Saturdays’ Notebook
San Diego Independent Scholars (SDIS)
March 2024

Saturday March 16, 1:30 pm via ZOOM
SDIS Monthly Lecture

No Self No Problem:
How Neuropsychology is Catching Up with Buddhism

Chris Niebauer, PhD

Chris Niebauer earned his Ph.D. in cognitive neuropsychology at the University of Toledo, specializing in the differences between the left and right sides of the human brain. He is a former professor at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania, where he taught courses on consciousness, mindfulness, left- and right-brain differences, and artificial intelligence.

His latest book is No Self No Problem: How Neuropsychology is Catching Up with Buddhism.

From the book: “Our association of our true self with the constant voice in our head is an instance of mistaking the map (the voice) for the territory (who we really are). This error is one of the biggest reasons the illusion of self is so difficult to see.”

For your convenience, click the following link to join the zoom webinar.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83716864012?pwd=bUhjSUlrRFpDYmVKTGRMUExjRFZhdz09
Meeting ID: 837 1686 4012 --- Passcode: SDIS
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

SCHOLAR’S NOTEBOOK
March 2024—Contents

Lecture: No Self No Problem: How Neuropsychology is Catching Up with Buddhism ........................................1

About SDIS ..................................................2

SDIS Study Groups
Biosciences Group and Works in Progress ......................3
International Affairs Group .................................4
Reading Experience .......................................4
Colloquy Café ..............................................5
Physical Sciences Group .................................5
Inside Politics ..............................................6
Film Group ................................................7

Calendar ..................................................8
Please check announcements for information related to possible sign-up requirements and specifics about meeting locations.

Please note our new group, “International Affairs.” See page 4.
BIOSCIENCES
BIOSCIENCES GROUP

Paused until September 2024

For logistical and health reasons, the Biosciences Group is in recess until September of 2024. In the meantime, the group will keep in contact through email discussions and exchanged references concerning topics of mutual interest.

Dorothy Parker

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WORKS IN PROGRESS GROUP
1:00-2:30 Thursday, March 21 both in-person and via Zoom

The Works in Progress Group meets monthly in the North University Community Library at 8820 Judicial Drive in San Diego, CA 92122. These sessions, which are open to the public, are at 1:00 on the 3rd Thursday of each month (September through May). The next meeting, on March 21, features:

Hecho en Mexico: Mexican Folk Art
Getting the Book Published

Grace Johnson

Long-time SDIS member Grace Johnson is Curator Emerita of Latin American Collections at the San Diego Museum of Man (now named Museum of Us). Johnson graduated with a BA in the Department of Anthropology and a MA in the Department of Latin American Studies from San Diego State University.

Her book, Hecho en Mexico: Mexican Folk Art, is based on an exhibition she created for the Museum of Man. It is designed for both travelers and persons interested Mexican art. Grace will use this book as the springboard for a discussion on the process of book publishing.

We encourage you to attend in person because of the social interactions and informal discussions before and after the presentation. If unable to get there, the Zoom link https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83716864012?pwd=bUhiSUlRFpDYmVKTGRMUExjRFZhdz09

“Mysticism and Art” was the topic of last month’s Works in Progress. The presenter, Caroline Morse, has developed a unique series of participatory discussions and art experiences related to mysticism. The February event focused on Dag Hammarskjöld, who is known for his pivotal role as Secretary General of the United Nations but whose writings indicate that he was a mystic. After an introductory discussion of Hammarskjöld’s life and his book Markings, participants had great fun using paint, pens, collage, yarn, feathers, glue, and beads (among others) to create their own art works expressing their reactions to the topic.

Jaime Pineda; Dorothy Parker
On February 13, Larry and Carol Veit convened an organizational meeting of the International Affairs Group at 10:00 am in the Picasso Room of Vi at La Jolla. Eleven people attended and four others were absent because of traveling or other unavoidable conflicts.

The participants introduced themselves, summarized their backgrounds in international relations, expressed their wishes concerning the structure and functioning of the group, and suggested discussion topics for future meetings. The consensus was that the group would continue to meet at 10:00 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and that membership should be limited to 15 people, preferably individuals with strong knowledge and experience relevant to international affairs.

The next meeting, on March 12, will focus on China. First, Carol Veit will summarize her insights on economic and political issues regarding China. Then, a discussion of her ideas will follow an agenda of questions.

Carol and Larry Veit; Dorothy Parker

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READING EXPERIENCE

Monday, March 18, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

Subject: 3 works of T. S. Eliot:

The February meeting began with the 1936 quote of the writer and editor Christopher Morley, “Shakespeare improved with his readers,” reminding us that we have matured and changed since we first read the Bard in school; his words have not changed. The seven of Shakespeare’s sonnets that we discussed only represent a fraction of the 154 sonnets that he composed between 1593 and 1597, while enjoying prosperity and recognition as a leading London playwright. Scholars and critics have written about “the bisexual nature evidenced in Shakespeare’s sonnets,” Morley asserting that the first seventeen sonnets are addressed to someone of his own sex. Just who is unclear, adding additional speculation to the existing arguments about whether the individual we think we know as Shakespeare could possibly have written all the material attributed to him. Was there another person or persons involved?

One member of the group reminded us that while reading Shakespeare we must be aware that the English language has changed in 400 years, particularly the spelling and pronunciation. The author’s name was during his lifetime probably pronounced “shaxsper.”

In common, the sonnets discussed all show vivid awareness of the shortness of life, the rapid passing of time, and the fading of beauty, the inevitability of death, but of the eternity of love. For additional information you may contact me.

Gerry Horwitz
COLLOQUY CAFÉ
Wednesday, March 20, 1:00, (in person).
Subject: The Supreme Court

February’s meeting featured a discussion of “Music,” with unexpected background sound provided by our hostess and her video: music composers of the past.

Music was first described by participants as calming and comforting, often fulfilling a need. But all agreed that some music stimulates movement (think of tango, think of waltz). Longfellow said music was the universal language of mankind, mused another.

One individual said, “Our era of music always had a story.” Another asked if we would react differently if we first heard the same music with no words, or those words with no music.

The session concluded with the singing of an old hymn with modern words by one member.

Next month: modern as well as older words of the Supreme Court, without music, will be analyzed. For further information contact me.

Gerry Horwitz.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES GROUP
Wednesday, March 13 - 2:00 p.m - via ZOOM

Our last zoom meeting was on Wed. Feb 14, at 2:00pm. At that time we continued our review with chapter six, which deals with higher order Feynman Diagram contributions in Quantum Electrodynamics. At that last zoom meeting we examined the various higher level Feynman Diagrams that lead to such results as the anomalous magnetic moment of the electron. Experiments showed that the magnetic moment was slightly different from what was predicted by ordinary Dirac quantum mechanics. A year later Quantum Electrodynamics was used to explain this deviation, by calculating the 2nd order radiative corrections. The agreement was spectacular.

In our review we developed a formal expression, to all orders in Feynman Diagrams, for the vertex diagram. This ‘enhanced” vertex diagram refers to an electron interacting with an external electromagnetic field, but includes all the possible ways "virtual" photons (ones that pop in and out of existence and interface with the electron), can contribute to the results. These formal results lead to two simple mathematical expressions called ‘Form Factors", that include all the effects of the virtual photons. A key problem in all these developments are infinities that appear in integrals over virtual photon momenta, both at low energy and high energy. The low energy problem is beautifully resolved through compensating effects of a rival process called Bremsstrahlung, which involves low energy real photons being emitted as part of the process of the electron scattering off the electromagnetic fields. Bremsstrahlung is the quantum equivalent of the fact that an accelerating electron emits radiation. The Feb. 28 meeting of the Group had to be cancelled due to technical computer issues. Our next meeting is on March 13 at 2:00 pm, at which time we will continue with the mathematical development of the combining of Bremsstrahlung with the vertex corrections at low energy real and virtual photons.

Alvin Halpern
The Agenda for our SDIS Inside Politics Study Group meeting on March 9 contains a number of topics relevant to the Presidential Election to be held in November 2024. How you feel about each of these topics could have an impact on your decision which candidate you intend to vote for.

The topic leading off the Agenda involves the charges filed against former President Donald Trump in Washington D.C. by the Federal Government, claiming that Trump illegally conspired to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Trump alleged that the case should not go forward because as President he is entitled to total immunity for any acts he committed in the course of his duties as President. The lower courts ruled against him, but the Supreme Court agreed to hear his appeal, and oral argument is scheduled to take place during the week of April 22.

A decision is expected sometime in June. Even if the Court decides against Trump on the immunity issue and sends the case back to Washington D.C. for trial, it is unlikely there will be time for the case to be held and completed before the election is held in November, which was Trump’s plan all along.

Another Agenda topic relevant to the presidential election this year involves the racketeering charges filed against Trump and 18 other defendants in the state of Georgia, similar to the Washington D.C. case. Even if Trump wins the Presidential Election, if he loses the Georgia case he will have no authority to set aside a conviction obtained against him by a sovereign state like Georgia. That case is now in jeopardy, because the defendants have filed a motion to disqualify the District Attorney Fani Wallis on the grounds she has a conflict of interest because of her romantic involvement with a special counsel she hired to help with the prosecution of the case. The Judge intends to rule on the motion within two weeks.

Other Agenda topics include who will be Trump’s Vice Presidential candidate, border and immigration issues, the war between Israel and Hamas, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the 100,000 votes for “uncommitted” in the Michigan primary.

Al Korobkin
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The Film Group will meet Wednesday, March 6, at 10 a.m.

As part of its series of American Movie Musicals, the SDIS Film Group will show the 1958 film, “Damn Yankees,” a popular and often-staged musical both on Broadway and other theatres in the U.S. and around the world. Because the film runs a little long, we ask viewers to come to the meeting at 9:50 a.m. Many in the original NYC cast appear in the film with the addition of movie star Tab Hunter. There are a number of songs that made the hit parade in the 1950s (“Steam Heat,” “You Got to Have Heart,” “Whatever Lola Wants”). They were covered by pop singers and are sung and danced to, with Bob Fosse’s choreography, and with his wife, Gwen Verdon, doing some incredible dancing.

The quasi-Faustian plot, grounded in midcentury sports regalia, is a lively commentary on how Americans regarded major league baseball in its golden age.

As a reviewer from IMDB raved, “The superb Gwen Verdon sings and dances and mugs through this very good adaptation of the smash Broadway musical.

Verdon is a cross between Shirley MacLaine and Carol Burnett with a dash of Carol Haney (another Bob Fosse protégé) tossed in. She's a total delight and one of the best dancers EVER! Here she plays Lola, the temptress used by the devil (Ray Walston) to lure Joe Hardy (Tab Hunter) from going back to his wife and breaking his satanic deal in which middle-aged Joe becomes a 22-year-old baseball star and catapults the Washington Senators to 1st place.”
March 2024
Some meetings and events listed are via Zoom

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