

In-Sight Publishing
Ask A Genius 139 – Inexpensive Big Brains¹
Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner
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[Beginning of recorded material]

Rick Rosner: I feel weird eating octopuses because I read too much about how smart they are, but then I read that they only live for 2 years because they are trash animals. They are high-predation animals. They are animals that generally due to their lifestyle get eaten at a high rate, like possums, where possums only live for 2 years. Octopuses only live for 2 years on average because they don't have a lifestyle where they aren't eaten. They get taken out.

But possums are crappy and stupid while octopuses are really smart. They fall apart after 2 years, which seems tragic for a really smart, curious, and sometimes friendly animal. It just shows that cognition, in some instances, can be super cheap. It is not that expensive to grow a big brain, and a certainly as synthetic brains become cheaper and cheaper in the future. It is going to lead to a re-evaluation of the kind of consciousness that we have.

The entities that come after us will be like, "Yea, you guys are not overly interesting products of the natural world."

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Where does that lead dignity? I am not arguing this from my position, but I am taking the perspective, as with many of my questions, of others that might have a question about this. So I am asking on their behalf, as "as if."

RR: Okay. Yea, then let's talk about dignity, we used to be holy creatures. We used to have a touch of God in us. We used to have the magical presence of consciousness and a soul, and man a little lower than the angels.

SDJ: Or think about Aristotle even, it was about men. Men were ascendant in many of these traditions as well...still!

¹ Four format points for the session article:

1. Bold text following "Scott Douglas Jacobsen:" or "SDJ:" 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>.

RR: Regardless of whether it is just men or grant this divinity to men too, and to minorities, and—we were exalted. Awareness of ugly bodily functions was generally sequestered. There's always been a literature of the scatological. There was writer from 2,200 years ago named, I think, Simplicissimus who may have written about filthy trickster characters. There have always been profane writers.

But they have been hidden away. But there has been exalted literature—nobody in *A Tale of Two Cities*, the action doesn't stop so somebody can take a shit. Nobody jerks off in Dickens that I know of, or in Plato.

[Break in recording]

RR: TV, for the first 30 years of TV, didn't talk about pee and doody, and butt sex. All of those boundaries have been erased and we are thoroughly biological creatures in everybody's understanding now. You can look at the wave of zombie stuff as a manifestation of the decay of degradation of humanity. Zombies are like a hyper-aware version of our biological basis. I don't watch *The Walking Dead* at all.

But what I think what happens on that show, I think this is season 5, or 6, or 7. Most of the zombies on that show. I don't know how long the world of *The Walking Dead* has been going on, but it is probably a couple of years since the zombie plague. So most of the zombies are 2-years-old at least. That means they are extra nasty, extra rotten, because these are people who have been scrambling along the ground or standing in a corner for a long time.

Which is a metaphor for our awareness of our own groundedness in biology, so yea, our best hope for immortality is to hope to live long enough to defy our natural circumstances and hope for technological glorification, technological exaltation, by becoming part of some information processing entities or entity that goes beyond human, which will start happening in the next few decades.

Which isn't the happiest thing, but the idea of legacy has always been an iffy proposition.

[End of recorded material]

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