

Ask A Genius 109 – Sunsets and Fucking¹
Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner
March 6, 2017

This session has been edited for clarity and readability.

[Beginning of recorded material]

Rick Rosner: Now, to language and to why it's so effective, one is it is compact. I was thinking of two things described by language, just as examples, that are more compact than thinking about the thing itself. The two examples were sunsets and fucking. You can say, "Sunset," and the word sunset is more compact than actually picturing a sunset, especially the mechanics of a sunset—the sun at a position in space, so it is just over the horizon, and an intervening atmosphere, and a beach, an ocean, and the reflective effects, and all of that.

Actually having to think about a sunset is much more informationally weighty than to simply say, "Sunset." It is a compact representation, like fucking—and sorry to use a bad word, the word is so small compared to the conceptual wad of stuff that went into that word. That it is much more compact. So thing one is compactness. Thing two is universally understood within your awareness.

When people developed money, it made commerce simpler because you didn't have to do outright barter. Money become the universal bartering tool. When you have a universal abstract tool that holds value, you can do any transaction, and don't have to worry if someone specifically wants your sheep before you can trade your sheep for adobe bricks or something. You can sell sheep, buy bricks, and don't have to do transactions with people who have bricks to sell and want to buy sheep.

Words are better. They are short and more easily understood by different parts of the brain. They communicate meaning easily among the different parts of the brain.

[End of recorded material]

¹ Four format points for the session article:

1. Bold text following and including "Scott Jacobsen:" or "S:" is Scott & non-bold text following and including "Rick Rosner:" or "R:" is Rick.
2. Session article conducted, transcribed, edited, formatted, and published by Scott.
3. Footnotes & in-text citations in the interview & references after the interview.
4. This session article has been edited for clarity and readability.

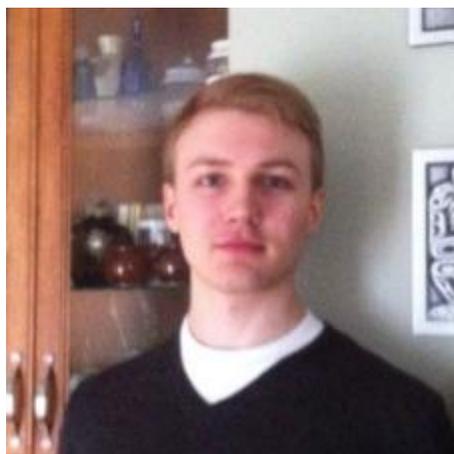
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1. American Psychological Association. (2010). Citation Guide: APA. Retrieved from <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/system/files/28281/APA6CitationGuideSFUv3.pdf>.
2. Humble, A. (n.d.). Guide to Transcribing. Retrieved from <http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/Transcription%20Guide.pdf>.

Authors



Rick Rosner
American Television Writer
RickRosner@Hotmail.Com
Rick Rosner



Scott Douglas Jacobsen
Editor-in-Chief, In-Sight Publishing
Scott.D.Jacobsen@Gmail.Com
In-Sight Publishing

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