



Spook I by Lyonel Feininger

Food for Thought

Insights into the Cognitive Sciences

By Jeni Fan

Recent work in the Cognitive Sciences field has revealed that "expertise" may not lead to better predictions or judgments. The field of judgment and decision making sciences (JDM) studies the accuracy, speed, and consistency of choices made by "experts" in their respective fields. As it turns out, experts usually have highly sophisticated mental links for their area which processes information in an almost automatic, pattern-recognition manner. For example, one study involving expert and novice chess players tested the participants' ability to memorize chess pieces on the board. The researches found that when the pieces are arranged as a result of a real game, the experts dramatically outperformed the novices in remembering where the pieces were. However, if the pieces were placed randomly, the experts did just as bad (if not worse) than the novices. Expert Chess players execute the first six to twelve moves by pure habit, or reflex to what the opponent is doing. An explanation proposed by decision theorists suggests that these experts have seen so many chess games that they have encoded a logical pattern of which they are unaware. When looking at the placement of pieces from a real game, the pieces follow a certain pattern of possible placements which is easily remembered

...continued on page 3...

In the Stacks:

'Brary Dawgs

By Arthur Miller

Alright "dear" reader...I see that you rebuff my suggestions (I use dear in quotations to signal contempt and sarcasm; I explain this because it's clear you never read and cannot pick up on such subtlety). I have implored you to rekindle the written-in-ink letter, sent in an envelope and thought out with more than just a passing care. You contacted me in droves, stating that your negative experience in 6th grade with your aloof penpal Schavitz Von Buntweisel has sworn you away from ever writing, preferring instead to e-mail. I begged you to pick up books and read, rather than be read to by some chump on a CD as though you were in a head injury rehabilitation facility. There, too, I received many distraught replies about your lack of time in this fast-food, super-sized world. "I must have Stephen King regale me of tales of incestuous cat vampires who stalk midgets with blue eyes, since I cannot possibly find time to read with my Axis and Allies tourney coming up and Fantasy Football to manage," you said.

Let me tell you something: You people disgust me. You have 8 hours free a day, yet you believe that your time is precious, valuable, and limited.

...continued on page 4...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Featured Articles

Fantasy Football Draft by James Schnedier, 3
Food for Thought by Jeni Fan, 1
In the Stacks: 'Brary Dawgs by Arthur Miller, 1
Passion is a Puzzling Game by Brett 4
Viva la USA by Susan M. F., 5

Assorted Contributions

Business Vernacular by Dan Fritz, 5
Letter from the Editor by Dan Fritz, 2
Movie Quoter by Dan Fritz, 2
Recipe of the Month by Elizabeth Carlson, 2
T.O.B.'s "Before-and-After" Corner by Susan Fritz, 2

Images

Cover Picture: Spook I by Lyonel Feininger

Newsletter Info

International Website Hits 2
Newsletter Ideas 2
Readers' Choice Awards 3
Stats 6



Movie Quoter

A Monthly Column

By Dan Fritz

Last issue we relived several classic quotes from Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. This month, we will delve into a quintessential coming of age film, namely Dead Poet's Society. Rather than merely quote you lines, I will provide some quick background information on a couple of the literary references in the film.

1) CHANTED BY THE BOYS AS THEY LEAVE THE CAVE:

"Then I saw the Congo, creeping through the black,
Cutting through the forest with a golden track"

This is a quote from the poem "The Congo: A Study of the Negro Race" by Vachel Lindsay. The poem has a very pronounced rhythm and is meant to be recited out loud. The poem contains margin notes dictating exactly how it should be read.

2) REFERENCED BY MR. KEATING, THE TEACHER:

"I sound my barbaric yawp over the rooftops of the world."

This particular quote is from the end of Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* and may be found more frequently using the word "roofs" rather than "rooftops." However, Whitman frequently made revisions to his poetry, lending to multiple versions in print.

To be continued next issue...☒

Letter from the Editor

The "wheel of time" turns, and fall approaches yet again. With the approach of fall, I am reminded of my time in Berlin and a trip to the Neue National Gallerie, where I saw the painting on the cover of this article. I have been searching for "Spuk I" (or "Spook I") since visiting that exhibit, and now the internet has made it possible. Here, I share it with you and tee up the coming fall changes. May you have the good fortune to find a long lost artifact.

Dan, editor@babbleonline.com ☒

Tower of Babble-ON's

'Before-and-After' Corner

By Susan Fritz

"Shower Caddy Shack"

☒

Recipe of the Month:

Apple Upside-Down Cake

By Elizabeth Carlson

1-cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup Flour
1 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
½ cup cold water
½ tsp vanilla
3-4 apples thinly sliced

Beat eggs & beat sugar into eggs. Sift flour, baking powder & salt together. Add to egg mixture alternately with water, add vanilla. Grease 8-inch pan & cover bottom with apples. Pan should be half filled with apples.

Topping:

1-cup sugar
1 TBSP cinnamon
Mix sugar & cinnamon together and sprinkle over apples.

Bake 350° for 45 minutes

Serve hot, plain or with whipped cream ☒

Newsletter Ideas

I'm looking for writers for the following topics:

1. Compare/contrast the Presidential candidates
2. Provide an academic review of Harry Potter
3. Compare/contrast *Lost* and *Gilligan's Island*
4. Wikipedia: Good or Evil?

Send your article ideas in today!

editor@babbleonline.com ☒

International Website Hits

Over the past year, Babble-Online has been viewed by people around the world. International website hits have come from the following 30 countries:

Argentina	Japan
Australia	Mexico
Belgium	Netherlands
Brazil	Norway
Canada	Poland
China	Romania
Colombia	Seychelles
Czech Republic	South Korea
France	Spain
Germany	Sweden
India	Switzerland
Indonesia	Taiwan
Ireland	United Arab Emirates
Israel	United Kingdom
Italy	Venezuela

A special greeting goes out to our fans in Germany and Seychelles who consistently view the website. Keep the submissions (and the web hits) coming! ☒

...*Food for Thought, p. 1...*

by the expert. However, when pieces are scattered about the board in a randomly generated pattern, the placements make no logical sense and are therefore difficult to encode.

Along the same line of research, cognitive scientists have found that experts are especially bad at picking out the most diagnostic information. That is, highly experienced experts can not identify (with any accuracy) what was the discriminating piece of evidence that made them arrive at their specific decision. For example, if you ask a highly specialized physician what caused her to order her set of tests to test her patient for appendicitis, she may say it was due to the patient's symptom of a sore abdomen. However, a sore abdomen is not a determining factor for appendicitis, as it could have been indicative of a number of alternate hypotheses (e.g. indigestion, gallbladder infection, stomach ulcer, etc.). This is usually the result of an expert's pattern-recognition style of information encoding. She has probably seen innumerable cases of appendicitis, all with a certain combination of symptoms (some more diagnostic than others), but she is unable to tell you accurately which of the symptoms was the one she based her decision on. This research has tremendous applied implications since many programs designed to make diagnostic decisions are based on "expert" opinion. However, we must question the validity of these models if experts are unable to identify the true factors on which their judgments are based.

Stay tuned for more food for thought. ☒

Fantasy Football Draft

By James Schneider

Fantasy Football is here again, and it should come as no surprise to anyone that I have now ruined the season of yet another up-and-coming star. Reggie Bush, Heisman Trophy winner and future Canton alum, will suffer his first and likely only sub-1,000 yard season under my team's management. It's inevitable and sad. That's half the reason I could not pick Brandon Jacobs. On Andy's team, he will shine, but on mine, he will not.

Ditto Andre Johnson, who was spectacular last year and on Ben's team, but who was horrific under other squads.

It's a shame really. I like these players; I like fantasy football; and yet, I keep hurting them and myself.

The draft was one of the greatest we've ever had. So many people showed up, and it was an experience that we'll always remember. 14 teams, 14 GMs... how about that? And more impressive

...continued next page...

The Second Babble-ONline Readers' Choice Awards Issues 3.7 through 5.5

Welcome to the second Babble-ONline Readers' Choice Awards! The following submissions have been nominated by the Editor and his staff, based on the following criteria: ability to

- 1) teach something and/or show concepts in a new light,
- 2) inspire emotion and/or make the reader laugh,
- 3) conclude at the appropriate time and/or leave the reader wanting more,
- 4) generate reflection, and
- 5) flow smoothly and artistically.

Submissions have been nominated from content in issues 3.7 through 5.5. Please vote between now and October 19. You may vote for one nominee in each category, and you may write in a nominee for any category. Prior winners are included at the end of this column.

BEST MONTHLY SUBMISSION / SERIES

- A. "Adventures in Vexillology" (aka "Know Thy Flags") by Nate Herr (3.7, 3.9)
 - Examines various national flags and their histories
- B. "Wine Country" by Steven Fritz (3.8, 3.9, 3.10)
 - Features wine reviews and background into the winemaking process
- C. "Right Before I Got Kicked Off Kids Incorporated" by Nathan Beach (3.9, 3.10, 4.1)
 - Provides humorous anecdotes of fictitious kids who get kicked off said show

BEST NON-TEXT SUBMISSION

- A. "Waldo at Work" by Nathan Beach (4.1)
- B. "Playing in the Mud, Circa 1947" by Nathan Beach (4.4)
- C. "The Mustard Yellow Belt is Back! U-S-A U-S-A!" by Garrett Calderwood (5.5)

BEST FICTION / POETRY

- A. "A River Runs Through It" by Shasta Cumleighty (5.3)
- B. "Two Lost Shakespearean Sonnets Found" by Eisley von Ripple (3.9)
- C. "horizon blues" by Brett (5.5)

BEST ARTICLE

- A. "Steam Engine Nation" by Japheth Pennybaker (3.7)
 - Satirizes the fear of technology advances in a fictitious 19th century newsletter article
- B. "MTV Kills People" by James Schneider (3.9)
 - Comments on the social degradation due to MTV
- C. "Letters: Not Just Your Father's ABCs" by Arthur Miller (3.10)
 - Pontificates on the lost art of letter writing vis a vis emailing and text messaging
- D. "Cashing in on Intelligent Design" by Brett (3.10)
 - Criticizes the "charlatany" of Intelligent Design's proposals
- E. "A Letter from Santa" by Santa (4.4)
 - Emphasizes the non-religiosity of Christmas and the purportedly unwarranted aversion by non-Christian groups

Recap of previous winners:

- **Best Monthly Submission/Series:** "Urban Vernacular" by Amanda Hall (1.6, 2.2, 2.4, 3.5, 3.6)
- **Best Non-Text Submission:** "Mattlock" (Well-Hung Jury) by Grant Calderwood and Dan Fritz (3.4)
- **Best Article:** "This Flesh is Legal Tender" by Brett (2.2)

☒

...*Fantasy Football, from previous page...*

since we are scattered throughout the country—coast-to-coast with some BK in the Midwest action. Who would have thought more than one person would travel from Los Angeles to Philadelphia to draft for a league that costs no money.

That astounds everyone I tell. And it probably astounds your friends, too. How is it that we could love Fantasy Football so much, care about it so much, and yet not have a financial stake in it. And actually voting down such a suggestion.

The answer lies deeper. It's the comradery, the friendship. That is what fantasy football is all about. So even if Reggie Bush has his worst season yet and Andre Johnson goes back to his average ways on my squad, I will still love the "sport." I still hope to one day make the playoffs, even though it seems unlikely it'll ever happen. But I do hope—far more than that goal—to see my friends next year sometime in late August or early September. Live draft participation of all 14 teams. It's a precedent I would like to maintain. ☒

Passion is a Puzzling Game

By Brett

Attraction is a contextual jigsaw puzzle and the pieces are constantly shifting. Evidently she wishes the married man would call. Despite his love for his wife - a classic, comfortable pattern that insures stability - the object of his attraction lies in some pained unobtainable somewhere else. A whisper. The poet desires the young nymph who can't stop fantasizing about Mr. Rock Star who pays her no mind, his thoughts drifting towards that mysterious fan that appears every show in the front row - with her boyfriend. Everyone's idol is someone else's sucker. And even this slides.

She used to daydream about him and his haircut and his gait and their silly repartee. He inspired her in all directions, and it was a passion: painful in a productive way. She probably did extra cardio on account of him. They finally dated. She rid herself of him. And so it goes. She couldn't believe it. Someone who used to make her nervous and giddy on the telephone is now history discarded by the very hands that is used to tremble during their first email exchanges. He had a hard time

...continued next page...

...*In the Stacks, p. 1...*

Hey, bonehead, Warcraft does not make you a better, more well-rounded person. (It does however "attract" you to the ladies—notice, again, the quotes and refer to the above explanation.) Since you seem to have a difficult time finding books, I am here to tell you exactly where to go. No, not Barnes & Noble to flip through a \$50 picture book of the 25 most fascinating gas pumps of the North West. The library.

I know, I know. You say to yourself, "That word sounds so familiar. Wasn't that a class in middle school?" I slap you in the face verbally, but think about the last time you were in the library. Time's up. (Oh, and SMF—renting free library DVDs does NOT count.) It's been a while, hasn't it? I know it has. Almost as long as...oh never mind.

My question to you is: Why? Didn't you love running to the library as a child and thumbing through the shelves, hoping that Darcy McForester brought back that copy of Encyclopedia Brown you've been waiting for? Didn't you relish that crinkling sound that plastic sheath made as you sat down at the nearest reading table to peruse the new Christopher Pike, Nancy Drew, or Hardy Boys (depending on your generation)? Didn't you love the echoing sound of books being dropped onto tables or whispering companions, wanting to respect the unadulterated silent majesty? The answers you will give me is, "Yes, yes, and yes—I used to drop the dictionary to hear that thud of which you speak!"

Libraries date all the way back to Ancient Greece in the 5th century BC. You know the Ancient Greeks, right? They're just slightly famous for their wisdom, creativity, and inventiveness. Not too shabby for a background. I bet the doofus who invented Civilization has pimples, credit card debt, and his virginity still in tact. Libraries have spanned the generations and have been a time-honored way to gather archived studies, works of philosophy, and fictional stories for entertainment.

Of course, the library—being awesome—offers up more than just books. Its very definition, secondarily at least, includes information gathered in multiple forms, such as newspapers, microfiche, and journals. Libraries have been surprisingly malleable over time, integrating the latest technology. While some out there mourn the loss in many libraries of the Dewey Decimal System (sorry SMF), libraries refuse to be left behind. Libraries will not be ignored by you or become obsolete. Sure, you can research your pseudo-intellectual, plagiarized, post-graduate paper through the internet. But are you really that lazy? Do you really hate fresh air and human contact THAT MUCH? Perhaps you are just an agoraphobic nutcase who lives in someone's basement and picks your nose as your hobby. In that case, perhaps it's better for all involved, society if you will, if you stay in your basement. But, for the rest of you, saddle up.

I will close my remarkable essay with two of the top reasons to get a library card. No, they don't work at security checkpoints in the airport. The first reason is cost. Most of us don't download books online; therefore, we still throw money at B&N, half.com, The Strand, etc. The library's still free. In this time of charging for the public restroom (thanks France) and a lap dance (thanks Golden Lady), you can get a book for no cost. I know, I know. But how will you impress all the chicks that come over when your bookshelves are empty? Well, she already knows you are a dolt; maybe she likes that about you. So, proudly display your action figures on your bookshelves.

The second reason is the librarian. Ohhhhhhhhh, I met one in Chatanooga once....well, that's a story for another time. Suffice it to say I couldn't pass a card catalog without blushing for years after that experience, which is saying a lot since I was once married to Marilyn Monroe, damn it! Most men fantasize about cheerleaders, secretaries, French maids, Hooters girls. But you don't know what you're missing, let me tell you. Kramer on Seinfeld had it right, so innocent and oppressed are librarians—who's better to seduce? I realize this argument only appeals to men and lesbians, so I'll have a second reason for you ladies out there: smart guys go to the library. You'd be surprised what kind of relationship you can find there. I mean, when I am trolling for librarians and there are no young ones, I turn to the closest woman holding a copy of a half decent book, one without Fabio on the cover.

So, I say: Take back our libraries, my small-brained contemporaries. Rediscover a place you used to treasure as a child. Shake the cobwebs from your mind and find out just how much the library has to offer you. Just don't check out Salinger. I'll rip your nuts off. ☒

...*Passion, from previous page...*

believing it too, and this distress was invisible to the other girls who now idolized him.

Pain and longing are relative and belong to everyone. Juliana Hatfield understood this (see track #1 on Hey Babe. Mammoth Records 1992). The pitiful Werther and Sean Bateman selfishly couldn't recognize their affliction in those upon whom they themselves inflicted it. The world is littered with examples. My daydreams and desires for yon nameless women [they actually exist in Charlottesville. the structure put them there] may or may not partially inspire what you're reading right now. Meanwhile, I am most likely unintentionally causing one or more people grief. This will ALL change in a week. You are the Poet to someone's Actress and the Actress to someone's Count who has his own Whore (don't worry, she's got a Soldier). Unfortunately this knowledge isn't satisfying, and if anything, perhaps mildly disturbing for anyone counting Karma points in anticipation of cashing in on the debt they feel fate owes them.

Everybody shits. And it stinks. Most people put their pants on one leg at a time. Some people may even make gold records thereafter – but there are always others spinning platinum sound. It's in your nature to want the one you can't have and allow it to drive you mad, whether you wear this on your face is something only the object of your infatuation can discern, since to them, you are transparent, and to your worshippers you are an enigma, made more mysterious by your inexplicable longing for someone turning their back towards you. Facing away, the person whose advances you ignore is also probably guilty of not paying prompt attention to those aspiring to win her affection. How is a structure so simple so difficult to shatter? Just remember that in the cult of cool, everything is relative. You, as a person, are *in essence* no sexier or smarter or what have you than the next move in the game makes you. But neither are the rest of the players. Their position in any given turn decides all of that, and the puzzle is not a pyramid. Not too many people grasp this, though I personally don't know what this awareness ultimately begets. Nonetheless it's worth pondering in lieu of daydreaming. ☒



Another entry in the annals of Business Vernacular

By Dan Fritz, PM

Entry 1: “Murphy rears his ugly head”—Used commonly as a means of cautioning people. This is a reference to Murphy's Law that everything that can go wrong will.

Chuck: “If we don't have suitable tracking, we won't be able to know who is responsible for delivering each piece of the project.”

Barry: “You're right. Three months down the road Murphy will rear his ugly head, and we'll all be blamed for it.”

Entry 2: Downstream impact—A “downstream impact” is the effect that a change will have on the process or systems further down the process chain. For instance, if I delete a field in one system, a downstream impact might be that a connected system will return error messages every time I open the program.

Bobby: “We're ready to roll out this project when you sign off.”

Arnold: “I'm not signing off until we've vetted out the scenarios with downstream impacts. I need to know what supporting processes need adjustments.”

Until next time. ☒

Viva la USA

By Susan M. F.

Well, well. September 11, 2007. I just typed that and the automatic function on the computer finished it for me. If I didn't know better even the man inside this machine recognizes the significance of this day. But I'm not here to discuss its holiness or the fact that “America has forgotten what happened on that fateful day.” No, I'm not even going to expound upon the tragic pictures on the cover of my free *Daily News* and *AM New York* periodicals. Instead, I am going to revisit and slightly alter an old phrase of mine from my NYU days. This time, instead of the classic “obligatory self-effacement,” the phrase is “obligatory stone-faced moroseness.” If I spend just a little more time, I'm sure I could perfect this phrase and clarify it so you could understand. Instead, just picture the face you are obligated to make whenever you pass the guy at work whose wife just died. It's not a frown, there are no tears involved—it's just depressed emptiness. Sometimes sincere and sometimes forced, the expression is, simply put, null and void of happiness.

So, why not? It's not a happy day, but as for me, someone who watched it happen from a rooftop not too many blocks away, today I deferred to that famous fill-in-the-blank phrase: “If you don't go about your daily life, the terrorists win.” This could mean any number of things, of course. But for the actors I was around this morning, it apparently meant that you should not change your level of grouchiness or your inconsiderate ways on account of some national day of mourning-esque date on the calendar. It still didn't mean the guy I see every other day at Starbucks should give me a free scone. It seems only the tourists stopped by the memorial site not a half-mile from where I now live to pay there respects. In fact, the only change that appeared to be universal amongst New Yorkers today—native and non-native; fresh-off-the-boat and returnees like me—was that morose expression of obligation.

I don't mean to sound cold, unfeeling, and disconnected from the tragedy. It's just one observation of someone whose job is to observe. My only question is this: do the terrorists also win if I tell a joke on 9-11? “So this guy walks into a bar...” Viva la USA. ☒

NEWSLETTER STATS

Note: Margin of Error is +/- 3%. Does not include the current issue.

Top 10 Matrix

Weighted Rank	Names
N/A	Editor
1	Hall, Amanda
2	Schneider, James
3	Brett
4	Joisa, Srida
5	Calderwood, Grant
6	Ellinwood, Matt
7	Fritz, Susan
8	Fishman, Alan
9	Nagella, Naresh
10	Crocetto, Ryan

To the left is a weighted ranking of contributors based on their total words submitted, number of issues submitted to, and average words per submission. Not surprisingly, a strong correlation exists between the number of total words submitted and the weighted rank. A breakdown of top contributor by category is included below.

Top Rank by Category:
(excluding the Editor)

Most Words = Amanda Hall
Most Issues = Susan Fritz
Most Words/Issue = Srida Joisa



Compiled by:

Dan Fritz, Editor
in New York, NY
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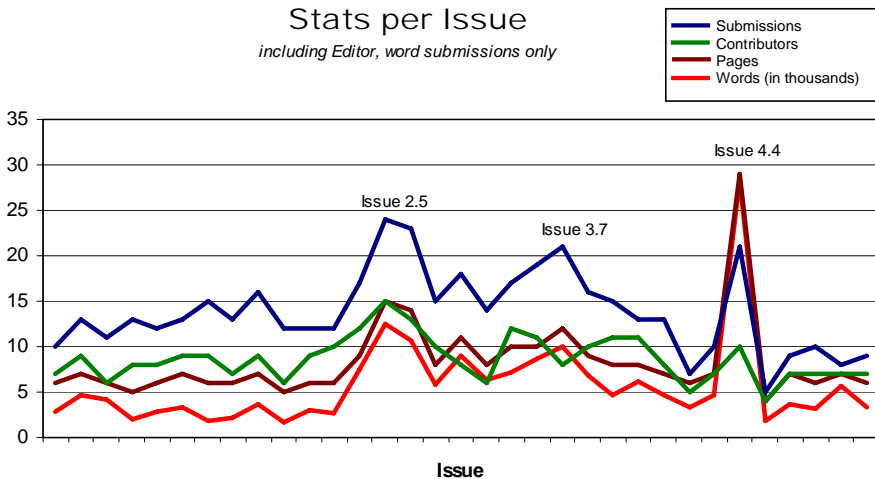
Contributors:

Elizabeth Carlson
Jeni Fan
Dan Fritz
Susan Fritz
Amanda Hall
Brett
James Schneider



Stats per Issue

including Editor, word submissions only



Life-to-Date Stats

Word Submissions only
Includes the editor
Does not include the current issue

Total Words: **188,523**
Total Pages: **274**
Total Contributors: **38**
Total Submissions: **456**

Average Words/Page: **688** (↓)
Average Words/Contributor: **4,961** (↑)
Median Words/Contributor: **1,129** (↑)
Average Words/Submission: **413** (↓)



Global Watch Map

BabbleON has attracted contributors and readers from around the globe. In addition to the U.S. writers from 16 different states (noted on the map), there have been international submissions from: Germany, Belgium, Italy, Iraq, and Australia.

Key: Yellow circles mark the residence of each contributor. ☒



Awards

These awards could be yours!

For Total Words Contributed:
1,000: **Little Scribbler**
5,000: **Babble-ONian**
10,000: **Grimmelshausen Award**
Each additional 10,000:
Proust BabbleStar

For Consistently Contributing:
Contributing to 10 issues or more: **Methuselah Award**

For Exceptional Content:
Alfred, Lord Tennyson Platinum Seal of Excellence:
To date, no one has won this.

Good luck, and keep the submissions coming! ☒