributed by: Marlene Behrmann





Guess that body part!

Match the body part to the grad student from whence it came. Send answers to *jknihnic* or *snellen* to win a case of orange soda!



1. Joan
2. Lara
3. Cibu
4. Jarrod
5. Sarah N.
6. Stefani
7. Scott
8. Norma
9. Elida
10. Miriam
11. Jacques
12. Dana
13. Gary
14. Erin V.
15. Rachel
16. Anthony
17. Julie
18. Erin I.



## Brain Teasers

### SO YOU THINK YOU'RE SO CLEVER SOLUTIONS

Contributed by: Miriam Rosenberg-Lee

Here is a quiz that's practically guaranteed to have you tied in mental knots for an hour or so. You'll probably hate us when you get through. If so, you can repair your shattered ego by trying some of these teasers on friends.

If you can answer every question right, you are obviously a genius. Anyone who makes only five mistakes or less is still fit company for the Brain Trust. But any mortal with the normal complement of brains should get nine to twelve right out of the twenty.

There are plenty of catch questions, with no holds barred, so read every word carefully. Write down your answers, then scroll to the last page for the bad news.

1. If 3 cats can kill 3 rats in 3 minutes, how long will it take 100 cats to kill 100 rats?
2. A whisky-and-soda costs 55 cents. The whisky costs 50 cents more than the soda. How much does the soda cost?
3. A little Eskimo and a big Eskimo are walking in the snow. The little Eskimo is the big Eskimo's son. The big Eskimo is not the little Eskimo's father. Who is it?
4. Which is correct: 8 and 8 are 15 or 8 and 8 is 15?
5. Is it legal for a man to marry his widow's sister?

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### GEEKY CORNER

#### ACT-R AXIOMS:

- (1) noise is your friend
- (2) noise can't solve every problem- but a great many of them!
- (3) !eval! is your secret affair: you enjoy it but don't stand up for it in public
- (4) if you are caught using !eval!: "This function will be part of ACT-X.x eventually."
- (5) "When Dario was a grad student at CMU, he developed a model of this."
- (6) parameter-free prediction is a relative thing.  
Amendment to (5):  
In mathematics, zero is absolute. But in cognitive modeling, there is zero-parameter fitting.

COGNITIVE MODELING IS A CHALLENGING, HIGHLY FORMALIZED METHOD OF BOTH PREDICTING AND ACCOUNTING FOR A WIDE RANGE OF DATA FROM BEHAVIORAL AS WELL AS NEURAL IMAGING STUDIES.

APPLICATION OF THIS METHOD, IF IT IS TO SUPPORT OUR SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE MIND, MUST ADHERE TO A SET OF AXIOMS THAT ARE ROOTED IN THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF OUR CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO ACT, PERCEIVE, THINK- IN SHORT: TO PROCESS INFORMATION.

- (7) Bumps are bumps, except when the model predicts them, then they are effects.
- (8) It's done that way in EPIC!
- (9) If you can't beat 'm, assimilate 'm!
- (10) It's all about postdicting predictions.
- (11) How can anyone be productive without productions?
- (12) ACT-R is about chunks, not chicks.
- (13) The lawyer is not in the park, but three plus four still equals seven.
- (14) W, P, C(a+b), S, s, (etc).

## *ACADEMY AWARDS...DAVID RAKISON & STEFANI NELLEN*

It seems like only a year ago I was writing my last column about the Razzies© and Oscars™. It has become something of a tradition, and so here I am again for – insert trumpets – Movie Award Madness. Beware though, because this year things are going to be a little different. Just as Obi Wan had Anakin Skywalker so I have found my own Padawan – Stefani Nellen. She has challenged me to an Oscar duel – not quite as exciting as a light-saber battle but the department wouldn't spring for that. We are going mano a mano on who is going to take the top awards on February 29<sup>th</sup>, whether Billy is a better host than Whoopi, and who is going to look better in a dress on the big night (I vote for Stefani over me and advise you to do the same). So, without further ado....

### **David**

Ok, ok. So my track record isn't so great. I still owe Margaret two months summer salary for my forecast that Russell Crowe would beat out Denzel and I thought that Sissy Spacek would win over Halle Berry (though I did plump for Beautiful Mind that year). Anyhow, this year I'm feeling confident. I've done my homework, seen the movies, read the reviews, and completed a phone poll of 1200 20- to 35-year-olds in the Greater Pittsburgh area. So here goes. The BEST PICTURE AWARD is a two horse race between Mystic Pizza, I mean River, and Lord of the Rings. Master and Commander and Lost in Translation were solid but they don't have an "Oscar" vibe. As far as I'm concerned, and as Christopher Lambert once said, there can be only one. I know a lot of you won't have seen LOTR on principle. Hobbits, goblins, and ogres sounds too much like a faculty meeting to you. Well I have to tell you, it's mind-blowing. The depth, the beauty, the majesty. But enough of me, the film is great too. It swept me away. Yes, the end is too drawn out, but the same can be said of much of Mystic River. And this award is well deserved for what is essentially a 12-hour movie that has set the standard for all future movies with trees that walk and talk. How could it not get my vote? As a corollary, I have to pick Peter Jackson for BEST DIRECTOR. Mystic River is again the big contender because Clint Eastwood pulled together a superbly talented cast, generated

a number of scintillating performances (I'm sounding like Ebert here, help!), and made them work like a well-oiled Turing machine. But mark my words, the overweight Kiwi will win. As a final note, if you're wondering who the hell is Fernando Meirelles and what is City of God let me tell you that it is a gripping, traumatic movie about growing up in drug- and gang-infested slum. It reminded me a lot of home. It's hard to watch but amazing – buy, copy, or steal a copy....from me (I have 200 to dispose of).

The BEST ACTOR Oscar is a much harder choice in my opinion. I loved Johnny Depp in Pirates of the Caribbean (rated: Arrrrrr) and Ben Kingsley in House of Death, Doom, and Gloom (do NOT see it!). But the smart money is on Bill Murray or Sean Penn. Interestingly both are disliked in Hollywood – they stay outside the system and openly criticize it. For example, Sean Penn did not attend the Golden Globes because, and this is true, he claims he couldn't find a babysitter. Their roles were very different but also had similar aspects. Murray was muted, conveying a lost soul without the need for words or over elaboration. Penn was also lost, but in a much more dramatic bare-your-soul kind of way. I think the latter is what will grab the attention of the voters – and it is worth bearing in mind that Penn has come close a number of times without winning (Dead Man Walking, I am Sam). And he was married to Madonna, though I've no idea why that is relevant. BEST ACTRESS is far easier to judge. No question:

Charlize Theron. Why? Because just as disabilities work for men, so relative disfigurement works for women. Think Kidman's nose or Berry's working-class look. Ugly is in. Trust me, I'm a doctor.

Finally, the SUPPORTING ACTOR Oscars. Let me start with the easy one: Renee Zellweger is a shoo-in. I really disliked Cold Mountain – in fact I preferred Return to Witch Mountain – but she was a shining star among a cast of burned-out suns. She was funny, sad, but mostly she was so alive. She was also on screen for as long as any other actor in the movie. Thumbs and toes up, way up. The supporting actor Oscar could be a real surprise. I have a sneaking suspicion that Alex Baldwin could win which

would give hope to really crap actors everywhere (take note Vin Diesel). But I have to vote for Tim Robbins because he's a great actor in a deep and meaningful role, and well, he's damn cool.

So, that's it. Rev up the microwave, break out the popcorn, and have fun watching a lot of famous people thanking their agents for making them rich. And one last thing. When you watch the speeches and all that endless fawning, remember what George Clooney said when he won the Golden Globe a few years back: "When I looked at the list of the people I was up against in this category I thought to myself.....I've got to win."

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## Stefani

Wants it...needs it....must have it! Must have the precious! But no: Andy Serkis's Smeagol/Gollum has not received a nomination and neither has any other member of the "Lord of the Rings" cast. Understandable: the mad accumulation of talent performing in and creating that movie would have required the definition of new categories.

MOST TERRIFYING FATHER OF THE BRIDE: Hugo Weaving (Elrond), LEAST-CONVINCING 87-YEAR-OLD: Viggo Mortensen (Aragorn), BEST TANTRUM: Andy Serkis (Smeagol), BEST (or should we say: most poignant) NON-VERBAL EXPRESSION OF SELF-PITY: Elijah Wood (Frodo), FASTEST VICTORY OVER 10 ENEMIES ATOP COMPUTER-ANIMATED STRANGE BEAST: Orlando Bloom (Legolas), MESSIEST WAY TO EAT COCKTAIL TOMATOES: John Noble (Denethor). Etc., etc.

Instead, we have to work with what we have- Return of the King is nominated for "Best Picture", Peter Jackson as "BEST DIRECTOR". There can be no doubt that Peter Jackson must have it...yesss....he should, must and will win this trophy, not so much for "Return of the King" but for making this trilogy per se, especially for finishing it decently (oh, I'm still stinging from the

agony of sitting through "Matrix: Revolutions"). There is no movie trilogy to match the scope of the "Ring", and now is the time to finally acknowledge that achievement. But will "Return of the King" also be awarded the Oscar for "BEST PICTURE"? No. It cannot. Somehow, "the intuition" is that a unique movie should win this award, not part three of a trilogy- paradoxically, the fact that "Return of the King" has two excellent predecessors makes it seem less outstanding than it might be, and the competition is considerable. Will it be "Lost in translation"? Ah, tough one, tough one. It is a sweet, unpredictable movie, it is one-of-a-kind, and all the little details are right. It would deserve the award, but somehow I want Sofia Coppola to try yet harder: The improvement from "Virgin Suicides" (already impressive) to "Translation" is immense, who knows what she can do if she has the Oscar to aspire to? "Seabiscuit" then? No way: Mediocre family entertainment with a drawn-out storyline, o.k. for the airplane. "Mystic River"? Too obviously a "quality movie". That leaves us with "Master and Commander." Has anyone noticed how brilliant this movie is? It is a wonderfully confident and elegant variation on the themes from the Aubrey/Maturin novels,

instead of attempting a 1:1 translation of a book into a movie. A very deep, warm and satisfying and extremely authentic picture that will prove to be timeless.

Let's go to "BEST ACTOR" then. Russell Crowe no, Johnny Depp ("Pirates of the Caribbean") yes. What kind of world is this? Presumably, someone nominated him as a joke and after that, befitting the unpredictable nature of emergent systems, things got out of hand. Granted, I'm bitter because I'm too pale to ever dare to wear his mascara. Additionally, I have all kinds of subconscious issues with his nomination, because his inept handling of the sword reminds me of my first traumatizing encounter with a culinary torch. I refuse to believe that he will be awarded best actor. It must not be. Not when Jude Law is nominated as well. "Cold Mountain" is something of a boredom-fest, but Jude Law is excellent, as always. However, he has been ignored by the Oscar people for more stunning achievements than this (he was – sigh- Dickie Greenleaf in "The Talented Mr. Ripley", and, in the name of everything female, he should have gotten that little golden statuette, argh), and ignored he shall be again, simply because he's too attractive. Sean Penn ("mystic River") and Ben Kingsley ("House of Sand and Fog") are too obviously great, but Bill Murray ("Lost in translation") is the clear winner. Why? Because his character is a classic that will live on beyond the movie.

"BEST ACTRESS" then. Hard. Very hard. Charlize Theron ("Monster") obviously made a very calculated career move in leaving her sweet, naturally charismatic movie persona behind in order to play the "first female mass murderer" in "Monster"- one of these unpleasant movies that the blurbs on the DVD-box will call "haunting", "dark", "superb", and of which critics approvingly note that "it has a rape scene almost as chilling as 'Boys don't cry'". I doubt whether this regrettable transformation will be rewarded by an Oscar, and would be sad if it will. As I didn't have the chance to see Naomi Watts ("21 grams") or Diane Keaton ("Something's gotta give"), I have to choose

between Keisha Castle-Hughes ("Whale Rider") and Samantha Morton ("In America"), hopefully demonstrating the value of ignorance-based decision making. And thus it will be...Keisha Castle-Hughes! Samantha Morton warmed my Non-Immigrant's heart, but Keisha is intense, beautiful, young, the exotic version of an enchanted little princess who finds her calling- basically the Aragorn-thing, only with a young Maori female. But is she really acting?

So here we have almost arrived at the end of the predictions-leaving only the awards for (a) BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR and (b) BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS.

Ad (b): Shoreh Aghdashloo ("House of Sand and Fog") it will be. For shining amidst all the gloom.

Ad (a): Please, let it be Ken Watanabe ("The Last Samurai"). To appear charismatic next to Tom Cruise might not be a big feat, but why is it that the scenes in which he appeared stick to my mind so persistently? I would not be surprised if it were revealed that he actually is one of the Samurai—or why is he looking so bemused most of the time?

Alec Baldwin ("The Cooler") is...well, Alec Baldwin in a boring movie, Benicio Del Toro ("21 Grams") already has an Oscar, Tim Robbins ("Mystic River") is impressive but somehow not made for supporting parts, and Djimon Hounsou ("In America")...is unforgettable.

Oh, am I looking forward to all the great and dumb Summer movies!

## MY TOP-10 MOVIES OF THE YEAR – BY DAN MIRMAN

There were over 8,000 movies released in 2003, and much to my chagrin, I did not see most of them. The list of movies that I am still looking forward to seeing includes “Thirteen”, “Monster”, “Kill Bill, Vol. 1”, “Angels In America”, “The Fog of War” and “21 Grams”. But it wasn’t all missed opportunities, so here are my ten (or maybe eleven) favorite movies of the year:

### 10a. Finding Nemo

Pixar consistently makes excellent animated films that the whole family can enjoy. This one is no exception. If you liked “Toy Story”, “Monsters, Inc.”, and “A Bug’s Life”, then see this movie and you won’t be disappointed.

### 9. Bend It Like Beckham

The culture clash / coming-of-age premise seems thin after “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” made immigrant assimilation the funniest joke since men wearing women’s clothing. But high concept is not what makes comedy funny. If you want laughs without the dirty feeling you get after watching a Farrelly brothers movie, then this is the movie for you.

### 7. Spellbound

This film has all the ingredients of a great story: a compelling cast of characters, a mystery that will keep you on the edge of your seat, with plenty unexpected twists and revelations, and comic relief in just the right moments. What else could you expect from a documentary about the National Spelling Bee? This film provides a great insight into one of America’s idiosyncratic intellectual competitions.

### 6. The Triplets of Belleville

It seems easier to describe this French animated film as differing from typical American animation in its portrayal of world that is corrupt and cruel using caricature that makes no effort to be liked. Unfortunately, this doesn’t tell you what the film is actually like, or why it is worth seeing. I can say that it is upsetting and yet uplifting, demoralizing but with a happy ending, thoroughly kooky and unpredictable but also rather formulaic. And it has some of the most absurdly hilarious moments I have seen on screen. Imagine Tim Burton’s “The Nightmare Before Christmas” meets “Saving Private Ryan” plus “Chariots of Fire”. I challenge someone to come up with a better description.

### 10b. Love Actually

The quality of a romantic comedy is not based on the romance (which is always simple and contrived), but on the comedy (which can either entertain or fall flat). This film is rather literally “Notting Hill”, “Bridget Jones’ Diary”, and “About a Boy” rolled into one. It feels a little like several romantic comedy plot sketches spliced to make one whole movie, but the laughs are frequent and fulfilling (and the heartstring-tugging is fine too, if you’re into that sort of thing), so if you like romantic comedies, you’ll like this one.

### 8. The Italian Job

Clever heist movies are always fun. They temporarily put the viewer in a world outside the law that is full of excitement, wealth, romance, and where complex plans are always executed nearly perfectly. This was perhaps the second best con movie of the year (behind “Confidence”), but if you like car chases, this movie is the best of the year. While we’re on the subject, we can only hope that this movie will help the safer and more environmentally friendly Mini triumph over the popularity of the SUV.

### 5. Pirates of the Caribbean

Some genres seem to remain vital and prolific, unfortunately the swashbuckling adventure is not one of these. Luckily, Gore Verbinsky et al. have captured the humor, the excitement, the mystery, and, of course, the swashing of bucklers that once made this genre so popular. This movie is the heir to the throne of “The Princess Bride”. Plus, Johnny Depp proves that real men do indeed wear makeup.

## MY TOP-10 MOVIES OF THE YEAR – BY DAN MIRMAN (CONT'D)

### 4. Lost In Translation

A sweet and funny movie about a has-been actor and the wife of a photographer who find themselves lost (like Dante at the beginning of the Inferno) in Tokyo. The set-up seems perfect for a cynical story about unhappy marriages and infidelity while traveling, but the brilliance of this movie is that it rises above such formulaic depictions. The realism of writer/director Sofia Coppola's story stems from the subtlety and complexity of the characters' confusion, not from something as cheap and theatric as sex with a stranger.

### 2. A Mighty Wind

A hilarious film from the people that brought us such comedy gems as "Best In Show" and "This Is Spinal Tap". This mockumentary tells the stories of folk musicians as they prepare to perform in honor of a recently deceased concert promoter. This fabulously funny film pokes fun at folkies without being mean-spirited ("Best In Show" did the same for dog show fanatics, but I think "Waiting for Guffman" was a little rough on the community theater actors). Warning: if you have never heard American folk music, this film may seem confusing, nonsensical, and perhaps boring.

### 3. The Station Agent

It is wonderful when very "unrealistic" characters or situations are able to elucidate "real life". The hero of this film is Finbar McBride, a train fanatic with dwarfism who just wants to be left alone. Fin tends to attract attention and comments that are unpleasant at best and more commonly offensive. This film's greatest triumph is in the depiction of the subtle differences between mean-spirited gawking and good-hearted attempts at friendship. And the importance of being sensitive to those differences.

### 1. Lord Of The Rings: The Return of The King

(Caveat: ranking LOTR:ROTK #1 reflects my consideration of the nearly ten-hour-long trilogy as a whole rather than this installment on its own.) Peter Jackson's movie version of UK's best-loved novel (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/bigread/vote/>) accomplished what I thought was impossible: making the screen version match the complexity and beauty of the imagined world of Middle Earth. This monumental project is characterized by excellent performance in all aspects of filmmaking, from screenplay adaptation to acting, and most of all, in the domains of cinematography and special effects (including set, costume, and prop design). Using a combination of good-old-fashioned prop/set/costume making from raw materials and cutting edge digital effects, Peter Jackson and his crew have put on screen what was in the minds of millions of Tolkien readers. Rest assured that these films are not without their flaws: in some scenes the cheese runs thick enough to spread on crackers and I've been told that some of the battle sequences require a Y chromosome to be enjoyed. Nonetheless, this cinematic triptych tells the kind of fully immersive magical epic that is the pinnacle of storytelling, both in print and on screen.

## WINE REVIEW

Erin Ingvalson

Previous issues of this column have focused on the differences between red and white wines, how to find a good wine, and the merits of the new wines coming out of Australia. In this column I hope to discuss what is really of interest to most of my readers: finding a wine that will impress your friends.

There comes a time in everyone's life when he or she realizes it's time to grow up and show a little sophistication. No more of that Boone's Farm; you're looking for something that will show everyone how cosmopolitan your tastes have become. The problem is that it's difficult to choose a good wine when you're new to wine. That's where these columns come in.

In the first issue, you learned about white versus red wine. I'm going to assume many of you have by now tried several varieties of the two and come to the conclusion they could easily be reclassified as "gross" and "grosser." Though many "wine connoisseurs" prefer reds and use terms like "full-bodied," we all know that's just code for bitter and more bitter. What wine drinkers are really looking for is something sweet that won't take all day to find in the State Store.

The safest bet is the White Zinfandel and its cousins, the White Merlot and White Grenache. For your home collection, I recommend one of the boxed varieties such as Peter Vella. I find these boxes maintain the quality of the wine for a long period of time, allow for easy pouring, and are quite economical, offering about five liters for \$15.

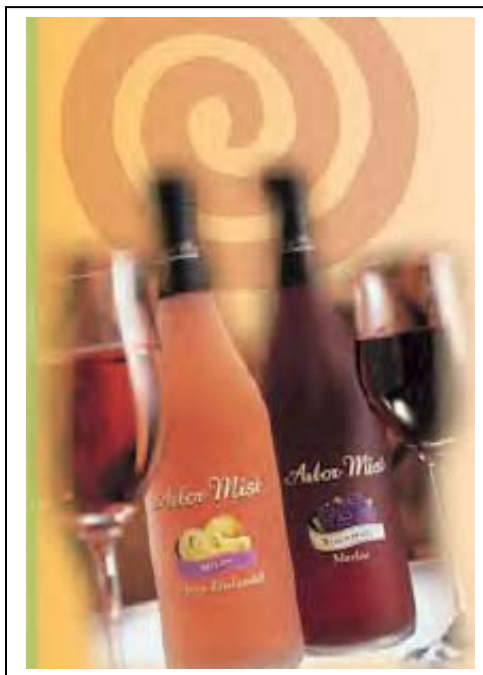


However, odds are that many people you are acquainted with will have a box of wine in their fridge for home use. So you'll need something a little more exotic for those casual get-togethers, something that will make your friends sit up and take notice. Fortunately, Arbor Mist has come to the rescue. Not only do they make the traditional White Zinfandel, they have also blended Chardonnay with a variety of fruits for a wonderfully sugary taste. Don't let the names of the wines frighten you. Though they may be the same as some of those bitter ones, the addition of fruit makes them much more palatable. I have noticed that other wineries are trying to impinge on the success of Arbor Mist, but personally I have not yet found anything that compares to their quality.

The one downside to Arbor Mist is the screw-cap. While for your casual gatherings the

emphasis will be on the selection and flavor of the wine you offer, for those formal dinner parties you'll need to take the class up just a notch. Many wineries do produce a White Zinfandel that comes with a cork. Corked wines are often a little more expensive, and expensive wines tend not to be as sweet—as you've by now noticed—but the impression makes up for the lack of flavor. In general, the cheaper the wine, the sweeter; when the price goes up, the flavor goes down. Personally, my favorites are Kiona and Martin & Weyrich Moscato.

Finally, when you need something more than a White Zinfandel, there are other varieties of sweet wine available, though they tend to be more expensive. Look for ice wines, varieties with the word "Late" in the title, and Rieslings. But be careful with Rieslings: many of the German varieties have a more fruity flavor than a straight sweet taste. It will take some trial-and error to get this worked out. Look on the back for the sugar percentage to find what's best for you.



Recommendations:

- Peter Vella White Zinfandel (their White Grenache is also good) \$15
- Arbor Mist Peach Chardonnay \$4
- Arbor Mist Blackberry Merlot, which proves a red wine can be good \$4
- Gossamer Bay White Zinfandel, \$8
- Kiona Reisling \$7
- Martin & Weyrich Moscato \$10

## A brief treatise on the ferocious, ambiguous duck-rabbit

By Anthony Cate



Figure 1: The ambiguous duck-rabbit

The ambiguous duck-rabbit's significance is lost on many new students of psychology, who view it as silly and obvious. What does this have to do with psychology, anyway? It's just a creature that is simultaneously a duck and a rabbit.

Wrong! *These* are creatures that are both ducks and rabbits:



The duck-rabbit's importance is that it is either a duck *or* a rabbit. It was introduced by Jastrow in 1900, and Wittgenstein was one of many who adopted the illustration to argue that objects and concepts are well-bounded entities, and that it is impossible to see the duck and the rabbit at the same time.

The purpose of this treatise is to draw attention to the grave problem of introductory students' nonchalance towards duck-rabbits. Yes, grave, since a new and deadly strain of duck-rabbit has recently been discovered, one, which may cause bodily harm to the unwary intro psych student: the ferocious, ambiguous duck-rabbit.

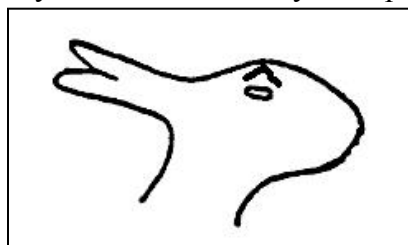
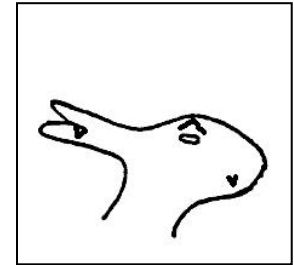


Figure 2: The ferocious, ambiguous duck-rabbit

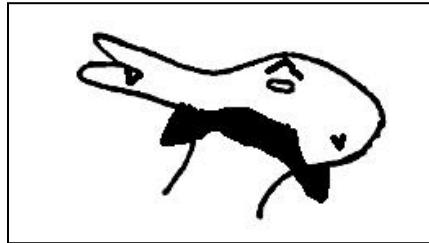
This beast is a double threat in the true sense of the term, being ferocious in both of its incarnations. In fact, this is the most psychologically interesting quality of the ferocious, ambiguous duck-rabbit (hereafter FADR); while its identity is ambiguous, its ferocity is not. No matter which identity the FADR may assume, its ferocity is immediate perceptible and threatening.

How can it be that the order, class, phylum, genus and species of a beast are unclear while its malignant intent is unwavering and eternal? It is too bad that neither Jastrow nor Wittgenstein is here to aid us in our hour of peril. The best we can do is increase awareness of the FADR. To this end, I present a catalogue of known subspecies. Figure 2 illustrates the most widespread strain of FADR, but there are others. Take note that even as the level of ferocity increases, it becomes no less ambiguous.



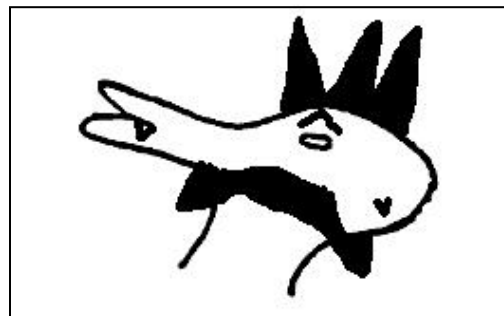
**Figure 3: Fanged FADR**

Monty Python fans know the dangers of discounting the huge fangs, let alone the earrings.



**Figure 4: Hipster FADR**

Beware the Squirrel Cage! Note that there is a slight hint of ambiguity between the fangs and the earrings. Perhaps a weakness?



**Figure 5: '77 style street-punk FADR**

The last strain depicted is of course the most virulent.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that it was probably negligence on the part of psychology instructors that led to the proliferation of a new and ferocious breed of ambiguous duck-rabbit. Let us never forget to pass on the knowledge handed down to us by Jastrow.

## THURSTON'S CORNER!

by Louis Leon Thurstone



I have been sitting in the lonelier half of your "lounge" for years now, and I've had to put up with your endless banter about "models," "processing" and "neurons." You are no better than the early psychophysicists, with their mania for computing the limen of lifted weights to two decimal places with a standard stimulus of one hundred grams! Give me scales, I say, scales that measure interesting psychological dimensions, like attitudes towards patriotism, Sunday observance, the church, war, prohibition, unions, communism, public office, immigration, the Germans, or evolution!

But enough. Wisdom it is that you need, and wisdom is what you will have. Ply me with your questions, and hold back no humdingers!

**I heard that Prof. Bingham brought you to CMU in part because he was impressed with your interest in the psychology of melody.**

This is true, although I consider it to have been a diversion of my tawdry youth. I was considering writing a master's thesis on the Hindu Ragas, but to tell the truth this was as much the result of a night of wild indulgence as it was my fascination with the way their melodies cover a very small pitch excursion. Here is a picture of me in those heady days, and you can see for yourself my natty togs. Even so, I was no equal to Prof. Bingham (who still lives next to me in the lounge), who worked with Stumpf on the problem, and had collections of exotic music on phonograph records, no less!



**You seem very bitter with the psychology faculty. How about the grad students?**

I recall one of my first impressions of graduate students of psychology. When they were asked a question, they would start to talk fluently, even when they obviously knew nothing about the

subject. Granted, this was in Chicago, but at least that city can win a damn hockey game. At the University there I took a class called advanced educational psychology, and I used to wonder what the elementary course could be like if the course that I was taking was called "advanced." Stop your complaining, you mental liliptians!

**One of your first jobs was working in Thomas Edison's laboratory. What influence did this have on your psychology work?**

Mostly it taught me how to fail and persevere. For every experimental failure Edison seemed to produce three more experiments to try. Also, Edison seemed to have an absolutely endless array of stories; very few of them were fit for publication.

**Can we hear one of those stories?**

No, but you might be in luck next month, at Kotovsky's Corner.

**Can we at least hear some more gossip about your mentors?**

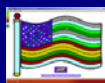
Very well. Although you could be asking me about multiple-factor analysis, you ingrates. I was an undergraduate at Cornell, and I heard a lecture by Titchener. I remember being interested in his lecture but curious about his extremely formal and pompous manner. If that's not a put down, I don't know what is! Why, the man wore his silly robes everywhere!



**What do you have to do to get on the lounge wall?**

To teach is probably still the best way to master one's subject and to recognize its major research possibilities. Seldom is a young researcher destined to professional recognition if he withdraws from teaching immediately after the completion of the doctorate. I confess that I was also gifted at birth with a striking comeliness.

Please note that Prof. Thurstone has blatantly copied 90% of this month's text verbatim from L. L. Thurstone. In E. G. Boring, H. S. Langfeld, H. Werner, & R. M. Yerkes (Eds.), *A history of psychology in autobiography, Vol. IV*, pp. 295-321. Worcester, MA: Clark University Press.



### **Impressions on Snow By Cibu Thomas (India)**

For a good two decades, the word 'snow' for me was a noun - a precipitation in the form of small white ice crystals formed directly from the water vapor in the air at a temperature of less than 32°F or 0°C. Snow was pretty (See Jim Reeves, circa 1960, for a review). It stood for everything that was pure and unique. No wonder Santa lives in the North Pole, I said to myself. We even placed balls of cotton with the uttermost care on our Christmas trees as a gentle reminder of what we were missing.

It also seemed like the best fun you can have with a lot of clothes on, thanks to some corny Indian TV commercials for cold cream. Life should be good with snow, I thought. It was everything that spoilsport rain was not. It rains like in Noah's times where I come from. In fact, one of the first nursery rhymes I learnt was: Rain, rain, go away; Come again another day. I forget the rest of it, but you get the picture. I wished one day, just for one day, God will blow a fuse on the thermostat up there and change the rain to snow. Oh how I wished for snow! And then I got to Pittsburgh.

It was quite alright in the beginning. It felt like some of the relationships I've had with the opposite sex. We both had our space, and life was indeed good. I wrote to all back home about the lovely time I was having with snow, and chuckled to myself thinking of all my friends cursing the rain. The closest they would ever get to snow was under "S" in the Webster dictionary, I snickered. Little did I know that the gods of irony were laughing their guts out.

On an unusually cold January night, I discovered that the word 'snow' can also masquerade as a verb (1): a descent or shower of snow crystals (2): a mass of fallen snow crystals. This shocking discovery coupled with 12 inches of snow and bone chilling wind felt like air-raided sirens inside my head. I pondered if this was indeed the gnashing of teeth that the Bible promises sinners (Revelations; Job). And then in a moment of exceeding clarity that was last associated with some suspicious looking mushrooms in my omelette, I learned the truth about snow.

Snow was not unique. And even if it was, who gives a, well, you know what. They don't have 50 names for snow in Alaska. It's just a stupid story perpetrated by some twits who wouldn't know snow if it came and bit them. And all that rubbish about Santa – a blatant lie (but see Will Ferrell in Elf for a persuasive counter argument, 2003)! Snow stops traffic. Snow spoilt my favorite rug as I unwittingly walked on it with my shoes on. Snow got in my eyes, ears, nose and mouth. Snow makes me walk like a penguin and almost gave me a pelvic fracture. Snow was the sole architect behind my many futile trips to the Waterfront looking for thermal everything. Snow reminds me of dandruff (okay, bad one. I'll strike that out). Soon, the word snow became another four-letter expletive in my dictionary. I despised it with the little energy I had left after walking two blocks up Squirrel Hill. I had it with snow!

My frontal lobes told me that it was pointless getting mad at snow, and so I decided to get even. But what can one do to wipe the silly grin off an inanimate object, I wondered. I jogged my

memory for all the fantastic techniques of evil geniuses in movies like the Austin Powers and the James Bond series. Soon a light turned on inside my head. One day, I waited patiently for the snow to do its little number. After a while, I collected a pan full of snow, boiled the crap out of it and made tea with it. Let me tell you, whoever said revenge tastes good when it's cold was so wrong.

Things have changed since the tea incident. Today, as I think of the little molecules of water conspiring and getting ready to shriek towards me like a banshee, I smile benevolently the way a teacher does at a mischievous child. Living with snow hasn't been easy, and it won't be. But I don't let that bother me too much. I have learnt the Zen approach towards snow, and of course, rain too.

## THE TOP 10 SIGNS YOU'RE NOT IN ANYMORE.....

**From:** Canadian\_Gradstudent <lonely\_maple\_leaf@landofthefree.usa>

**Date:** Thu Feb 5, 2004 1:29:05 PM US/Eastern

**To:** Canadians@back\_home.ca

**Subject:** Top 10 Signs You're Not in Canada Anymore:

Hello All,

Well I hadn't intended to write a cheesy mass email, but certain things just struck me as fitting into this format (with apologies to David Letterman)

10. No Nova electric hand dryers, paper towel everywhere.
9. Debit and credit the same card, PIN code for debit, sign for credit, but comes immediately out of same account.
8. Molson and Labatt's are imports.
7. Armed security guards at the grocery store.
6. Large screen TVs in dance clubs show football game behind girls dancing on speakers.
5. Canned mandarin oranges in salad.
4. Grad Student event serves unlimited beer on tap, no one drunk.
3. Everyone has a car, walking 20 minutes to school seen as crazy.
2. Prof studies multiplication of large numbers, finds application in teaching soldiers in US Army to search for land mines.

And the number 1 sign you're not in Canada:

1. They have a beer called Corona Light!

## ADVANCES IN BEHAVIORAL THERAPY: THE ITA ("INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANT") TEST



By Stefani Nellen (Germany)

Tests of all kinds are wonderful. GRE. TOEFL. TSE. International Students, like me, will surely feel the warmth of fond memories upon reading these acronyms- each of which referring to yet another variation of aptitude test, another hurdle to be overcome on the way to some academic institution in an English speaking country. Personally, I have no problems with aptitude tests. Elite institutions like CMU should reserve

the right to a strict admission policy, and the task of selecting among applicants from a wide variety of colleges, not to mention countries and continents demands some sort of standardized measure of intellectual brilliance. Also, some of my dearest personal memories are associated with taking these tests. For example, I will never forget how my friend Sonja and I left from Heidelberg at 4 a.m. in order to make it to the

TSE (test of Spoken English), which was held in some cryptic faraway place at 8 am. There was a closer location, but if you schedule your appointment only 6 weeks in advance, you have to take what's available. Anyway, at some point on the way we were stuck in a cornfield behind some agricultural vehicle, and while time was passing by, and I was busy reconciling my mind with the \$250 I had paid for the 20 minutes it takes to do this test, Sonja and I felt swept away by that kind of reckless joy that can only be evoked by finding yourself in an utterly absurd situation...it turned out, by the way, that the test location would have been in the basement of some hospital that specialized in treating young children with cancer. When we tried to take the TSE a second time (wisely traveling to the location by train), we discovered that the location had moved to the basement of a parking garage. It stank of gasoline, and the light in the bathrooms was of that white-blue sort that is designed to make your veins invisible under your skin, effectively preventing junkies from going about their business. The test administrator, who seemed to dwell in this place, smelled of alcohol and, with hoarse voice, connected the five brave souls that had arrived from all corners of Germany to the recording equipment. Does this description seem exaggerated? It is the truth! I never would have made these experiences, were it not for the TSE. The \$500 were well worth it. But I also like thinking back on the GRE (\$300). Knowing that I was suffering through the same ordeal as my future transatlantic fellow graduate students gave me a sweet sensation of bonding with them. The test itself is also quite fascinating: for a non-native speaker, the language part seems to be an outrageously funny mixture of a guessing-game and those Dadaist Manifestos from the 20's. The quantitative part, on the other hand, was something of a sobering experience: calculating the relative volume of potato-bags and milk jugs for what seemed like 10 hours was certainly a good antidote to my high-flying plans for graduate school. I repeat: I bear no grudge against these tests—I wouldn't have missed them for the world. For this reason, I was worried when I arrived at CMU: Was that all? No more tests? Ever again?

Luckily, there is the ITA. The International Teaching Assistant Test, a kind of oral exam that places the applicant in an ad-hoc "please improvise" kind of teaching situation. When I was informed that I had to pass this test in order to be permitted to interact with Undergraduates,

I was thrilled. There is nothing like a new challenge. For some time I was worried that it wouldn't be the "real thing", but the instructor at the "ITA information session" quickly did away with these doubts.

"At Pitt, they had this TA from Asia who couldn't speak English, and he was supposed to teach the calculus class. As a result, the entire class sued Pitt, because they hadn't learned the material. They won the lawsuit, and Pitt had to pay them back the tuition for the past semester. Of course, CMU doesn't want this to happen. This is why you have to take this test". Wow! Here I was, feeling quite inconspicuous, but in reality I was a walking danger, both for the tender, impressionable mind of undergraduates, who would be forced to waste their time with lawsuits (what a pity that this had to happen with a trivial and popular topic, such as calculus, too!), and for CMU, which would be sued into bankruptcy because of people like me.

Luckily, we are given the chance to learn and improve. Just taking the ITA without preparation is clearly discouraged. Instead, multiple seminars are open for applicants, where instruction in basic speaking and teaching skills are offered, along with- "cultural skills". Cultural skills? Of course! As we were told, some countries prefer a more formal way of teaching. Some TA's might arrive at CMU wearing jackets to class, insisting on being addressed by their last name and expecting peace and quiet in the classroom. Beware: "This will not win you any respect with undergrads". Therefore, the way we adapt our teaching style to the "American Way" will be part of our evaluation in the ITA, for our own good.

I left the information session deeply worried. Did the telephone conversation during which I had scheduled my test date count as a "placement interview", according to our instructor essential for correctly assessing my language level, and thus preventing me from trying to take the ITA in vain?

Eventually, I decided to just go through with it and take the test the following morning. After all, they couldn't forbid me. And it lasted 10 unremarkable hours. I did survive, and have one more story to tell.

Doing away with irony for a moment: There is not one day going by during which I don't feel privileged to attend CMU, and I always felt treated with respect. The ITA episode was the one slightly bizarre exception to this rule—perhaps the instructions sessions preceding these tests should be held in a more neutral way.

## Guess the Screen Name

While searching the mail room, we came across this list of the faculty members' Instant Messenger screen names. See if you can figure out which name belongs to which faculty member.

Faculty Member	Screen Name
1. John Anderson	A. berkeleyup
2. Marlene Behrmann	B. CLIfounder
3. Sharon Carver	C. cnbcman
4. Patricia Carpenter	D. coldgiver1947
5. Peggy Clark	E. communalXchange
6. Sheldon Cohen	F. cowswithwheels
7. Brooke Feeney	G. devSciguy
8. Dick Hayes	H. drcatalysis254
9. Vicki Helgeson	I. fmridude
10. Lori Holt	J. gerbilchick99
11. Marcel Just	K. germanlover
12. David Klahr	L. headhoncho346
13. Bobby Klatzky	M. kidsschoolrox
14. Ken Koedinger	N. lives4actR
15. Ken Kotovsky	O. morningperson87
16. Marsha Lovett	P. neglectdiva
17. Brian MacWhinney	Q. noam_imperson8or
18. Jay McClelland	R. pdpXpert1962
19. David Plaut	S. puzzleguru8110
20. David Rakison	T. sacLadee
21. Lynne Reder	U. sClaus2803
22. Mike Scheier	V. stat2tor
23. Bob Siegler	W. wineguy331

Sweet Days of Youth....

Can YOU find a faculty member in the photo below, circa 1960? It shows the Dollar Bay girls hockey team.

Email your answer to [snellen@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:snellen@andrew.cmu.edu) or [jknihnic@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:jknihnic@andrew.cmu.edu)

Your prize will be a Tiramisu recipe from Stefani. If you can guess where Dollar Bay is, Stefani will make the Tiramisu for you, so try hard!



## Special Thanks to...



- David Rakison
- Lori Holt
- Sheldon Cohen
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- Cibu Thomas
- Miriam Rosenberg-Lee
- Julie Booth
- Sarah Novak
- Anthony Cate
- Erin Ingvalson
- Gary Lupyan
- Elida Laski
- Dan Mirman
- Niels Taatgen
- Hedderik Van Rijn

### Answers to Miriam's Brainteasers:

1. Three minutes. It takes each cat three minutes to kill each rat.
2. Two and a half cents.
3. Mother.
4. Neither; 8 and 8 are still 16.
5. Only dead men have widows.

## The People have Spoken!

Thank you for your responses to last issue's PsyCoke survey. As a result of your feedback, we will be offering Dr. Pepper, Cherry Coke, and Diet Cherry Coke. Due to lack of interest, we will no longer be offering Orange Soda.



Stay tuned for these exciting changes in the Coke Machine.