SATURDAY APRIL 15, 1:30 pm via ZOOM---SDIS Monthly Lecture

Fearless Women: Feminist Patriots from Abigail Adams to Beyoncé
by
Elizabeth Cobbs

Elizabeth Cobbs is a prize-winning historian, novelist, and documentary filmmaker. Author of nine books, she has served on the jury for the Pulitzer Prize and the Historical Advisory Committee of the U.S. State Department. She has written for the New York Times, Financial Times, and Washington Post.

A Stanford Ph.D., Cobbs holds the Melbern Glasscock Chair at Texas A&M. In 2020, the U.S. Army Signal Corps Association named her Brevet Colonel for unearthing the story of the “Hello Girls,” America’s first women soldiers. At age 23, Cobbs won the Rockefeller Youth Award for “a significant contribution to the well-being of mankind.”

When America became a nation, a woman had no legal existence beyond her husband. If he abused her, she couldn’t leave without abandoning her children. Abigail Adams tried to change this, reminding her husband John to “remember the ladies” when the Founders wrote new laws in 1776. He simply laughed—and women have been fighting for their rights ever since.

Fearless Women tells the story of women who dared to take destiny into their own hands. They were feminists and antifeminists, activists and homemakers, victims of abuse and path breaking professionals. Fueled by an unshakeable sense of right and wrong, and inspired by national ideals drawn from the anti-patriarchal writings of John Locke, they wouldn’t take no for an answer. In time, they carried the country with them.
The Scholars Notebook is issued monthly during the academic year, except December, by the San Diego Independent Scholars.
Editor: Arlene Gilbert

SDIS strives to promote opportunities for active learning and scholarship, for its members and for the San Diego community.

Public service activities of SDIS include free public lectures and cooperative educational projects with other organizations. SDIS members enjoy a variety of regular discussion groups, presently via Zoom.

SDIS, established in 1982, was instrumental in the founding of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, an organization that unites eight similar organizations and has international membership.

For more information see https://sdscholars.org or contact sdisask@gmail.com

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APRIL 2023—Contents

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SDIS Events Calendar
At its April meeting, the Biosciences Group will return to the topic of sleep and how various neural processes during sleep can influence brain health, memory consolidation, the emotional loading of specific memories, and creativity.

The sleep stage characterized by rapid eye movement (REM) often attracts the most attention because it is associated with classic dreaming, the strengthening of memories, and the alteration of mental associations. The other parts of sleep are sometimes lumped together as non-REM stages, even though many different and seemingly incompatible processes occur during non-REM. Recently, however, non-REM has been better explained in a formulation that emphasizes two function-based stages, as described below.

In this model, the first non-REM sleep stage, slow-wave sleep, acts primarily to remove molecular debris and toxic products from the brain via a transport system called the glymphatic system. This process refreshes the brain and prepares it for subsequent sleep stages, as well as the following day. The second function-based part of non-REM is “the transition to REM”, which is marked by brief pulses of brain activity called sleep spindles. Sleep spindles play a role in the transfer of newly learned information into long-term memory storage, a process called memory consolidation.

In the Bioscience Group’s discussion on April 14 at 1:00, we will focus on non-REM sleep, especially slow-wave sleep’s importance for restoring the brain’s chemical balance and removing toxic metabolic products, including beta amyloid and brain “tangles,” which are present in Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative diseases. We will also consider the reported advisability of going to bed at approximately the same time each night, to get optimal efficiency of the first slow-wave sleep cycle, which appears to act in cooperation with the body’s biological clock to yield a burst of growth hormone and other repair-related compounds.

In subsequent sessions, we will return to the coordination of various sleep stages and how the combination of REM with the “transition to REM” influences creativity and memory.

If you are interested in sleep or, more generally, in questions that link psychology with neuroscience, we welcome you to the Biosciences Group. For information, contact Dorothy Parker or sdisask@gmail.com

Dorothy Parker

READING EXPERIENCE

10 a.m. — Third Monday — April 17 --- via Zoom

We will discuss works of the late author Maurice Sendak, namely these three both written and illustrated by him: WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE, IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN, and OUTSIDE OVER THERE. Sendak began his career as an illustrator of works by others. The March selection was the first in Reading Experience’s attention to the theme of “Authors/Illustrators” focusing on two works by the early 20th century French aviator Antoine de St. Exupery, WIND, SAND AND STARS and his more well-known THE LITTLE PRINCE.

Gerry Horwitz
WORKS IN PROGRESS

3 p.m.— Thursday — April 20 — via Zoom

- Is there a hidden meaning behind “Conjurer,” a painting found in Saint-Germaine-en-Laye, France, and traditionally attributed to Hieronymus Bosch?
- Can one deduce the identities of any of the persons depicted in the painting?
- Is “Conjurer” indeed an autograph of Bosch?

These questions were addressed in a spirited session of Works in Progress on March 16, 2023, where Diana Withee presented a longer version of a paper that she will read this May at the 5th International Bosch Conference at the Jheronimus Bosch Art Center in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands. To support her novel interpretation of the painting’s meaning, which is based on the identity of a Bosch patron and others who participated with him in an important event during Bosch’s lifetime, Diana compared the faces of figures in the painting with contemporaneous portraits of the persons that those figures likely depict. She also argued that the painting is an original, and not a copy, and that the best portraits are credibly from Bosch’s own hand, although some minor portions may be by others in his workshop.

Since her talk at the conference are limited to 25 minutes, Diana solicited comments from the Works in Progress audience concerning what parts of the longer version were most convincing and what sections could be mentioned more briefly. This engendered a lively discussion that included several helpful suggestions and much enthusiasm.

At our next meeting at 3:00 on April 20, Jaime Pineda and Julia Stroud will team up. Jaime will first describe his new book Controlling Mental Chaos: Harnessing the Power of the Creative Mind (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, in press). Jaime is now working on a play related to that book and will distribute the first 40 pages of the draft play to group members. In Julia’s part of the session, she will use that play as an example of her approach as a “book doctor,” especially noting whether each character’s personality and reactions make sense to her as a psychotherapist.

Dorothy Parker
PHYSICAL SCIENCES GROUP

2 p.m. — Wednesday — April 12 — via Zoom

At our next meeting, which will be held on April 12, at 2pm, we will continue with Chapter 6, exploring the annihilation of an electron positron pairs with enough energy to create a muon antimuon pair, in great detail, leading to specific formulas in the center of mass system. In doing this we will average over initial spin states and sum over final spin states, leaving terms involving traces in spinor space. We then use the trace theorems to get solutions in terms of the various momenta of the particles.

We will also explore extensions to high enough energies to create quark antiquark pairs, and examine the changes that need to be made to accommodate that system. We will explore how the high energy limits give us the ability to experimentally demonstrate a pretty validation of quantum chromodynamics (QCD). Finally, we will explore spin dependent effects in the pair annihilation-creation systems.

Alvin Halpern
The Film Group meets Wednesday, April 5 at 10am to view The Duke, a 2021 British fact-based movie in which a 60 year old man (Kempton Benton) steals Goya’s 1812 portrait of the Duke of Wellington from London’s National Gallery. Starring Jim Broadbent and Helen Mirren, this true story reveals that Kempton is an eccentric activist who stole the painting in 1961 to try to get the government to provide free TV licenses for seniors. As a working man, Kempton’s fervent opinions about the rights of the lower class and the elderly led his activism.

Last month, on Wednesday, March 1, the Film Group watched Vincente Minelli’s directorial debut, Cabin in the Skies, a 1943 MGM musical with a all African American cast. The brilliance of the starring and featured players stood out against the stereotyping of Black culture. As Ethel Waters sang beautifully, Lena Horne belted her songs amazingly, and Eddy "Rochester" Anderson showed his perfect comedic timing, the film seemed to patronize and trivialize what people of color had to live with in the unintegrated south. One member, after the meeting was over, had the thought that this and several other MGM movies featuring all-Black casts made during the war, were created less for general audiences and perhaps more for those soldiers of color who fought--even as the armed services segregated them--in special units in Europe and the Pacific.

Barbara Heckler and Ken Krauss

The SDIS Inside Politics Zoom Study Group meets on the second Saturday of every month to discuss the hot political topics of the day. The April class meets on Zoom on Saturday, April 8, at 10:00 a.m., and the lead topic is the Manhattan District Attorney obtaining from the grand jury an indictment of ex-President Donald Trump for paying hush money to a porn star.

This is the first time a U.S. ex-President has ever been indicted. It is particularly significant since Trump is the only person yet to announce his candidacy for the 2024 Republican nomination for President. Many experts on both sides of the aisle have expressed legal problems with the case being prepared by the D.A., who has responded by stating he would not be intimidated into dropping his plans to indict Trump. During our Study Group Zoom meeting, we will discuss many of the issues raised by these experts, as well as the many cases against Trump lined up by other states and the Federal Government. In addition, we have about 14 other political topics to discuss that day. Please join us on Zoom if you would like to participate in a lively and spirited political discussion.

Al Korobkin
April 2023

SDIS meetings and events listed are via Zoom

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