

**In-Sight Publishing**  
**Ask A Genius 118 – Dreams, LSD, Cats, and Art<sup>1</sup>**  
**Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner**  
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[Beginning of recorded material]

**Rick Rosner:** A lot of stuff happens during sleep, and it doesn't freak us out. We lose contact with the world. We lose contact with our bodies. We have dreams where all sorts of weird stuff happen. If any of this stuff happened while we were awakened, we'd be panicked, but thanks to hundreds of millions of years of evolution we have systems in our brains in place that make it so sleep phenomena don't freak us out.

Everybody, for most people I think once in a while, gets a signal through from the sleeping/dreaming brain to your leg because you need to in your brain. That happens to people every few months at most, unless something is wrong. But I am guessing that the shutdown systems aside that the structure of dreams can give information about the structure of consciousness.

In that, all sorts of things—things happen in dream, but they are not totally chaotic.

[Break in recording]

**RR:** Dreams have a narrative. They have a rough flow. You can describe what happens in a dream as if you're telling a story, but don't because nobody likes to hear other people's dreams. But anyway, there's a narrative flow. This happens then this happens. Often, the things that happens from one moment to another are related to one another. There's continuity. There's a world that feels normal within the dream.

It takes a lot to happen in a dream and for you to realize, "Bullshit, this is a dream. It can't possibly be happening." Which, to me, says that a lot of the information structures in the brain are intact and linked to brain architecture, kind of the way you'd expect. The brain is not getting

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<sup>1</sup> Four format points for the session article:

1. Bold text following "Scott Douglas Jacobsen:" or "SJ:" is Scott Douglas Jacobsen & non-bold text following "Rick Rosner:" or "RR:" is Rick Rosner.
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>.

any sensory input. So it's self-stimulating. And I don't know why, and I'm not sure it matters to this discussion.

But when self-created inputs run through the brain, they create recognizable aspects of life. You don't just get crazy noise as compared to, like, when you take LSD. So it's as if I think in dreams you're processing modules—your expert subsystems in the brain—are largely intact in terms of being able to process signals. And you get worlds that aren't pure chaos in your dreams. It's— Dreams are almost what you've forgotten you can't do because you have incomplete information.

Like, in a dream, you forge you can't fly. So maybe you fly as opposed to complete chaos, like on LSD, which breaks down—it gives your perceptual systems and your thinking a hard time, and people end up looking lizardy or weird in a whole bunch of different ways because the expert subsystems that normally process sensory information about people's faces into useable information have been messed up, and you're getting incomplete and crappy results.

So you might see wire-frame-ish faces that look like they're made out of polygons. Your perception of faces is crappy and incomplete because your expert subsystems have been hampered at the neuron level, and they're just—when you're drunk, your perceptions are— unless you are blackout of pass out drunk—your perceptions are largely intact, but just slower and you're more confused.

It seems like it affects neuron-to-neuron processing and breaks down what should be self-contained information processing. Dreams also leave those information processing systems intact. You run thoughts or electricity through expert parts of your brain through dreaming. You still get decent imagery, recognizable imagery, recognizable situations. Ditto with a brain surgeon poking your brain with electrodes and runs electricity through your brain that way.

People don't get chaos. They get sights and smells, besides the smell of burning brain. In schizophrenia, I don't that much about it, but it seems as if schizophrenia can encompass a range of scales of disruption. That schizophrenics hear voices or have other types of hallucinations. That's closer to disruption among or between expert subsystems, where you are still seeing recognizable visual images.

You're still processing, and still getting recognizable stuff. You are just confused where it is coming from, which is your own head. I assume there are other varieties schizophrenia, where things are messed up more on the neuron-to-neuron levels, and you suffer perceptual difficulties similar to the ones you get if you took LSD. Like the—I dunno—famous set of drawings by the cat artist at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that anybody who was a kid in the 70s had *Time Life* books.

This guy was a famous drawer and painter of cats. Then he started losing it...

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen: [Laughing]**

**RR:** ...and being institutionalized. He kept drawing cats and he went crazier...

**SDJ:** [Laughing]

**RR:** ...and crazier while the cats got spikier and spikier.

**SDJ:** [Laughing]

**RR:** Until they looked like sunbursts, they're kind of awesome. They're pretty as hell. They reflect some kind of perceptual difficulty.

**SDJ:** They probably came from drawing cats. [Laughing]

**RR:** It probably did come from drawing cats! Because cats carry toxoplasmosis—researchers suspect that people who catch toxoplasmosis from their cats are more subject to schizophrenia. So he probably [Laughing]...

**SDJ:** [Laughing]

**RR:** ...caught it from the cats themselves.

**SDJ:** [Laughing]

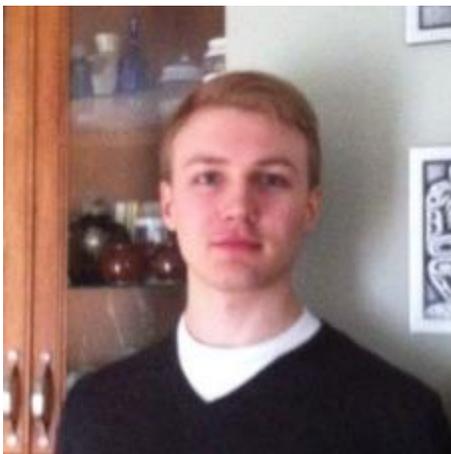
**RR:** Anyway, dreams, schizophrenia, LSD, kind of represent a range of derangement from neuron-to-neuron to expert subsystem-to-expert subsystem.

[End of recorded material]

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