

Agnes Bolinska.
Agnes Interview 8
Green meeting (part 1)

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the June 2 Agnes green meeting (part 1) that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/JF0qNiyL0Q>. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt
Agnes = Agnes Bolinska
MD = Michael Dickson

- 0:00 Russ comments: The comments that I have inserted in the transcript below are intended as commentary about what I think at the time I write the comment, which is generally within a day or so of the interview. They are not to be confused with the Truth with a capital T; there is no guarantee that I will agree with them if I review them at some later time, at which time I might revise or extend them; they are invitations to Michael and/or Agnes to disagree, or to amplify, or to say they don't understand, and so on. If they wish to insert their own comments, they should pick a color other than this green, and then do so. They should also feel free to correct the transcript.
- 0:04 RTH: Well, our task today is... Agnes' green meeting. Any questions, comments? Before we just launch into that?
- 0:16 Agnes: I have two comments. One is, someone's coming to my house around 1 to fix some stuff. So I will have to go then, or whenever he comes. He may... if he's late, I can stay longer, but... And then my second comment is I just saw that there was an email from you about the meeting, but I didn't, I haven't read it, so if there's something essential there, then...
- 0:38 RTH: What I did was I sent you a copy of the document that I'm about to open on my screen, on the possibility that you would like to have that open. But it's the same document that you've already had, which was called Agnes...
- 0:50 Agnes: [inaudible]
- 0:51 MD: Contemporary descriptions. I had it on my screen, yeah.
- 0:55 RTH: Contemporary descriptions, right. So you don't have to be looking at exactly the same place in the document that I've got open on my screen.
- 1:04 Agnes: Are you gonna share your screen, or should I open mine?
- 1:06 RTH: I am gonna... I am gonna share my screen.

1:08 Agnes: Okay, then I'm not gonna open it on my screen, I'll just look at yours.

1:11 RTH: Okay. Then, unless anybody's got anything else to say... and as far as the 1 o'clock is concerned, that'll be 2 hours from now. I'm guessing we'll be shot by then, so it's.

1:22 MD: I also have to leave at 1 anyway, so...

1:24 Agnes: Okay.

1:27 RTH: So, let me share my screen...[shares his screen] And so you should be able to see... the document that... Y'all can see that?

1:54 Agnes: Yep.

1:56 RTH: ...which is exactly the same document as before, the only difference is that to prepare for the green meeting, what I do is I put this... this little row of green dots in here, which means that if I type anywhere in the middle of here, it turns out to be green. Just saves... But that's, it makes it a little bit easier for me to do the typing here.

2:17 So our task is to go through these samples and bring them to mind, so to speak, and see whether we have a joint recollection of what this, what this sample is. Or not necessarily a joint recollection, but a recollection of what this sample entails. And, and then we'll write a *caption*. And then we'll move on to the next sample, and then we'll move through all of Agnes' samples. And we'll start from the last day, because presumably that's where we understood the best about what Agnes' samples were.

2:55 MD: And are we gonna take them... on that day from... I'm asking because I'm... I've got the transcripts open as well, I want to know where to start. Are we starting from the end of the day or the beginning of the day?

3:05 RTH: I think it's generally easier to start from the beginning of the day. Start from the beginning of the day, but have the last day.

3:11 MD: Got it.

3:12 RTH: Just because it's easier to go forwards in a transcript than it is to go backwards in a transcript.

3:16 MD: Yes, I guess.

3:20 RTH: So...

3:20 MD: I said yes, but I don't know why it's easier to go for us in backgrounds.

3:23 RTH: Yeah, I didn't. It just turns out to be slightly.

- 3:27 MD: Okay.
- 3:27 Agnes: Read forwards, that's why I might go, unless you're reading backwards, which wouldn't surprise me.
- 3:31 RTH: That's right. So, we're gonna look at the first sample here, and then write a caption about it.

Consideration of sample 7.5

- 3:50 MD: And so... Can you... can you... briefly tell me, I probably should already know this, but I'm afraid I don't. Can you tell me what the relationship is between what's in the contemporary description for 7.5, and what's in the transcript? Are these basically quotations from the transcript, or is this something...
- 4:17 RTH: So, the contemporary descriptions are versions... are *my* descriptions of the sample. [MD: Right.] And I guess I should say, in classical DES, if we were doing a real DES study, then the contemporary description would be something that one of us would write, and then pass back and forth between all the other interviewers who were involved. And make those descriptions as good as possible every, on, immediately, within a day, within 24 hours, basically, after every sample. *We* didn't do that, necessarily. I sent you, every day, the contemporary descriptions, but we never applied ourselves, really, to making sure that they were, that they...
- 5:00 MD: Right, I guess that's why I... yeah, so that's... that's probably why I'm not so familiar with these. I mean, I'm looking at the transcript. And it looks like... It's sort of semi-quotation-like, but not... but... but selective.
- 5:15 RTH: When I write a transcript [he misspeaks: he means "description"], I very often start with what, in this case, Agnes' first salvo would be, [MD: Um-hmm.] and... because it just saves me a little bit of time, but then I clean that up as a... and by "clean that up," I mean... I... I try to improve it based on the rest of the discussion that we had.
- 5:35 MD: Right, okay, no, that's becoming clear as I'm comparing these things, yes.
- 5:40 RTH: Okay. But the point of that, of all of this, is that it's *never* that we take Agnes' words as, as the Gospel describing Agnes' description. We give Agnes credit for being, careful but fallible describer. And then... and we give each of us credit, so I... I feel I... I, myself, have a capable but fallible memory, and, and my... my writing skills are all... everybody's... everybody... everybody is a fallible contributor.
- 6:25 So, what I would say in the... for the green description here, the caption description is that there's inner speaking, [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] and that there is some kind of a cognitive pause or something, oh, we'll just call it a pause, not a cognitive pause. And there's a seeing... without... Or with a *weak* figure-ground phenomenon.
- 7:22 MD: So was it. I mean, so I'm looking now just at your description, and maybe I'll go back to the transcript, but it says... "At the same time, I see the computer screen without

any particular focus.” So why are we saying that’s a weak figure-ground as opposed to just there’s no focus at all?

7:22 Russ comments: DES is *not* about what is written in the descriptions; it is about what was in Agnes’s experience at the moment of the beep. The descriptions are designed to be tools that help us, but should not be considered ends in themselves.

7:52 Agnes: I mean, one of the distinctions that we had made is, well, actually, I don’t know if this is exactly how we talked about it, but, having a figure-ground phenomenon within the screen. So, for example, when there’s a *sentence* that I’m looking at, that may have been the next one, or something like that, and *that is* the figure, and then the rest of the screen is the ground. As opposed to there being *no* figure-ground phenomenon within the screen, nevertheless, the screen and the contents of the screen itself are the figure, and the ground is everything else around the screen. So I don’t know if, *partial* figure-ground... Yeah, so I don’t know how that distinction connects to *weak or partial* figure-ground in this case.

8:48 RTH: So my recollection is that that is the distinction that we were trying to make here, but it’s also possible that the green would be better with “no or weak or partial” figure-ground. And so let’s... let’s think about what the... what the point of the green description is. So the object of the green thing is to help us stay on track when it comes time to write a characterization of Agnes’ experience. [MD: Mm-hmm.] And so we’re gonna... we are going to wanna write, because we spent a lot of time talking about, figure-ground phenomenon in Agnes’ experience. And what this green thing is going to say here is... *This is a sample that we ought to be thinking about when we’re interested in figure-ground phenomenon*. So we don’t have to go back and read all the... all the transcript, or watch all the video, or read all the descriptions. This will be... this will be a sign to us: *This is one that we should consider when we’re going to write about Agnes’ figure-ground phenomenon*.

9:51 MD: Right.

9:52 RTH: And by putting this in here right now, I would say, well, *maybe* there was some... figure-ground in that... in that Agnes had zeroed in *to some degree* on the screen, and not what the [MD: Right.] window or the... Wall, or whatever that’s behind the screen.

10:10 MD: I see that now. I was... yeah, I was misreading the “without any particular focus” earlier, but that was “without any particular focus relative to the boundaries of the screen,” or something like that.

10:23 RTH: Right. And I would say, this is... the conversation that we’re having right now is exactly what the point of the green meeting is. The green meeting is to reawaken those conversations so that when we write about them, we can do as good a job of writing about them as we can.

10:43 Agnes: So, Russ, in that case, I mean, just... I don’t know if “weak or partial figure-ground phenomenon” is... quite right.

11:00 MD: Yeah, I mean, it seems to me... sorry, I... doesn't it seem like it... there's just a... it's just a regular figure-ground, and then... but the ground... the figure is the screen as a whole, rather than anything on it?

11:14 Agnes: Yeah, that's more or less what I was gonna say.

11:20 RTH: So go ahead and say what you were *gonna* say.

11:23 Agnes: So, I was gonna say that it doesn't seem... okay, like, imagine... To me, something like weak or partial figure-ground phenomenon refers to the extent to which the figure is contrasted with the ground, where strong figure-ground phenomenon is, like, there is a clear and distinct figure that is clearly and distinctly distinct from the ground, or something like that. And, And then *weak* would be, like, it's maybe less distinct, or something like that. Whereas, what I was gonna say, and what Michael just said, is that, in my recollection in the sample, it's not that It was particularly strong or weak. It's just that the *screen plus contents of screen* was the figure, everything else was the ground, rather than *some particular sentence* being the figure, and everything else in the screen being the ground.

11:23 Russ comments: RE "It's just that the *screen plus contents of screen* was the figure, everything else was the ground"

Agnes will retract that (at 14:47) after MD (12:49) reads her the transcript of the original interview. What Agnes has said here is entirely reasonable, but not true. That is not a criticism of Agnes—it's the way reasonable people are. But that's why [as an important part of the epoché] DES avoids reasonable characterizations and sticks to immediate descriptions.

12:34 MD: I mean, but I'll... okay, so... I'm gonna offer now, from the transcript, a slight a retraction of what Agnes and I just said.

12:47 RTH: That'll save me the effort!

12:49 MD: Because I'm looking now on the transcript, and I see 13:22, "I'm not focused on anything in this moment. It's kind of like, it's kind of like this pause kind of moment where, there isn't anything I'm focusing on, but I am seeing the screen."

13:13 Agnes: Hmm.

13:15 RTH: So, my recollection of this sample is that the distinction that is hard for us to be making, in general, in general with Agnes, I guess, would be, and would apply to this sample, is between, my eyeballs are aimed at, and what my experience is. So, the question is whether that sentence that Michael just wrote means... translates as, "my eyeballs are aimed at the screen. And I'm taking in... So my eyeballs are aimed at the screen. The question is whether I have made *anything* figural, or whether I have... to some degree, started to make a figure, and I've *sort of* zeroed in on the screen aspect of it, but not yet, really.

14:09 MD: Yeah, I'm actually kind of being inclined now back towards the kind of partial. Not... I think *no* would be too strong, but partial.

14:16 Agnes: Yeah, no, I kind of agree now, too. Like, now that you've said that, Michael, I mean, that's helpful. And yeah, I'm kind of inclined to go with that as well.

14:29 MD: Because I, I would, I would...

14:30 Agnes: So, Russ, you were right! [they laugh]

14:36 MD: Because that seems like a reasonable interpretation of, I am seeing the screen, as the screen is still a thing that's somehow distinct from all the other stuff, but you're definitely not figurizing anything on the screen.

14:47 Agnes: Yes, and also I retract what I said earlier about the screen being the figure and everything else being the ground, now that you read that quote from me. [they laugh]

14:47 Russ comments: See the comment at 11:23.

15:01 RTH: So that... that... that is why we have to do these conversations, so that we can... we can... we can retract, or revise, or whatever, and that... So does "weak or partial" seem good, or is there now...

15:16 MD: I mean, it seems to match with what we said about that in the transcript.

15:25 Agnes: And I would agree with that, yeah.

15:28 RTH: Okay.

15:31 Agnes: Now that, Michael, now that you read the transcript, it's funny, because I was like, "I'm the authority of my experience! Let me tell you!" But now that you read it, you helped jog my memory to the experience.

15:43 MD: I mean, I was reading *your* words.

15:45 Agnes: I know you were! [they laugh] But that's what... that's why I think it's funny. Because I thought that my memory was kind of better than my words, but that was... I think that was false.

15:45 Russ comments: That is such an important observation. A main finding of DES is that people do not know their own inner experience, and that is because what they take to be memory is really a (natural-attitude) reasonable reconstruction.

15:58 MD: I... you know what, just as a side note, and I know we have a lot to do, so I won't do this very often, but: I've written a very, very small amount about my own experience, and I may end up having to talk about it in a few weeks at a conference, (not one that you're going to be at, Agnes). And... I found a similar thing, right?

When I go back and read my own words, sometimes that revises my own memory of what was going on. But also vice versa, because sometimes, in retrospect, especially in light of the whole process, I can look at my words and realize that I was sort of confused in the moment, and I'm a little bit clearer now.

15:58 Russ comments: MD makes an important observation. The general principles from DES are: (a) You can never get from a general to a particular (but it seems that you can); (b) You *can* get from the particular to the general (and it takes surprisingly few carefully described particulars for a general to emerge). And (c) The iterative process holds that you can learn new ways of understanding particulars, and that is safer for newly encountered particulars (it is sometimes effective, but riskier, for new understandings of old particulars).

16:35 RTH: The conversation that we're having now is in the ballpark of what I would call, *it's not about the words*. Words are rubbery kinds of things, and so the words that we started out with today, and then 5 minutes later, revised, because the words are in a different context, those words are not the same words. Those are the... And that's just the way it is, I think, and I think that's the way, sort of, all words are. And DES is one way, maybe the best way, or the best way *I know*, to make that... clear... make that point clearly.

17:10 MD: Yeah.

17:12 Agnes: And also, I mean, if I can make one incidental comment as well, and I'll also restrain myself, but I was, thinking about that this morning, because I had, like, a series of very weird dreams, and I just remembered them, and I was writing about them just purely for my own self, because they were so weird. And I realized that even in writing the words to only myself, I couldn't quite find the words to refer to the experiences, and the words that I chose would kind of change them in... sorry, the dreams, not the experiences, but change them in subtle ways. So anyway, yes, I'm seeing this... *it's not about the words thing*.

17:55 RTH: So when we write the description of Agnes's figure-ground phenomenon, the description that we write is going to be yet in yet a different context. [MD: Right.] And that description is going to be faith, not, it's going to be *unfaithful* to Agnes' actual figure-ground phenomenon in the same way that she just described that her description of her dreams are unfaithful. That's just the way it is. But they're going to be in the ballpark. What we want to do is to keep our description of Agnes' figure-ground phenomenon in the ballpark of the way it was. We're not going to quibble about whether it's 100% accurate or 97% accurate or something, but we want it to be better than 50 or better than 20 or something. And that's the that's the process that we're going through here. And also, I would say that the discussion that we're having now, or yeah, now is good enough, is in the ballpark of the *little or no discussion*, which I think we have had. In my take, we can't really distinguish between *little* or *no*. That's just not possible. And so I think I think the amount of figure-ground phenomenon that Agnes has here is in the *little or no* category. There's

19:14 Agnes: Yeah, agreed.

19:15 RTH: And all we're really going to do at the end is to say, it's not a, there's no crisp figure-ground here! She's not zeroed in on this particular line on the computer screen, or whatever, like she is in a later beep. It's not figure-ground like that. It's a more diffuse; maybe *diffuse figure-ground* would be better than *weak* or *partial*.

19:40 MD: Okay, yeah.

19:41 Agnes: I'm happy with either, of any of this.

19:44 RTH: Okay. Onward to the last sentence here, which, in my lingo, would be sensory awareness bodily. Or tactile. Tactile. Those words blur into each other for me, and ...

20:22 Agnes: Yeah, that's fine by me, I think.

20:28 RTH: So, we happy for this caption? The object of the caption being: when we have all gone through all the samples, then we can if we're trying to remember what we're gonna write about, this is gonna be a clue for us to get there?

20:42 MD: So, I'd like to raise... And this is a kind of, Russ, I think I think I foresee what we're doing at this very first one, as a little bit like In miniature, what you're what you like to call iterative. In the sense that we're probably spending a lot more time on this one than we'll need to on some of the later ones as we get faster at this. At least that's what I'm telling myself right now, otherwise this is gonna take 6 hours.

21:10 RTH: Well, we'll find out about that. I think, in general, that's correct, but we... And I think with Agnes, my prediction is that it's going to be correct, because I think the figure-ground phenomenon was the difficult thing for Agnes, and so we're when we get done hashing that out, then things after that will be easier.

21:24 MD: Right. But I want to raise another there's I think there's another phenomenon here that I remember. I could be wrong, but I think I remember coming up several times, and I'm not sure we ever totally focused on it, but It's the *pause*. It seems to me that there were several times when Agnes described a kind of, *I was pausing*, *I was anticipating the next thought*, or *I was wondering how I was going to answer this objection*, but not wondering in any very focused, explicit way. And so I'm wondering whether something along the lines of *pause in thought*, or *suspended thought*, or I'm not those aren't quite the right words. But that so, in your description, Russ, I'm looking at "while in a kind of pause, waiting for the rest of the sentence to appear." And to whatever if that's not a if that's not a what was happening in the world description, but a, you know, she was experiencing herself as, as, as, you know, paused, or something like that and I know there's a lot of baggage around experiencing herself. I didn't mean to imply any kind of meta experience or anything like that, but just experiencing the pause-iness of the thought or something. I feel like that came up several times, and it might be worth at least provisionally flagging here, in case we do see it coming up several times.

- 22:57 RTH: Well, we did plug we did flag it, at least to this extent [highlights the word *pause* in the caption].
- 23:02 MD: Oh, I'm I sorry, my, I got so many windows open on my screen, I didn't quite see that part. But maybe... hmm
- 23:09 RTH: But I think you're right in bringing our attention to that, and it could be that we should massage this description, and put this in brackets. [updates the description of sample 7.5]
- 23:23 MD: I guess the I guess now that I'm seeing the the, the word *pause* in the in the in the green description maybe just, maybe, uh, adding what was paused. I mean, so it wasn't for example, you could read that pause as a pause in *inner speaking*, but that's not what it was. It was a pause in *thought*, and it was a pause in a previously active thought about writing.
- 23:57 Agnes: I mean, I think one small refinement was would be to just say. pausing in blah blah blah, or like, I mean, rather than just *pause*, pausing and then, specifying further, at least a little bit the nature of the pause.
- 24:15 MD: So, I'll read again what you said, Agnes. Which might give us a clue about how to do that. So at 10:35, "I was in, like, a pause moment of trying to figure out what precisely I want to say in response to the objection." So this pause in the midst of a thought about what to do next, or what to say next, I think that comes up more than once.
- 24:38 Agnes: Yes.
- 24:39 MD: And so, I wonder if we can characterize the nature of that pause very briefly, like a pause in thought, or a pause in active thought, or I'm not sure what the right words are to use.
- 24:56 RTH: So the [coughs] (Sorry, still early in the morning for me.) [MD: Yeah.] The The question for me is how much of the pause is experienced? So there's a pause, and we can and I'm happy to say that in some general sense she's writing a paper, she's not at this moment writing the paper, and therefore it is true that she is waiting for some of the next sentence in this paper to appear. That is true. But whether that's experientially true is another deal altogether, I think. So the pause could be caused by the fact that she's hungry and she's, and her hunger interests have, have not become conscious, but have distracted her from the from the writing.
- 25:52 Agnes: I, I mean, I want to push back against that, because I think in all of the samples where I paused, it wasn't, like, a distracted pause. It was a pause, I would characterize what I was doing still as *writing*. I mean, for me, writing involves many different activities, and one of them is this kind of pause within the writing process. So I would not; I mean, I would distinguish this kind of pause from a distracted sort of pause that *would* constitute a break in the writing. It was a pause in the sense that, I mean, in I know we're not talking about previous samples now, but I'm going

to bring them in a little bit, because I think they're relevant and similar. It's kind of like a pause where I'm thinking, or listening, or kind of anticipating what's coming next, in the process of writing. That's part of the writing process. So, yeah, I don't know, I don't know how to kind of summarize that. But I think that I think that's important, that it's not a distraction, it's not separate from the writing process, but a constitutive part of the writing process.

27:20 RTH: [types in green "anticipatory pause"] So does that capture it?

27:22 Agnes: Yeah? Yeah, I, I mean, that does capture it, yeah. I think so.

27:29 MD: I was thinking of an analogy to hearing a pause in a pause in thought, similar to a pause in sound. So I'm hearing silence in some sense. But it's there's, there's some kinds of hearing silence where it's, it's surrounded by sound, and so there's some sense in which the sound just stopped, and that's kind of an it's kind of coloring my experience, and also I'm, I'm sort of anticipating that there will be more sound later. As opposed to just not hearing anything, which is a very different kind of experience, whereas, like, sound just wasn't part of your experience at all. But in some contexts, silence is part of your experience. And this seems like a similar thing, except it's not about sound, it's about thinking. [Agnes: Hmm.]

28:18 RTH: I agree with all of that.

28:20 Agnes: Me too.

28:25 RTH: So, from the standpoint of what the green meeting is about, and what the *caption* is about, is: What we're trying to do is to organize our thinking about Agnes's experience. And, and now what we're talking about is we are going to be interested in saying there's quite a few pauses in Agnes's thinking here. And this is going to be one of them.

28:48 MD: Do we do we want to say anticipatory, anticipatory pause of thought? Just to clarify that that's not about the speaking or the seeing? [RTH inserts "of thought"] I mean, that feels to me like it will remind me better of what we're talking about, but...

29:23 RTH: That's fine, that's fine with me. I want to point out another another installment of the *it's not about the words*. It is and it isn't about the words, as is always the case when it when I say *it's not about the words*. It when we what this portion of the green caption is designed to do is to help us get back to thinking about this sample when it comes time to write about Agnes's pauses. And so we want to be able to find things that we can search (part of the green thing is we'll search in the green category so that we can count something. *Well, how many pauses were they, and where were they?* The green is going to help us out in that. But but that doesn't mean that we have to be slavishly well, we said during the green meeting it was an anticipatory pause, therefore we have to use the word "anticipatory," or whatever.

30:24 MD: That's how I was thinking of it.

- 30:26 RTH: Okay. So, we happy with the green? [Agnes: I'm happy.] For the anticipatory pause, and also the whole the whole green? [MD: Mm-hmm.] Number 6. And by the way, I don't consider the captions as set in stone. When we get to another *pause* sample or another, *figure-ground* thing, we may want to come back and change what we wrote here.
- 31:00 MD: Right. I mean, there's a sense in which, and correct me if this is wrong. I mean, I should just say, like, everything I say, you should just assume that it's prefaced by that statement. It seems like it seems like we're sort of creating categories here? Or attempting to? Categories that are relevant directly relevant to Agnes's specific experience.
- 31:22 RTH: That's correct, we are we are, we are creating categories, or you might say we are reflecting categories that we've already created.
- 31:31 MD: Yeah, fair. Both.
- 31:34 RTH: So it's iterative, everything is iterative, from my point of view, iterative all the way down.
- 31:38 MD: So, refining categories, maybe.
- 31:40 RTH: Yep. That is that is exactly correct, I think. And we could quibble about the word categories, too. [MD: (Inaudible)] Things we need to describe, but, but yes. That is what the green meeting is supposed to do. We're gonna when we write about Agnes's description, it's gonna it's gonna be structured with paragraphs and sections or whatever. And, because that's how people communicate in writing. And, And this is designed to help us do that, and if you call those sections *categories*, I don't really care about that.
- 32:15 MD: Yeah, I mean, I was using the word loose. I didn't mean, like, the absolutely real, objective facts about Agnes's experience.
- 32:23 RTH: I think we are all in agreement that there is something about *pauses* that characterize the experiences that we collected from Agnes. That might be because we were, that she was engaged in writing much of the time that the sampling occurred, so the pause might not be a good characteristic of her in all of her situations, but as far as the ones we got, it was, it was a thing. Number 6?

Consideration of sample 7.6 starts here

- 33:02 RTH: So this is a sensory awareness somewhere in the bodily tactile range?
- 33:11 MD: Oh, look, and there's another *pause*.
- 33:15 RTH: And then a semicolon.
- 33:16 Agnes: Anticipatory pause of thought! [laughs]

33:27 MD: This looks very similar to the previous one, doesn't it? [they laugh] I mean, I guess the only slight difference, but maybe these differences aren't enough to matter, is in this one, it seems like you wanted to say, that *maybe* there was some lingering sense of a stronger figure-ground that was dissipating, or something like that.

33:58 Agnes: Yeah.

33:59 MD: That's a pretty subtle difference that may not have to make it into these green descriptions, but it's there.

34:25 RTH: [write "dissipating"] We buying that?

34:27 Agnes: Yeah.

34:33 RTH: And I'll put a question mark in after *dissipating*.

34:38 Agnes: I mean, should we distinguish between... So, in brackets, you have computer screen, as you do above. But the thing that was dissipating was the sentence that I had been focusing on as the figure, rather than the computer screen. Is that something that should be.

35:16 RTH: Joe, what'd you get in mind.

35:17 Agnes: Should it be "of sentence"? Like, should that be added or not? I'm happy with that, I think.

35:35 RTH: And in answer to your previous question, should it be added or not? That's something of the art of the green. If it's if it's something that we think we might want to think about later on, then it's better to put it into the green, because we can always ignore it later. What's hard what's hard is to remember well, which sample was it that she was that she had to figure in and was going away? That's what the question mark...

36:06 MD: Right. That all makes sense.

36:13 RTH: We happy with 7.6?

36:15 Agnes: Yes.

Consideration of sample 7.1 starts here

37:01 MD: But we're going it's 7.1 now, right?

37:04 RTH: Correct.

37:05 MD: Okay.

37:05 Agnes: Yeah, and I have a question.

37:08 MD: Sorry, I was trying to find it in the transcript.

37:10 Agnes: So, the sensory awareness. I mean, I've noticed that here we haven't distinguished the different kinds of sensory awareness. Is that intentional, or should we do that? And, I mean, one reason that comes to mind to distinguish this one from the others, although I'm not at all tied to this, is that there is, like, this *shifting* feeling here. So, I mean, does that matter? Should that be there?

37:44 MD: [RTH writes "(shifting)"] That's what I was gonna say. What Russ just did was my, also, my thought.

38:11 RTH: So, in the *little or no*, which we've had this discussion already today, but in the *little or no* category, whether there's whether there is figure-ground phenomenon here, or whether what she is saying, what Agnes is saying, speaking of Agnes in the third person here. What Agnes is saying is: More of my visual, more of my retina, is occupied with the computer screen than anything else, but I haven't made an experiential focus of it. Not at all, really. It's more central, but it's not figure-ized. And I think the answer to that is *we probably can't make that distinction*, that there then it's in the little or no category. There's either there's either no figure-ground, or there's a little figure-ground.

39:13 MD: I mean, the words, and I won't read them, but the words in the transcript are very similar to the first sample, where she says something like I was aware of the screen. But nothing in particular on the screen. It does seem like the description is very similar. Which, I'm just saying that to justify use of the same phrase.

39:44 RTH: Okay. So the question is, to say, "I'm seeing the screen" makes it seem like that I have made the screen a figure. But I don't, I'm, I'm guessing that isn't what happened at that.

40:02 MD: Well, I

40:03 RTH: Experience at the moment.

40:04 MD: Well, I think that yes, I'm agreeing with that, and that's why I think that's why I think this is similar. I mean, I think she, in both cases, she said something like. I'm seeing the screen, but it was but in *neither* case was there this, like, strong distinction being made between the screen and the rest of the stuff, but somehow the screen was I don't know, a little more there for her than the rest of the stuff, or something. That's I think that's why the weak or partial or diffuse makes sense.

40:34 RTH: So I think, I think we I think we are in the realm of *we can't make this distinction* between really no figure-ground at all or a little bit of a figure; the screen's a little bit of a figure, but not much. So, are we all in agreement about that?

40:58 Agnes: Yep.

40:58 RTH: On to number 2.

Consideration of sample 7.2 starts here

41:17 MD: So, one thing that I think might be *distinctive* about this one, and so maybe, I mean, I realize that one thing we're doing is sort of trying to do what I earlier characterized as *making categories*, but this one I recall being distinctive in the sense that Agnes seemed pretty, I think, (I'm gonna look at the transcript and be sure this is right) I think she was more confident about where the beep happened relative to experience in this case, more than she seemed to be in a lot of cases.

41:46 Agnes: Yeah.

41:49 MD: Yeah, you said, in the thing, "the beep went off after I had typed *till*." That I mean, that's a I'm quoting now from the transcript, but I think that's also in Russ's description, or pretty close to it.

41:59 Agnes: Okay.

42:00 MD: And that that strike that strikes me as *unusual* rather than usual for Agnes. And maybe that's worth noticing as well.

42:13 RTH: [RTH types "confident about moment of the beep"] And does this capture that for you?

42:16 MD: Yeah.

42:21 Agnes: I mean, I don't know if this is something worth noting now, or this comes more from the generalization, looking at all the samples, but one thing we talked about was that for some experiences, it's just easier to know when the beep interrupted them. Such as saying something, and then the beep comes, as opposed to kind of being in a pause where it's more inchoate.

42:50 MD: One of the things that Russ has said, which strikes me as plausible, was it that the information that you're confident about where the beep happened relative to experience might reflect something about the experience itself? And that's why I was pointing this out.

43:10 Agnes: Right.

43:11 RTH: Right, I think that's what Agnes was saying as well.

43:14 MD: Okay, yeah.

43:17 RTH: And I'm, I'm in agreement I'm gonna agree with that. The fact that she had a *figure* and the fact that she *knew* when the beep came, those are not unrelated, I think. When Agnes's experience is sort of all over the place, (and I want to make 100%

sure that that is not understood as a criticism, because I as I have said before, I think there's reason to say that that's smart, or wise, or skillful or something, did not did not always have a focus. It's dangerous not to not always have a focus, but it might be good. And, but those things are related. So we happy with we happy with this caption?

44:04 Agnes: Yes.

Consideration of sample 7.3 starts here

44:13 RTH: So I've got to ask: is it the neighbor's cat, or is it the neighborhood cat?

44:17 Agnes: It's just a neighborhood cat, but the neighbors and I, have talked, both we've all talked about, like, well, we want to keep her, should we keep her, should she should be our should she be our shared cat? But we all travel too much, y'know, we've had those conversations.

44:31 RTH: Okay, got it. [types caption] So this caption conveys *for me* that there were two separate feelings going on. Neither one of them was experienced directly in the body, that's what "mental" means. And there was seeing without figure-ground. We happy with that?

46:34 MD: I, I, I wonder... It seemed to me that the *weirdo* part was really more specifically a concern about whether Agnes had crossed some kind of social line.

46:47 Agnes: Yeah. Although I was worried about being a weirdo, too.

46:53 MD: But I well, no, but those are the same but that's just a more specific version of being worried about being a weirdo. But the words I'm looking at the transcript, and the words you used more often were, "am I crossing a line"?

47:04 Agnes: Right, yeah. Yeah.

47:07 MD: Which sounds more specific, because there's lots of ways to be weird, and this is one particular one.

47:12 Agnes: Yeah.

47:20 RTH: [changes the caption] Fair enough. And I would say, just as a meta comment as to what we're doing here, is that it is evident that each of us has a different perspective on these things, in the act. Michael is tied to the transcript, which is good. Russ is more interested in the, what's he gonna type in the green? Agnes is remembering, sort of, globally, whatever. We all have a different a different perspective that we are that we are trying to honor but not accept as the gold standard.

48:05 MD: That all makes sense.

48:08 RTH: On to Day 6.

Consideration of sample 6.1 starts here

48:10 MD: [laughs] Okay. So, a distinction that *might* be relevant. [pause] In this case, and I'm trying to remember, the reason I'm pausing, I was trying to remember maybe there's no answer to this question, but in this case, sure specifically, Agnes' inner speaking was in some sense or other, addressed to another. And in 7.5, for example, it didn't seem like that was the case. She was innerly speaking something that was, that was that was her own thought that she was writing. So, in some sense, I guess it's addressed to another, but there was not some kind of explicitly present other, so to say that was the addressee of such an objection.

50:05 Agnes: But I also wouldn't say explicitly present other. Because...

50:09 MD: I'm sorry, I didn't hear you.

50:11 Agnes: I wouldn't say explicitly.

50:13 MD: Yeah, I didn't like those words when I said them.

50:17 Agnes: Because the other wasn't present, even though they were addressed to you and Russ,

50:23 MD: Right, I didn't that's why I didn't like those words. But there's a kind of addressee [Agnes: Yes.] in this case that there didn't seem to be in the earlier case of inner speaking. Like, you didn't say you didn't say something like, "as if to an audience member raising an objection," or something like that.

50:41 Agnes: I mean, I think that's true. I'm wondering whether that is, that difference is relevant here.

50:47 MD: I don't know, I have no idea.

50:49 Agnes: And that is a genuine question, because to me, from, from what I... Like, as far as my recollection of these experiences goes, I wouldn't have necessarily highlighted that as a difference that makes a difference, because ultimately, they were both instances of inner speech, and yes, it's true, one of them was in the context of, I'm writing this paper, and there is no particular audience in mind, and the other one was about, like, me imagining myself to be saying something to you and Russ, but those, but those contextual differences I'm not sure they're really, like, part of my experience in any deep sense. I don't know.

51:46 MD: Well, let me ask this. That all makes sense, and I certainly wouldn't know whether the distinction is important. But here's something else that you said, and maybe this gets at something that's more common rather than different. you said, like, almost as if I'm *rehearsing* what I'm gonna say to you. So there's this, like, rehearsal aspect to it, which could be common to both. rehearsal isn't exactly the word to use,

because that's also anticipatory in some sense, whereas I don't I didn't get the impression that 7.5 was anticipatory in any way. But it is a kind of (I don't I'm not sure what the word he uses there) saying words to yourself that you might or may not be that you are also... Here's, maybe, here's what, maybe this is it. You're saying words to yourself that also are words that appear in some other context. In this case, it's writing the word, it's written words. Right? You had just written such an objection, and now you're saying them to yourself. And in the other case, it's words that you anticipate might be spoken in the future. But you're saying them now to yourself. But, so it's both are a kind of rehearsal, although one is kind of more backwards-looking and one is more forwards-looking, but what you're suggesting right now is that the backwards versus forwards-looking thing may not be so important.

53:20 RTH: So let me make a comment about this. So Agnes is, so Michael has suggested the potential for a category, that there's this *impersonal and impersonal* stuff. And Agnes is saying, *well, I don't think that's a category*. And I would say is, *let's not decide that now. Let's allow that to emerge, so let's keep that as a possibility*. And so I have altered, this is the 7-point caption, I have added this phrase to the inner speaking, does that seem like a characteristic, an adequate characteristic of this phrase? And then when we go back to the....

54:03 And also, when I wrote this as "addressed to," I did not put the object of who this was addressed to. That was sort of in the same kind of reaction as Agnes was saying, that Russ and Michael weren't there, and so I didn't put that this was to a particular person, but there was an *it as if* it was addressing two

54:26 Agnes: And, I mean, maybe

54:28 MD: Go ahead.

54:29 Agnes: I think The *addressed to* and the *rehearsal* aspect. I think are distinct, and I think they're both relevant. I would maybe push back against what the distinction Michael was making earlier about or rather, the similarity that Michael was drawing on earlier. If I understand correctly, Michael was saying that both this case and 7.5 could be understood as instances of rehearsal. I think *this one* certainly *can* be. Like, this one, I think, like, rehearsal is a good word, I think, to characterize this one, whereas the other one I wouldn't really characterize as rehearsal. Like, that's just not how I think of the writing and the inner speaking in that context. But I would use that word for this one, and I think that is a difference that makes a difference because (perhaps!) because that kind of when I'm speaking innerly speaking in that kind of rehearsal way, it's like. And I'm not saying this is all necessarily exactly part of the experience, but it's like, I'm imagining myself saying these things to you, like, I'm kind of imagining the conversation, as opposed to inner speaking where I'm writing, which I think *is* a difference. And again, I'm not I'm not using *imagining* to you, like, in, in any kind of literal way, it's just pointing out the difference between these two contexts of inner speech.

55:59 MD: So Yeah, I know I didn't like the word *rehearsal* either.

- 56:04 Agnes: But I said I *do* like it in this context.
- 56:06 MD: Right, no, but I was I didn't I mean, I didn't like it. I agree with that. In fact, I yeah. You said there you said it *as if* to the two of us, but then you made it very clear that we weren't in any way experientially present, so that, that that seems, that *does* feel like rehearsal, like and I was trying to think of how in what sense this inner speaking and the previous one so I I was trying to think about similarities and differences. And the difference is, I think we've clarified The similarity (which may or may not be relevant, or you may not feel that this is a similarity) has something to do with (I hesitate to put it this way), but the *re* in *rehearsal* and the *re* in *repetition*. [laughs] Like, in both cases, you're saying words that somehow also exist in another context. And in one case, you're *repeating* words that you had written, and in one case, you're **rehearsing** words that you anticipate, perhaps, saying. So it's not a kind of ad hoc inner speaking where you're just, like, musing to yourself or something. You're saying words that also have some applicability in a separate context from the one in which you're saying them to yourself. In a writing context, or in a speaking-to-people context. Do you see what I'm saying?
- 57:24 Agnes: Yes.
- 57:25 RTH: So let me let me state it in the way that I would have stated, I think the same thing, and I used I, in my head, used the word *bridge*, that these these words seem to *bridge something*. These were one bridged what she might say to us when the thing happened, and the other case bridged to what she was writing about the, the paper. [Agnes: Yeah.] But I think that I think that's what the *re*, that's the *re* that Michael is referring to is the same kind of a deal. [MD: Yeah.]
- 57:54 Agnes: Yes. Yeah, and I agree. I agree with that. [RTH adjusts some captions]
- 58:29 MD: We talked about that one a long time. I mean, not just now, I mean in the transcript.
- 58:43 RTH: So I guess I would, given that I'm talking to a couple of philosophers here, what I would say is that the... What we are trying to do here is to get the words that we are thinking about using to rest lightly on Agnes's experience. And *not* trying to make them necessarily verbally coherent. This is *not* about fitting a word to a theory, or fitting a word to another batch of words (which is what I sort of what I take philosophy to be). It's about fitting words to, hmm, directly apprehended experience. That's sort of a musing aside for me. On to number 2.

Consideration of sample 6.2 starts here

- 1:00:03 MD: So I'm inclined, but maybe I'm reading too much into Agnes' words, and maybe I'm now... Maybe this is, maybe this is applying a theory here (I don't mean a philosophical theory, I mean a theory about Agnes.) Because what she says I mean, you've summarized it, and that it matches what we said in the transcription, of course. You know, I see the list on the tablet on the table without focusing on any of those aspects. But still, in her description, she was able to say, well, we're talking about the tablet and the table here. We're not talking about it's not it's not that I

see the list. Just... With that, there's some there's something that's there's something that's being picked out of the environment as relevant, as relevant to describe here, and that's the table, and, and it feels a little bit like the same thing as saying, well, I'm seeing I'm seeing the computer screen, but I'm not seeing anything in particular on it. But the computer screen was still the thing that was being picked out as sort of the thing that I was not seeing anything on, which is why we've been saying things like, well, there's maybe some no or weak figure-ground kind of thing going on here. And this feels similar to me in the sense that, y'know, that the, the tables, like the screen, the computer screen here. Like, Agnes felt like that was, in some weak sense, pick-outable. Alright, she didn't say she didn't say I'm seeing the tablet in the kitchen, she said I'm seeing it on the table.

1:01:42 Agnes: So, can I,... I have two comments, one is about, like. So, Michael, I hear what you're saying, and I agree. Like, mostly I agree with you. If we're gonna do it that way, let's stick to *weak* figure-ground or *partial* figure-ground in this case as well. And possibly also, like, in the cat case, that one where, like, the cat is a weak figure-ground, potentially. So, so that's one, one thing I want to say is I, basically, I agree, and I think we should do it the same.

1:02:22 However, one question that I wanted to raise was whether that is something to be like, whether those words are an indication that, in fact, there was some sort of partial figure-ground. Or whether they're a product of the fact that in order to describe an experience, I have to use some sort of conventional language. And, like, *tablet on table* is the language that one uses, rather than, like, *I see table* I mean, I don't even know how to describe it otherwise, right?

1:03:03 MD: I totally agree, Agnes. That's why I was trying that's why I was suggesting that the phrase that we used earlier is correct, something like *weak or no* figure grind.

1:03:12 Agnes: Yeah.

1:03:13 MD: So maybe going back to Russ's one of Russ's themes, maybe we just can't make that distinction, and so we just allow it we allow it to be one or the other.

1:03:20 Agnes: Yeah.

1:03:21 MD: Like, maybe it is, maybe the words are just there *because words have to be there*, or maybe they're there *because you were weakly making a distinction* in experience between the table and the rest of the stuff.

1:03:33 Agnes: Yeah.

1:03:35 RTH: So, so that's that's why I prefer the phrase, *my eyeballs were aimed at*, because when you start like that, it makes it seem like, well, now I can tell you where my eyeballs are aimed: they're aimed at the they're aimed in the direction of the table with the with the Tablet and the and the notepad on it, or whatever the list. But I'm not making any of those figural. That's what

1:04:00 MD: So here's a question, though. When you when you, Agnes, if you were to say "my eyeballs were aimed at" the table. And supposing that you're speaking truly, and The question is. Was there something in your experience in the moment that corresponded to the fact that my eyeballs were aimed at the table, or is this purely propositional knowledge on your part? I know I was in the kitchen, I know the tablet was on the table, *therefore* my eyes must have been aimed at the table, right? In other words, there's no experiential component to that, you're just saying, *that's how my eyeballs had to have been*. Or can you not distinguish between those two things?

1:04:39 Agnes: No, I mean, I okay, so first of all, this wasn't in the kitchen, it was in the office, but that's...

1:04:44 MD: Oh, never mind, sorry.

1:04:46 Agnes: It's okay, it doesn't matter. In my experience. I saw the tablet on the table. Like, not it wasn't, like, an, something I inferred or anything like that. Like, that was part of my experience.

1:05:04 RTH: So it's more than *my eyeballs are aimed at*.

1:05:06 Agnes: Exactly.

1:05:08 RTH: But less than, I see *the tablet*, or I see *the list*, or I see *the table*.

1:05:18 Agnes: I was seeing the tablet on the table with the list.

1:05:21 MD: That's, that's what makes me want to say that it's more like a weak figure-ground thing, but not a but not merely *as a fact of the world*, my eyeballs were looking were pointed at the table.

1:05:33 Agnes: I would agree with, like, I mean, I think, Michael, correct me if I'm wrong, but it seems to me that your point is more about what Russ was saying earlier about the inability to distinguish between little or no figure-ground phenomenon. I think what you're saying is: that is the case here, just as it is in some of the other samples.

1:05:56 MD: Yeah, I would I was kind of

1:05:58 Agnes: I agree with that.

1:05:59 MD: I was kind of reacting to the my eyeballs were pointed at language, because in the past, we've used that language to describe facts of the world that aren't actually facts of our experience. And it seems to me that it was very weakly a fact of your experience, that you were seeing the table. It wasn't just that, in retrospect, you know that your eyes must have been pointed in that direction.

1:06:21 Agnes: Yeah, yeah, it was part of my experience.

1:06:25 MD: But how strong was that being figure-ized? I think that's the part that we're saying, well, little or no.

1:06:31 Agnes: Yeah. I agree.

1:06:34 RTH: So we happy, we happy...?

1:06:36 Agnes: As well, if we can revise that one.

1:06:50 RTH: [scrolls looking for cat sample] Anybody remember where the cat is?

1:06:52 Agnes: I think you just scrolled past it a second ago. It's on day 7, I believe.

1:07:03 MD: Yeah, it is, I'm just looking here. It's 7.3.

1:07:08 RTH: There it is, 7.3. So we're gonna change this...

1:07:19 Agnes: Cat.

1:07:24 RTH: It's not just the cat. If we left it as cat, it would make it seem like the figure. It's cat/pavement/porch.

1:07:33 MD: I mean, I was okay with either of the languages. The thing I was reacting to was that my eyeballs were pointed at language, and I was only reacting to that because we had been using that kind of phrase to be clear that we're just talking about real-world facts and not experiential facts, and it wasn't obvious to me that we were doing that in this case.

1:07:53 RTH: Fair enough.

1:07:54 Agnes: I would change this to cat, not cat/pavement/porch. Because I think if any, like, if something was the cat was slightly figure-ized. The, the pavement and the porch were in the background. Those were the other aspects of my experience that weren't figure-ized.

1:08:20 MD: Sorry, I just killed a fly on my computer screen. So, it looked like I just whacked you in the face with something that wasn't you, that was the fly.

1:08:30 RTH: So my recollection is that the cat was not as figure-ized as Agnes just made it out to be.

1:08:39 Agnes: I mean, it wasn't. That's why I said little weak, or partial, or diff like, like, I want to say that it's not figure-ized, but maintained I guess, like. To be consistent with the other ones, I can't I don't feel like I can confidently say that this one is so different from, say, that the first sample we talked about today, where I was looking at the screen, and there wasn't there was, like, a little, little-to-no partial diffuse figure-ground phenomenon computer screen, I would say I'm unsure whether there was little-or-no figure-ground phenomenon, parentheses, cat, because if there if to the

extent that there was some figure-ground phenomenon, which there may not have been, and if there is, it's, it's very weak. The figure would have been the cat. Because the only other things in my visual field, and in my experience, rather, were the pavement and the porch. There was nothing else.

- 1:10:00 RTH: So the question is, Is that what Agnes felt, Agnes' experience was at the moment of the beep? And then there's Agnes' experience during the interview a week ago, and then there's Agnes' experience as she recalls it today. And we have already seen an example where the last two of those things are discrepant.
- 1:10:24 Agnes: I'm willing to stand corrected, but I'm I am... I mean, one thing I one thing I feel pretty confident about, and you can correct me, like, if Michael wants to fact-check me what I said in the transcript, he can. But, like, I feel like I have a pretty distinct memory of my visual experience. And, I mean, there just based on, like, there was nothing else behind the cat. Like, there was the cat, there was the pavement, and there was the house. There was, like, nothing else in my visual field that I *saw*. And I mean, I think the only like, for me, that is clear. Like, that is just a fact. (I'm willing to be corrected about any of this.) The question, the thing that I'm less sure about is The extent of the figure-ground phenomenon. But I feel confident that those were the only things in my visual field.
- 1:11:33 RTH: [displays the transcript from sample 7.2] So here's your opening salvo about it.
- 1:11:45 Agnes: Yeah, so that ma- does that not match what I'm saying right now?
- 1:11:51 MD: My way of reading this is that that if we want to try to assimilate it to some extent to some of the other ones, like the list on the tablet, on the table one, in that case, like, the, the I would assimilate, like house and porch to the table, and cat to the list, or something like that.
- 1:12:15 Agnes: That's what I'm saying, yeah.
- 1:12:21 MD: But in both of those cases, it seems like
- 1:12:25 Agnes: Well, I would assimilate cat to list on tablet.
- 1:12:29 MD: Yeah, yeah. Fair. Yeah. I think that's what I was trying to say, but maybe I said it wrong. And it seems to me that what we've been or *one* of the things we've been saying is that in that case, it's not clear the extent to which the table the table was figure-ized with respect to something else or not. And in this case, it's not clear what whether the house and porch were figure-ized with respect to anything else.
- 1:13:06 Agnes: There was no *anything else*. Like, just based on, like, the perspective of where I was sitting, y'know, like, there was no any like, like, I was low to the ground, the cat was low to the ground, and, like, my vision was limited here. There were no other, like, I don't know, other things that I could see, it was just that bit of porch, the pavement, and the cat.

- 1:13:38 MD: I think it's not exactly like the other ones, then.
- 1:13:41 RTH: It's not exactly like the other ones, but nothing has to be exactly like anything else. But what I would what I would say is: most people who had this who had more or less this kind of experience would have said, as their opening salvo, "I was seeing the cat." And there would be no mention of the pavement *at all*. Or of the porch. And if you asked them, if you pressed them, they would say, wait, you know, the cat was sitting on the pavement, of course, and there was the porch in the background, but I wasn't really paying attention to that. My experience was on the cat. Agnes does not sound like that *at all*. To me. Now, the question is, is that just a verbal thing? *Well, Agnes has this way of speaking, and those people have that other way of speaking*. Or is this an experiential thing?
- 1:14:36 Agnes: I think it's, I think it's an experiential thing, and I think what you're getting at, Russ, is that there wasn't much of a figure-ground phenomenon. But I guess the reason I'm maybe revising that, or kind of pushing back against it, is just in light of the other samples that seem kind of similar, and one of the things we talked about was... I don't know, I guess.... I'm having a hard time, with certainty, drawing a clear distinction between, say, this sample and the first one we talked about today, I believe it was 7.5 or whatever, where we decided that we should call it, *little or no* figure-ground phenomenon, or, like, *weak, partial*, like I just I don't know, I'm having a hard time here, knowing where, like, the categories where things should be categorized differently or not. And partly I am, like, I am drawing on my memory of what I, like, what I remember the experience to have been. I don't know. I don't like, I feel I don't feel confident about any of this.
- 1:16:11 RTH: So, so let me let me draw what I take to be a hugely important distinction here, and that is: that we're trying to determine the conversation that we're having for the last 5 minutes here is about trying to determine whether there's a 20% figure-ish, a 20-20%-ish figure thing, or a 25%-ish figure thing? Whether, whether there's whether there is a slight difference between the cat and the, and the computer screen, or whatever. But in both of those but in both of those situations, it's a long way away of from a clear figure-ground phenomenon. [Agnes: Hmm.] And that's, and to my way of thinking, the latter part of that is the important deal. The important deal is Agnes' figure-ground phenomenon is experientially, *not just linguistically*, but experientially different from those other people who talk about their figure-ground phenomenon. She has, at best, a *weak* figure-ground phenomenon *sometimes*. How weak? Whether we call it 25, or 35 or whatever, doesn't much matter, but it's not 100, or 95, or 90.
- 1:17:22 Agnes: Agreed, yeah.
- 1:17:24 RTH: And that's and that is the big deal. And we can't lose sight of that from the fact well, we can't you know, I think there are people who criticize my work and say, well, you guys can't decide between whether there's no figure-ground here or just a little bit of figure-ground. And I'm and I'm saying, Well, that's not the important distinction. The important distinction is Agnes's figure-ground phenomenon is not the same as a lot of other people's figure-ground phenomena, as best we can tell.

1:17:51 MD: That's fair.

1:17:56 RTH: So... And that's another way of saying that the caption, the captions don't have to be exactly the same. And if we do make them exactly the same, that doesn't mean that the experience has to be exactly the same.

1:18:10 Agnes: Okay, yeah, that's helpful, actually, yeah. So I'm happy with keeping it, like, as it was, in light of that.

1:18:23 RTH: So let me, let me Where did the cat go? 7.5? [scrolls in transcript document]

1:18:28 Agnes: 7.3, I believe, wasn't it? Yeah. Scroll down.

1:18:52 RTH: [alters the caption of 7.3] That seem fair?

1:18:58 Agnes: I mean, I so I would either revert back to our original description, which was *no* figure-ground phenomenon. Or if it's partial, then I would just put cat in parentheses. Like, what I think is not the figure is the cat, pavement and porch, with some other stuff as the ground, because I think there was no other stuff. I would either have just cat in parentheses, or I'm happy with just *no* figure-ground phenomenon, which is what we had originally.

1:18:58 Russ comments: I think Agnes and I are talking past each other somewhat, and (accepting that we are talking about a minor part of the experience) the important consideration is whether the cat is more prominent than the pavement and the porch, or whether the cat, the pavement, and the porch are equally (but not very) prominent. That is, I entirely agree with Agnes when she says "what I think is not the figure is the cat, pavement and porch, with some other stuff as the ground," but that's not the issue. The issue is whether (a) the cat is figure-ish and the pavement and porch are ground-ish; or (b) the pavement is figure-ish and the cat and porch are ground-ish; or (c) the porch is figure-ish and the pavement and cat are ground-ish; or (d) that cat, the pavement, and the porch are more-or-less equally but not strongly figure-ish. If I had to bet, I'd bet on (d) as being more faithful. The good news is that I don't have to bet. See the comment at 1:19:54.

1:19:35 RTH: So does it

1:19:39 MD: So you're seeing the, you're seeing the pavement and the porch and the cat. And it's maybe, maybe the cat is, in some weak sense, figure-ized relative to pavement and porch, or maybe not. Is that what you're saying?

1:19:52 Agnes: Yes, that's what I'm saying.

1:19:54 MD: Okay. That that's why that's I guess that's how, ultimately, how I understood it. And I was trying to assimilate it a little bit too strongly, probably, to some of the earlier experiences. So there's something similar here, but maybe we, maybe, maybe trying

to make it fit into some model that exactly applies to all of them doesn't make sense.

1:19:54 Russ comments: We have been hammering on this figure-ground issue since about 1:00:03 (and before that, too): that is, we have spent 20 minutes trying to get one detail right (and will do so later as well). And our conclusion, as MD says at 1:19:39, is "maybe the cat is, in some weak sense, figure-ized relative to pavement and porch, or maybe not." That might seem like we've wasted 20 minutes, but I think the opposite: this has been valuable conversation in that it iteratively builds our bracket-the-natural-attitude skill, and that is among the most important DES skills.

There is a strong natural-attitude tendency to make the cat figural and the pavement and porch ground—Agnes is interested in, petting, feeding, worried about the *cat*, not the pavement or porch. We have practiced bracketing that tendency; we have honored RTH's attending to what Agnes said near the end of her opening salvo (54:09 in Interview 7: "So I, it was like the visual seeing the, **the cat and the pavement**, but not, um, yeah, again, when the beep went off, I'm not sure if I was focused on the cat or if I was just kind of seeing the whole scene. I'm not sure") and his noticing (1:13:41) that that is an unusual statement: "most people who had this who had more or less this kind of experience would have said, as their opening salvo, 'I was seeing the cat'." But we *didn't* blindly believe Russ's opinion; and we did not blindly accept the natural attitude. We tried, and we tried again, *and maybe next time* (if there is a next time) we will be better able to attend to these distinctions at the only time they can be made (which is to say, in the immediacy of the beep). That is another statement of the importance of the iterative method's focus on ever new samples.

1:20:24 RTH: We're in the weeds as far as distinctions. our concern. So, are we happy with this [the 7.3 caption] in 7.3?

1:20:38 Agnes: Yes.

1:20:47 RTH: And we haven't yet gotten to the second half of 6.2 here. But we happy with this [the first half of the 6.2 caption] so far?

1:20:59 Agnes: Yes.

1:21:27 RTH: And this one, I didn't I, I was never fully satisfied that I understood what was happening here, in this, in the second half.

1:21:49 MD: So I think one of the things that came out of that discussion, which I think you said somewhere in there, yeah, it's not a, so you said *it's not a sensory thing*, like, Agnes because I, I think I pushed Agnes, like, were you feeling it? In your nostrils, or in your throat, or whatever, and You said you said you... well, you did say you were feeling the breath in your nostrils, but then... What else did you say? Well, so I don't know what to make of this. Let me read it out loud and see what you think, Agnes. So I asked "you're really just..." (this was a question, although I put it in the form of a statement here) "you're really just paying attention to breathing or breath, rather than some physical feeling in this area." And then you said, "yes!" Oh, no! I'm sorry,

you said “yes and no. I was feeling the breath primarily in my nostrils. So that sounds like it was a physical feeling. But it was in your nostrils. Maybe I was pointing to some other area, and you were saying, yes, I was feeling it, but not, not in the spot you’re pointing to, Michael. I was feeling it in my nostrils. Now, I’m interpreting our words now, in retrospect, not really remembering what I might have been doing.

1:23:21 Agnes: Yeah, I mean, from what I recall, and kind of connecting this to Michael’s description, one of the discussions that we had was about what was happening at the moment of the beep? And, again, this whole what experience did the beep interrupt thing came up?

1:23:46 MD: Right.

1:23:46 Agnes: I wasn’t able to locate the beep. Like, it’s not like, in breath, in breath, in breath, beep! I *was breathing in*. I was not able to do that so precisely. What I was able to do, I believe reasonably confidently, but that’s something I don’t remember at all, so don’t take my word for that, was that I was somehow attending to my breath, and that I was feeling it in my nostrils. I think the feeling in my nostrils didn’t exhaust the experience. Like, it wasn’t just feeling breath in nostrils, it was something more than that. So I think that part of what part of the issue, from what I remember, that came up was just like, how to describe this exactly, the experience of this what was and what was precisely happening at the moment of the beep, which I wasn’t able to do.

1:24:43 MD: So, right, so I won’t read all this text, but in case a reference is helpful, we’re talking about 36:14 in the transcript. And, and that, that’s, that I think I’m about to say what you just said, Agnes, but, so but you so tell me if that’s if you feel like I’m not. So Agnes wanted to say that in the general vicinity of the, the beep. she was somehow aware of the ins and the outs. So she says, in experience, the ins were distinguished from the outs, but she was not able to say.... So there’s some general sense in which in and out was happening, but she was not able to say, at the moment of the beep, whether it was an in or an out. [Agnes: Yes.] So this is this is one of those cases where Agnes was not able to pinpoint even though she knows that in her experience there was stuff going on, she wasn’t able to pinpoint exactly where the beep happened relative to that. So, similar to words, where I don’t know where it happened, whether it happened after this word or this word, but I know that words were going on. It seems it feels similar to that to me. Is that, is that fair?

1:25:59 Agnes: Yeah, I mean, the only thing I would alter in what you said was, I would say, in contrast to, like, one of the other beeps that we talked about, where I was saying blah blah blah, and the beep went off at this point, and I’m confident.

1:26:15 MD: No, that’s what I’m saying, that’s exactly what I’m saying, is

1:26:17 Agnes: Oh, that’s what you’re saying.

1:26:18 MD: Oh, I’m saying it is in distinction to that.

1:26:20 Agnes: Oh, in distinction! Okay, gotcha. Yeah.

1:26:25 MD: We noted that in an earlier one today. [Agnes: Yeah.] precisely because we thought it might be distinct from some other ones [Agnes: Yeah.] where you weren't able to say exactly where it happened.

1:26:36 Agnes: Yep.

1:26:41 MD: And I think the confusion there was a long discussion of that, and I think the confusion was that you were you initially said, I'm feeling the in and out of my breath. [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] And we couldn't figure out whether it was an in or an out, and so at one point, I offered the idea, which turned out not to pan out. I offered the idea of, well, maybe you were just experiencing the in and outness of it without distinguishing the ins and the outs. And you said, no, I was distinguishing the ins and the outs, I just don't know whether it was an in or an out at the moment of the beep.

1:27:09 Agnes: Yeah.

1:27:12 MD: I don't know how to summarize that in green text, but that seems like a relevant observation.

1:27:22 RTH: So, what I would what I would say about that is I don't still don't think I understood, understand what this experience is. It seems like it's less than a sensory thing, or more than, or different from a sensory thing.

1:27:37 MD: Well, she says she's feeling it in her nostrils, though, which kind of feels sensory to me.

1:27:42 RTH: Yeah, I didn't believe it.

1:27:43 Agnes: I think it's a subtle...

1:27:46 MD: I, I, Russ said he, he said yes, but he didn't believe it. [Agnes: Wow!]

1:27:46 Russ comments: RE (MD 1:27:37) "Well, she says she's feeling it in her nostrils, though, which kind of feels sensory to me."

In cleaning this green-meeting transcript, I have watched/listened to the 6.2 interview, and what I have found is that when Agnes begins to talk about her breathing experience (at 30:55) she spends two full minutes (until 32:53) saying (to my ear) that she doesn't know how to describe this experience of breathing. And a minute later she spends another minute (34:00—34:54) in the same vein. Agnes has demonstrated that she *can* describe *sensations* when they occur (stretching legs in 5.3 and 6.1; lip sensation in 7.5; etc.). So why would Agnes spend a huge amount of time and energy saying she doesn't know how to talk about this breathing stuff? The most reasonable answer, to my ear, is that this breathing stuff is *not* simply nostril sensation.

RE (RTH 1:27:42) “Yeah, I didn’t believe it.”

Here, RTH expresses his impression that Agnes forcefully conveyed that Yes, it had to do with her nostrils, and Yes, it had to do with in and out, but No, it was not experienced in a simple sensory way. So what RTH might have said at 1:27:42 is “I didn’t believe it was simply a sensation in the nostrils, and likely neither did Agnes.”

I think the issue is likely the epoché: in the natural attitude, if it has to do with nostrils and the in and out of breathing, then it *must be sensation*. I think that is not necessarily true in the experiential world. The natural attitude is a worthy opponent.

I’m no mind reader, so mostly I am happy to leave this aspect where I started it 1:21:27 “I was never fully satisfied that I understood what was happening here.”

Agnes comments: I agree that the attention to the breath is not exhausted by the sensation in the nostrils. I'd say that's part of it, but the experience of attending to the breath isn't reducible to this sensation.

- 1:27:52 RTH: What I believed it was that it was more about nostrils than about chest, or about abdomen, or something. I believe, [MD: Okay.] I believe that, but that doesn’t mean that I felt breath in my nostrils.
- 1:28:07 Agnes: I think it’s A subtle sensory thing. And, like... Okay, like, if somebody comes and, like, smacks me in the arm, that is not subtle, right? Like, I felt pain in my arm, or whatever. Feeling breath in nostrils, or, you know, like, let’s say you’re sitting upside and you feel, like, a slight wind. That’s more subtle, but it’s still sensory, and I think that’s.... I mean, okay, I think this is at least partially a subtle sensory thing. I don’t know that that exhausts the experience. I think it’s also, I think it’s also, like, in the realm of....
- 1:29:08 I mean, two things are two separate things are coming into my mind, and I don’t know which of them were (or perhaps neither) characterizes this. So one thing is the thing I was gonna say is, like, maybe it’s in the realm of, like, a pause. And an awareness like, a pause, and but then an awareness of what’s going on in that pause, which is just breathing. The other thing that comes to my mind, but this is, like, highly theory-laden, is just, like, it was, like, a moment of mindfulness, of just like, in the Buddhist context, often it’s discussed as, like, a bare awareness. But I don’t know if that’s too theory-laden to say; probably it is. I don’t know.
- 1:29:59 RTH: So, my understanding of bare awareness would be, in the Buddhist sense, would be: If I’m inhaling, I am experiencing myself as inhaling, and if I’m exhaling, I’m experiencing myself as exhaling. [Agnes: Yeah.] Which is not what I understood Agnes to be saying here, that she is somehow into the cyclical nature.
- 1:30:33 And so what I guess I’ve been thinking about as this discussion is that it’s sort of like a lack of figure-ground of, but in the, in the experiential sense. I’m not making the inhale the figure, I’m not making the exhale the figure, but I’m not discarding it either, entirely, not ignoring it.
- 1:30:59 MD: So, in that whole discussion, there was a lot of back and forth between me and Agnes about I tried to get her to say what tell me tell me something about the

physical feeling, and she was like, no, it's not that, no, it's not that. And then there was a lot, a long discussion from Agnes at the end, of which she says, I think I'm confabulating now. And then but then but then the, when she the moment when she was, like, Yes, this is it. I had I said "you were feeling something physical in this area, your nostrils, but it was just breath, not temperature, or flow, or," and in other words, I was referring back to the list of things that I might have that's more specific that she might have been feeling. The flow-ness of it, the temperature of it, whatever. And so it was like, none of that, it was just breath, felt in the nostrils. And Agnes said, "Exactly, yeah, yeah." That was the one time that she was like, Yes. Yeah, I'm looking at her response. So you have to read mine in context. I wasn't just worried about whether it's temperature or flow. It was, like, the whole list of things that I had offered earlier that were my attempts to try to characterize the nature of the physical feeling. And she wants to say it was just breath, but it was in her nostrils.

1:32:26 Agnes: And, and Russ, I mean, what you said earlier about, like, notice, like, when the breath is moving in, you notice that it's moving out. When the breath is moving out, you notice that it's moving out. I mean, I didn't say those words, but I would have characterized it that way. I mean, I think those words characterized what I was experiencing. Again, with the big caveat that, of course, this was a long time ago, and, like, I may be misremembering, like, y'know, I could be getting it wrong in all sorts of ways.

1:32:57 But, what the thing that Michael just pointed to... I mean, I think part of the issue here, perhaps, is... I mean, the passage that Michael pointed to is like, oh, I'm feeling the breath. One way of replying to that might be "No, you're not feeling the breath, you *must be* feeling some movement in the hairs of your nostrils, or warmth, or whatever." And I said, *no, I'm feeling the breath*. And of course, like, I'm part of why I raised the theory-ladenness stuff is because I've done a good bit of meditation practice and listened to people talk about this and so forth, and of course that informs how I'm interpreting any experience that I have. So I don't know, I don't know what to make of that, but I, like, I don't know what my point is here, except that, I think that's part of the challenge here in describing—for me to describe what precisely I was going, what was going on when I say that in, like, a non-theory-laden way. I don't think I'm able to do that. And maybe that's why you're saying, "I don't know what was going on here." I don't know.

1:32:57 Russ comments: I think there is an inexorable pressure in the direction of the natural attitude, and an inexorable pressure in the direction of theory, and an inexorable pressure in other directions as well. It is my impression that Agnes is trying and has tried throughout to resist/bracket those pressures and describe her experience with fidelity, and to be forthright about the difficulties of that enterprise. I suspect that is what led her on day 6 to preface her description of her breathing experience with three minutes of caveats.

Accomplishing that resistance/bracketing (if it can be accomplished) is by proceeding *upstream*, back to the source, that is, back to Agnes's experience. Not merely back to the words that we used to describe that experience—it is too easy to cherry-pick particular words or phrases that align with one or another of the inexorable forces—but back to Agnes's experience itself. That is, of course, another

description of the iterative method: we build some bracketing-muscles by exercising in the service of one sample, and then we get another, brand new sample, and perhaps the muscles we have developed will allow us to gain a toe-hold into a higher fidelity apprehension and description the next time around.

1:34:35 RTH: Well, the good news or the bad news, depending on how you look at it, is I think this is the only sample that's sort of, like, in this category. [Agnes: Yeah.] And so, from the good news point of view, I think we don't have to much worry about it—it's not going to be a characteristic of much of Agnes' experience. The bad news is that if we had more examples, then we might be able to triangulate across them and start to understand what we what we're doing here.

1:35:03 MD: That sounds right.

1:35:26 RTH: Anybody else want to put something in the green here?

1:35:29 MD: I think it I mean, again, I mean, this is all now in light of what you just said, which, in my memory at least, relative to my memory, seems right. We did have this long discussion about, was it physical or not? I think Agnes wanted to say it is physical, but there was no specific physical sensation that she was able to identify apart from *breath*. Which I found interesting, even if it's unique, relative to the list of experiences that we have. And I don't know, Russ, is maybe that's related to what you want to say about your own self there that you don't fully understand. Now, I don't fully understand it, either, but I think those words, at least, are a little more specific than just, I don't know what's going on here.

1:35:29 Russ comments: RE "I think Agnes wanted to say it is physical, but there was no specific physical sensation that she was able to identify apart from *breath*. Which I found interesting, even if it's unique, relative to the list of experiences that we have."
I agree.

1:36:25 RTH: Okay. So we're happy with this as a [highlights the caption]

1:36:35 Agnes: I mean, I guess

1:36:37 MD: Well, I would say "physical without a specific physical sensation having been specified," or something like that.

1:36:44 Agnes: Agreed. And then, I want to say, without Michael and Russ fully understanding, because I think I understand. [laughs] I don't know if I'm doing a good job convincing you that I understand.

1:37:02 MD: I mean, I don't know if I I don't know how I feel about it. I think I could probably convince myself that I understand it, but I'm not sure that I would... Yeah, I don't know how I don't know I'm not sure what my stance is towards this. But, but I think I do like the "physical without there being a specifically mentioned physical

sensation” or something like that. That does strike me as a good summary of that whole discussion.

1:37:02 Russ comments: RE “physical without there being a specifically mentioned physical sensation”

I think to say there was no *specifically mentioned* sensation makes it far too much about the words—it makes it seem that Agnes *could have* mentioned it but *didn’t*. It is at least possible, and I would say likely, that there was no directly apprehended *sensation*, whether or not it was mentioned.

1:37:25 Agnes: I agree.

1:37:33 RTH: So, in the spirit of the caption is trying to remind us of what we were talking about. Is this fair enough?

1:37:41 MD: Yes.

1:37:42 Agnes: Yes. Maybe attending to breathing? Or is that too complicated?

1:37:56 MD: Is it attending, or just awareness?

1:38:01 Agnes: I don’t know.

1:38:02 MD: I don’t know either, and I think one of those words Russ doesn’t like, so I may

1:38:06 RTH: I don’t like either one of them. [they laugh] But, but they’re, but they’re only words, and we gotta, gotta do the best we can do. [they laugh] So, shall we move on to number 6.3 here?

1:38:26 MD: Sure.

Consideration of sample 6.3 starts here

1:38:38 RTH: So this is seeing without figure-ground.

1:38:41 Agnes: Yes. And then I would also say “anticipatory pause.”

1:38:54 MD: Yep.

1:39:08 RTH: So it is now 9.42, which is 12.42, which is 15 minutes before we had to be done. Do we want to stop here, or do we want to see whether we can get through Day 5?

1:39:22 MD: Well, does it matter if we I mean, we’re not going to get through Day 5, but does it matter do we have to get through it a whole day, or does it make sense?

1:39:28 RTH: No, it doesn’t matter.

1:39:29 MD: Well, then I say let’s go till 1 o’clock and get what we can done.

1:39:34 Agnes: I'm happy with it.

1:39:44 MD: This is like grading papers, Russ. You have to get through as much of it as possible [Agnes laughs] in the time allotted. I don't mean it's like grading papers in the sense that it's drudgery. [laughs]

1:39:56 RTH: Mmm.

1:39:56 MD: I think, I think, okay.

1:39:57 RTH: I understood what you meant!

1:40:06 MD: But Agnes will get a grade at the end. You too, Michael! You especially. Well, that's fair. If we know that we're grading each other, maybe we'll be nicer. [they laugh]

1:40:18 Agnes: Maybe. Uh-Oh, I'm attending to my breathing. I guess enough.

1:40:37 RTH: Making a liar making a liar out of me in the first sample! [they laugh] This seemed like a different deal from attending into my breathing, but from the previous one.

1:40:53 MD: It did.

1:41:01 Agnes: I mean, okay, if I can say something that I think Russ will disagree with, but I'm gonna say it anyway. I would again, from my memory, I would say that this probably bears a lot of resemblance to the attending to the breathing. Like, I mean, it's... That previous beep that we were talking about, the kind of attending to the breathing that was going on there, is the kind of attending to breathing that you do in a meditation practice, but it was happening kind of spontaneously, and of course, again, with the big caveat that I may be misremembering, or whatever.

1:41:44 MD: This one does feel more intentional than the other one.

1:41:46 Agnes: It was more intentional, yeah, exactly. It was more intentional rather than spot like, that's what I was trying to be doing here, as you can see with the more than 80%, like, I mean, a lot of meditation experience, especially in the beginning, when one is distracted, is not actually doing that, so I think that was, it was not as present as some meditations are, but it was... That is what I was kind of trying to do.

1:42:30 MD: There is, so there was a discussion here about (and maybe it's in this description, no) there was a discussion here about the location of the beep relative to experience, and there was and it ended up (I'm around 8.31 right now in the transcript) it ended up that you were willing to say. it could it might be the 80 the 80-20 might be more of a temporal something. In other words, I'm like.

1:43:05 Agnes: Great.

1:43:06 MD: I'm 80% sure that it was during the attending to breathing, but maybe it wasn't, maybe it was really during this whirl of thoughts about the beeper. And so, I think that's relevant in part because it may be another one of these cases where you're not, well, it is another one of these cases where you're not sure where the beeper actually happened. [RTH displays transcript]

1:43:31 Agnes: Mm-hmm.

1:43:36 MD: But what is similar to this one, similar between this one and the previous breathing one, is you're again insisting that it's more about the physical nature of the breathing, rather than, like, a cognitive thought to the effect, I am breathing, or something like that.

1:43:52 Agnes: Yeah.

1:44:06 RTH: Okay. This seem right?

1:44:31 MD: Yes, are we trying to I don't I mean, I guess this is not specifically, aspect of Agnes' experience, but then we're but then we've been saying maybe it connects to Agnes' experience. And by it here, I mean the lack of clarity about when the beep happened relative to experience, because this seems another case like that. So Agnes was going back and forth between this was a 100% slash 0% breathing words, one way or the other. But I'm but I'm only but I'm not sure which one it was. And then the other option was, I was sort of 80% attending to breathing and 20% to swirl of words. But she wasn't able to, like, distinguish between those two things.

1:45:32 RTH: So what did we say originally? It was one of the early [scrolls to sample 7.2]

1:45:39 MD: It was the very first one, I think. No, I'm wrong.

1:45:52 RTH: Here it was. Well, we said it was in 7.2, she *was* confident about.

1:46:02 MD: Right, but we raised that because of anticipating that there would be, yeah, *lack* of confidence.

1:46:09 RTH: So now we're in sample... [scrolls back to 5.2]

1:46:13 MD: 5.1, should be, or 5.2?

1:46:15 RTH: Yeah, 5.2. So this should be not confident about moment of the beep.

1:46:21 MD: Yeah, or just lack of confidence.

1:46:52 RTH: Onward to number 3.

Consideration of sample 5.3 starts here

- 1:47:12 Agnes: So that's, like, a lack of figure-ground phenomenon. And then a bodily sensation awareness, or however you put it, Russ. Anticipatory pause. [laughs]
- 1:47:45 RTH: Seems pretty straightforward. We happy about that?
- 1:48:02 MD: Yeah.
- 1:48:04 Agnes: The only thing I don't know if this matters, but the kind of, like, that, that *eager* anticipation, should that be Should that be included in the pause? I feel like that's maybe distinct a little bit from the others. [RTH includes "eager" in caption] Yeah.
- 1:48:26 MD: Yeah, it's a slightly stronger sense of anticipation from some of the others. It's still anticipation, but yeah, you were more emphatic about that in this one than in the others.

Consideration of sample 5.4 starts here

- 1:49:31 Agnes: So should I mean, should we say something about seeing figure-ground phenomenon here?
- 1:49:39 RTH: And if we were to say that, which way would we go? No figure-ground or figure-ground?
- 1:49:46 Agnes: I would lean towards figure-ground? Like, I think the phone was figure-ized in this case.
- 1:50:00 RTH: So what I would say is that I must not have thought that, when I wrote this description.
- 1:50:06 Agnes: Okay, I could be wrong.
- 1:50:08 RTH: because I wrote this [highlights].
- 1:50:11 Agnes: Right.
- 1:50:13 RTH: If this were normal figure-ground, everyday figure-ground, I'd say I'd reach for and see the phone.
- 1:50:19 MD: Yeah, so here's so here's something Agnes says I'm not focusing on anything in particular, it's all just there in front of me.
- 1:50:29 Agnes: Okay, never mind, I take back.
- 1:50:33 RTH: So, so it's a hugely important deal that what this what Agnes' retrospection doesn't match up with what she said at the time. And that's and that's this is by no means a criticism of Agnes. It is the way it is it is the, the bane of everybody's existence, basically, that...

- 1:50:33 Russ comments: By “bane of everybody’s existence,” RTH was starting to say that the natural attitude infects (nearly) everyone’s retrospections. In retrospection, if I am reaching for the phone, *I must be* experiencing the phone as the figure of my experience. That is why bracketing the natural attitude is so difficult.
- 1:50:55 Agnes: So I guess part of why I, I think part of why I interpret it that way is because of the reach for the phone with the enacted but not experienced intention of unplugging it. Part of what was tripping me up, and like, I, I had a hard time I was just kind of using the figure-ground phenomenon as a starting point for our discussion, is because of that other component of this first part. So I don’t know, I’m just I’m not sure how to make, like, what to make of that with respect to figure-ground. Like there’s an enacted intention of unplugging it. It feels I don’t I don’t know, I don’t know if that’s right.
- 1:51:39 MD: So, my interpretation (I’m reading through the transcript now, I won’t read through all the things), but my interpretation is that As a visual experience, there wasn’t a whole lot of figure-ground, but you were definitely, like, cognitively focused, or *intentionally* focused on the phones, like, that’s the thing I need, because I need to do something with that. You were gonna answer it. [Agnes: Yeah] Answer a message or something. [Agnes: Yeah.] But that kind of importance to you in the moment of the phone is not the same thing as visual figure-ground.
- 1:52:11 Agnes: Yeah, I yeah, good. Agreed. So should we say I mean, okay, should we settle on no figure-ground phenomenon? Seeing with no figure-ground?
- 1:52:31 MD: I don’t think we really carefully explored that in this one. We didn’t it wasn’t a, you didn’t make a big deal out of it, but it looks to me like we didn’t really, either.
- 1:52:40 Agnes: Hmm.
- 1:52:41 RTH: [scrolls through transcript] So what was the sentence that you just read? The first one.
- 1:52:47 MD: Oh, I wasn’t reading any particular sentence, I was just I was just reading through the entire transcript.
- 1:52:52 RTH: You quoted a sentence., at least as I recall it. The reaching
- 1:52:59 MD: Where let me okay, I wasn’t quoting, so I was just summarizing, so maybe I mis-summarized, but where was I? What was I looking at? See if I can find something.
- 1:53:16 RTH: [reads] “I could see the phone, and I was focused on the phone on the counter.”
- 1:53:26 MD: Right. But then So, so, again, I’m, I’m just interpreting here, but my interpretation so the question was, what’s the nature of that focus? And as I was reading through this, maybe I’m misinterpreting it, it seemed to me the nature of that focus was something like, *this is the thing I need to do something with*. But it wasn’t so much a visual thing as a this is the object of interest to me in the moment, because I need to

answer messages, or unplug it, or both, I can't remember now. I think it was both. I think it was unplugging for the sake of taking it somewhere so you could answer messages.

1:54:12 Agnes: Yeah.

1:54:17 MD: That's why I'm saying I don't think we, in the end, really explored carefully whether this was a figure-ground phenomenon. It was more But the nature of the focus didn't seem to be Agnes saying, "this thing stood out to me visually from this other thing." Like, she used the words, I'm seeing the phone on the counter, but those same words have been used in situations where we're saying there *wasn't* a strong figure-ground thing, and so I think we can't interpret those *words themselves* as meaning figure-ground.

1:54:50 RTH: I agree.

1:54:52 MD: And so, the question is, what's the nature of the focus? And I guess if we had evidence that the nature of the focus on the phone *was* visual, then we could say, okay, well, that *is* the right interpretation in this case. But it seems to me there's an equally plausible, if not more plausible, interpretation of the focus, is that it was the object of interest to Agnes in the moment. Rather than the object that visually marked itself out from everything else. That's what I was trying to say earlier; maybe I didn't say that very well.

1:55:20 RTH: So, if what you're saying is that we're not going to say anything about figure-ground phenomenon about this, I agree with that.

1:55:26 MD: That's what yeah, that's what I was saying, is I don't I don't think we have a conclusive thing to say one way or the other.

1:55:31 RTH: I agree.

1:55:34 MD: What we do have a conclusive thing to say is that Agnes was interested in the phone. I mean, I don't know that we need to say that, but I mean, I think that's, that seems to be true in this case.

1:55:54 Agnes: And I mean, we want to say some we want to say something about the visual phenomenon.

1:55:59 MD: Yeah, so you said, you said here. that in your vision I'm at 39:53 now. You said, like, what was in my visual fear? I was seeing phone on counter.

1:56:09 Agnes: Hmm.

1:56:10 MD: Right? But I'm now, what I'm saying is, we never really explored whether that is describing a figure-ground experience. So we did explore that when you said, I'm seeing tablet on table, or whatever it was. We, we, we were kind of I mean

- 1:56:27 Agnes: Because the fact that we didn't explore it explicitly rule out our describing it... Are we mentioning figure-ground at all now in this context?
- 1:56:40 MD: I mean, my inclination would be to say. could I mean, similar words were used here to cases where we did explore it, so it could be interpreted the same way, but I don't think we have very strong evidence for that, apart from just saying, *well, same words were used, so maybe it's like the other one*. So the same figure of speech was used here, as you used when you described tablet-on-table, or whatever, whatever they were. But we never, we never said enough in my reading of this, we never really said enough to... You weren't saying things like, but nothing was standing out in particular, or things like that, which is what the kind of thing you were saying earlier.
- 1:57:22 Agnes: Right. So one... Hmm. Yeah, I mean, Russ, like, what's your answer to this question about whether we should say anything about figure-ground or not.
- 1:57:43 RTH: I would not say anything about figure-ground, about this.
- 1:57:47 Agnes: Okay.
- 1:57:47 RTH: And my logic there is something like: if I'm going to make a claim about Agnes' figure-ground phenomenon that makes her a little bit *unusual*, then I don't want to have to pin that on something which is pretty ambiguous.
- 1:58:02 Agnes: Gotcha. Okay. Yep, that's [inaudible]
- 1:58:05 RTH: So I would I would I would back away from trying to make a claim about this.
- 1:58:10 Agnes: Okay.
- 1:58:13 RTH: And my my when I read through this this passage here, my figure-ground phenomena don't antenna don't jangle. That's she's reaching for the phone on the counter. That's a seems like a sort of a natural thing--if I'm going to pick up my phone, I'm going to see the phone in the counter. It's not just the phone, it's not just the counter. That's Seems like natural-action figure-ground phenomenon to me.
- 1:58:44 MD: I mean, the only slight pushback against that might might be at, like, 41:08 and 41:13, where Agnes says, I'd say the phone plugged in this and the counter are equally salient. Which does kind of point in the direction of not making a strong figure-ground kind of distinction. Like, the counter and the phone are kind of all just there or something. I don't think it's strong enough to change what you just said, Russ, but it all of I think everything that I'm reading here is consistent with both there's a there's a this is a normal figure-ground kind of experience, and also this is *not* figure-ground kind of experience, and I don't think, to my mind, I can't tell the difference between those two hypotheses.
- 1:59:36 RTH: Right, I agree. So

1:59:47 MD: Oh, I have to go!

1:59:48 RTH: Yeah.

1:59:50 MD: I just realized what time it is. I have 18 minutes to get somewhere that takes about 18 minutes to get to.

1:59:56 RTH: Alright, so go for it, we'll email when we're gonna do this again and finish it up.