

In-Sight Publishing
Ask A Genius 116 – Laurence Fishburne, Pain, and Pornos¹
Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner
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[Beginning of recorded material]

Rick Rosner: Okay, we were talking off-tape. It came up that we noticed that Larry Fishburne’s, Laurence Fishburne the actor’s, daughter at some point made a porno. I’m sure it was painful for Laurence Fishburne. It is not unheard of for people to do porn the way it would’ve been unheard of 50 years ago. It I not entirely unqualifying. This is already probably 20 years ago. Jeff Koons did a series of porno ceramics with his wife Cicciolina, which was transgressive.

But it was not disqualifying. He is still among the more prominent artists of our time. He made Kitschy porcelain sculptures showing sex between him and his wife. The trend is it takes more and more to transgress as time moves on, where posing in *Playboy* in the 60s may have qualifying from a legit acting career. Though, even then, Marilyn Monroe’s early nude shots made it into *Playboy*.

Even so, what is considered transgressively pornographic keeps getting more extreme, and I think there are two reasons for that beyond the fact that guys are pervs and need more and more extreme stuff to look at. In terms of the role of what’s transgressive or not in society, you mean have BJ ad butt sex jokes in NBC Prime Time sitcoms. Yea, they’re trying to be edgy and to catch a younger edgier demographic, but still you couldn’t say pregnant on *I Love Lucy*.

So two main reasons, information wants to be free if I am using that right and I don’t know if I am. So our quest for information is going to go into more and more areas that were previously taboo because we want to explore all aspects of life, even the raunchy ones. My wife loves *The Brady Bunch*, and so do a lot of people, but it always annoyed me because it was so circumscribed.

It was so limited in what it could address and so fakey in how it addressed things. I mentioned it before, but even the grass in their backyard as fake before it was a thing. It was lazy 70s TV.

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.

For further information on the formatting guidelines incorporated into this document, please see the following documents:

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>.

That show barely ever went any place that wasn't super safe. Neither did most TV at the time. Now TV and other forms of entertainment can go just about anywhere, which is good for trying to understand the world.

Although, of course, a lot of entertainment is schlock and doesn't even try to understand the world. It throws in crap to try to capture viewers. So thing one, information, even the nasty stuff, even especially the nasty stuff. Thing two is we are less and less exalted creatures, special and separate from the world. The more science explains who we are, the less we are divine beings, and if we're just natural products of the world along with everything else.

Then everything is fair game to be discussed among the phenomena of the world, and nothing should be taboo because the exaltation, the exalted position, that we thought we were in with regard to God has been eroded. That's about it for all of that. Oh, no, then there's the next deal, which is, well, if everything we do—good, bad, raunchy, ugly—is a natural consequence of the world and us being a part of the natural world. How do you do ethics?

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: If we love information, and if we remain less exalted, especially now, then we need simple, general ethics.

RR: If you look at the Holocaust, and if you look at genocides, it seems to be something humans do given the right circumstances.

SDJ: Does this make genocide right?

RR: It's not right. But how do you come up with ethical systems that continue to be powerful and help people not do evil in a world where anything can be seen as natural.

SDJ: Does the Golden Rule plus the Hippocratic Oath suffice as components?

RR: Maybe. One argument to be made is just because something is natural, just because we evolved from apes who bash each other's heads in with bones or rocks, or eat each other's faces off, or kill babies from fathers who aren't theirs, or whatever violent apes do—just because something is natural means it is acceptable or allowable. The 20th century view of science is—the 20th century scientific view of the world was random in charge of everything.

No value, really, just random action and that's not exactly it. Randomness isn't in charge of the world. Persistence and order, emerging order, is in charge of the world. Information is order and information is in charge of the world. We live in an information-processing universe. We are information processing beings, and for information to exist there has to be order, and there has to be persistence.

Things have to be able to exist across time. From there, you can come up with a bunch of ethical rules that say that some things are better than others. We're not just left with randomness.

SDJ: So the laws of physics, or the principles of existence, imply order and derives persistence and that persistence will bring further order by implication and that order for

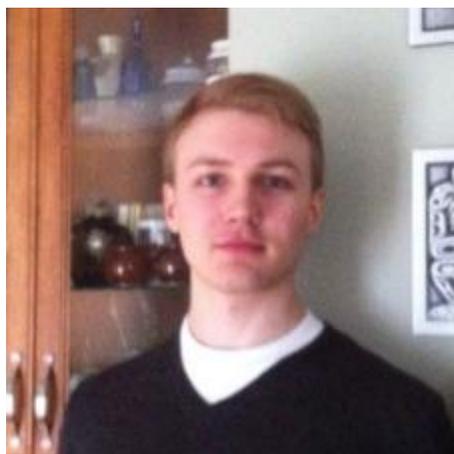
any conscious being in that system will be a greater value because persistence is what will keep the beings in that system going.

[End of recorded material]

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