

Agnes Bolinska.
Agnes Interview 6
Sampling day 6

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the May 12 interview with Agnes that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/T3juy1YVS18>. 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: So we are recording. It makes my life a little bit easier if I start the recording sort of more or less about the, at the beginning that we [MD: Right.] talking about samples. [MD: Understood.] So anything we should be talking about before we look at... This is gonna be day 6, I believe.

0:24 Agnes: Um, the only thing that I should say is that we had originally, well, we had planned that I would do most of the sampling the day before and I failed to do that. I mean, I just got one sample from yesterday for various reasons. Um, yeah, it's turned out yesterday, turned out to be like a very busy and kind of stressful day, so I only ended up wearing the beeper for not that long. And I just have one sample from yesterday.

0:49 RTH: Okay. Well, shall we do that one sample and then we'll just go, go forward from there? And, uh,

Sample 6.1 discussion starts here

0:55 Agnes: Sounds good. So, so it was yesterday evening, um, and I was stretching my, like, right glute and adductor muscles. And [laughs] I was thinking about how the beeper hadn't gone off [laughs] for a long time. I mean, I'd put it in and it hadn't yet gone off. And I was also thinking about how, um, how I was delinquent in wearing it this evening. Um, so that's all background.

1:33 And then I was sort of in the middle of like thinking about how, what I would say to you guys about my not having worn the beeper, and I was innerly saying to

myself, "I have to confess...." [laughs] Um, I was also feeling the stretch, and I was, um, seeing the room that I was in, but I wasn't focused on anything in particular.

2:02 RTH: So that, so the beginning of that... Was that was, was that two or three sort of separate strands of thinking about the beeper or was all of that sort of background to "I have to confess"?

2:19 Agnes: That was, that was all background. Um, yeah, that was all background to that experience.

2:31 RTH: So the, so the beeper-related portion of this experience is: at the moment of the beep, I'm saying...?

2:40 Agnes: At the moment of the beep, I'm saying "I have to confess." And that was like sort of in the context of having been thinking about both. Well, okay, like, I mean there were two things, two beeper related things that I was thinking about. One was that, um, just that I had, that we had planned that I would wear it in the evening and then I hadn't really done that as much as I had hoped to. Um, and so kind of feeling a little bit guilty about that and what I was gonna say and thinking about what I was gonna say to you both today about that. And then the other thing that I was thinking about, I don't know if it's a part of this, but I was just, I had been wearing the beeper for probably close to an hour or so, um, and it hadn't gone off. So I was becoming aware that it could go off and it probably should go off soon cuz I was gonna go to bed soon after that. Um, so those were the two beeper-related, um, bits of background. But in the moment of the beep, what was, in my experience was this saying to myself, "I have to confess," and then the feeling of the stretch and then seeing the room.

3:59 RTH: Well, let's start with "I have to stretch," [misspeaks and corrects] or "I have to confess." "I have to confess." [laughs] [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] "I have, I have to confess": that you are speaking that?

4:09 Agnes: Yes. Innerly speaking that in my own voice.

4:11 RTH: As if to us? Or as if [Agnes: Yes.] to me? or as if to Michael? Or...

4:11 Russ comments: I don't particularly care whether the speaking is aimed at me or at Michael or at both of us. What I care about is the fidelity of Agnes's experience, and that requires that I press for this detail because if Agnes's experience is actually aimed (for example) personally at *me*, and I allow us to leave its description as aimed impersonally at *us* (perhaps because Agnes doesn't want to offend Michael by leaving him out, or perhaps she doesn't want to specify me because that is too personal, or for whatever other reason), then Agnes and I will have collusively agreed that it is okay to avoid specifying personal aspects of experience. From the standpoint of fidelity, that is *not* okay, and the only way to have such fidelity-about-the-personal be *possible* is to inquire about it any time it *might* be a factor.

4:17 Agnes: Uh, as if to the two of you on the Zoom call. [laughs]

- 4:22 RTH: Okay. And, and is there any, is there anything to say about how that, how you experience that speaking? Do you *see* us, do you just, do you just, do you speak it in your normal, the way you would've spoken it just now?
- 4:39 Agnes: I don't, I don't see you. Um, I don't see you. I don't imagine myself to be in the Zoom call. I'm just saying it as I did just now. Like "I have to confess...", like almost as if I am rehearsing what I'm gonna say to you, but not with, without visualizing you or anything like that.
- 4:59 RTH: Okay. Okay, then I'm good about that piece. Michael, you wanna ask anything more about the speaking?
- 5:10 MD: No, I don't think so.
- 5:12 RTH: And then I'm not sure about how much of the rest of the, of the consideration of the beeper is present at the moment of the beep.
- 5:22 Agnes: I think at the moment of the beep, um, it's not really present, I believe. And this is, I'm not confident. Like I can't remember. And I, I didn't, I, I, I, I can't remember and I didn't properly take note of that.
- 5:46 RTH: So we have had in the past discussions of temporal imprecision or unsureness or something like that. And is that like that? [Agnes: Yes.] So somewhere in there this was happening, but, but I'm not sure when?
- 5:46 Russ comments: RE "we have had in the past discussions of temporal imprecision or unsureness"
For example, in Agnes interview 5 at 9:39 and at 46:17ff.
- 6:03 Agnes: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah, it's somewhere in there. This was happening. I'm not sure when.
- 6:09 RTH: Okay. And, and is it your sense that I was not sure when, *at the moment of the beep*? Or is it that I'm not sure *when looking back from it 10 hours later* or whatever?
- 6:26 Agnes: It's more, I think the latter. Yeah. Like I, I'm, I'm finding it difficult to remember and I didn't, my notes are ambiguous on this point. So, so, um, may it's possible that at the moment of the beep I could have given you a better answer than I'm giving you right now.
- 6:53 RTH: But you don't sound confident of that either, since...
- 6:56 Agnes: I'm not confident about that.
- 6:58 RTH: I'm not sure about that. Which as, which as an more or less of an aside, I would say is, is probably related to the experience at the moment of the beep. If, if it were

clear at the moment of the beep that this was before the beep and that was after the beep, *and* in the context of Agnes being a smart person and having had several conversations about this or *many* conversations about this with us over the, over several hours worth of conversing, it would seem natural that Agnes would be able to say, she would *notice*, she would *know to say*, I gotta, I gotta keep these things separate.

7:38 Agnes: I think so! [laughs]

7:40 RTH: think, I think so, too. So I think, [laughs] I, I, I

7:43 Agnes: Think

7:45 RTH: I, I think one is never sure. And that's why the method has to be iterative and sometimes the iterations have to go for a long time before, before, before people can really be confident about that. And that's just the way it is. That I, I, I think we have to leave it as being indeterminate *until* we have good evidence to the contrary. And that is, I think, at the heart of DES, that the, the, the object of, *one main object* of DES is to leave things indeterminate *until it wouldn't occur to us to wonder about whether there was indeterminacy anymore*. And we're quite a ways away from that still, at least about this sample.

7:45 Russ comments: That statement is at the heart of DES, and I have written about it on several occasions, but I think it is not adequately appreciated. DES is *not* about answering questions about Agnes's experience (that is, DES is *not* about trying to answer questions such as "Did Agnes's experience have characteristic X?"). DES is *not* about trying to make discriminations about Agnes's experience (that is, DES is *not* about trying to answer questions such as "Would it be better to say that Agnes's experience had characteristic X or characteristic Y?").

DES *is* about describing Agnes's experience with fidelity, which *does* entail saying that Agnes's experience had characteristic X when her experience did in fact have that characteristic. And DES is about saying Y about Agnes's experience when in fact Agnes's experience is better characterized by Y than by X.

These two situations (asking questions vs. describing with fidelity) are fundamentally different, in my view. If we (that is, Agnes, Russ, and Michael) have to discuss what X is, or how X differs from Y, then Agnes was not prepared to invoke X (or distinguish it from Y) at the only time it mattered—in the immediacy of the beeped moment. If she's not good at it now, she was not good at it then. That is not a criticism of Agnes; it is simply how the process works.

Today's discussion may well clarify what X is and how it differs from Y, and that understanding and discrimination may well be useful going forward, *but there is no reason to believe that Agnes will be able to rewind her retrospection and apply the new knowledge to an old moment*.

If today's discussion *did* clarify what X is and how it differs from Y, then Agnes (and Michael and I) will be able to apply that understanding to *next week's* beeped experiences. At that point, answering questions about X (or Y) will *not* be required—we will simply use X appropriately (much as we might use *red* or *inner speaking*).

All that is the heart of the iterative method: if we encounter an *X* that is not easily applied, then good! Let's stay in the *not-sure-about-X* mode for as long as we can (days, weeks, longer), applying it (or not) to an ever-renewing series of never-before-discussed experiences, until either we become confident about *X* or we accept that we cannot resolve the difficulties that *X* presents. *At that time*, one way or the other, *X* will no longer be an issue—there will be no need to try to clarify *X*—*X* will be part of the descriptive skill. (See the comment at 58:54.)

8:34 Agnes: Yeah, I mean, I would like, my, my best guess is from, based on what I remember in combination with my notes, is that, um, that in that kind of indeterminately long span of time that the beep interrupted, there was some of that thinking about that the beeper hadn't gone off as well as the, I haven't been wearing the beeper. Um, but, but yeah, I'm not confident.

8:34 Russ comments: RE "but yeah, I'm not confident."
We have not resolved *X*, and Agnes is to be applauded for keeping that alive.

9:06 RTH: Okay. Michael, you have any more say about that aspect?

9:12 MD: Um, well, that, that was, we're, we're, no, I mean I have, I, I do have something to ask about the feeling the stretch, but I think we haven't gotten there yet.

9:23 RTH: We haven't gotten there yet.

9:24 MD: Yeah.

9:26 RTH: So let's go there. So I'm feeling the stretch. What, what is that experience?

9:32 Agnes: So what is that experience? [laughs] how do I say? More than just, I'm feeling the stretch? So I feel, um, I'm stretching the, like I'm doing on, I have to make it, I usually do the hide-self view, but I'm gonna do the show-self view. So I know that this is not allowed, but I'm doing it anyway. [re-enacts the stretch that she had been performing] I was doing like one of these kinds of stretches. So I was feeling it, like here [points to her thigh] I was feeling the stretch in my muscle here. And I, yeah, that's like primarily where I was feeling it, like all along my leg.

10:09 RTH: And is this experience primarily of *feeling* it? So I am *doing* the stretch, but I'm not really attending or even experiencing *at all* the *doing* of the stretch, the, the *action* of the stretch. But, but I am experiencing the feeling of being stretched, the feeling of the stretching.

10:27 Agnes: Yeah. Yeah, I would say, so

10:29 MD: Can I try something here? Sure. Because I, I, I've been thinking about this. I actually almost was gonna bring it up at the beginning, but this offers the perfect opportunity, so I'm glad I waited.

- 10:39 Um, cuz there's been some back and forth about this whole notion of active versus passive. And that's, that's been, we've been going on back and forth about this for a while now. Um, and so I put some thought into it this morning.
- 10:55 So the first thing I, so I'm gonna, I'm gonna offer you three non-exclusive, non-exhaustive categories, but I wanna say first of all, that none of what I'm about to say is intended to be a reference to any kind of thinking about oneself, any kind of meta-experience (I'm still not a hundred percent sure what that means) um, or, and it doesn't, doesn't involve any, any words or anything like that.
- 11:21 So one way you could experience the stretch, I'm gonna call *passive*, but all I mean by that is it's as if someone's doing it to you. A second possibility, and I'm, I'm gonna call it *active*, is you experience it as your own action, not in a meta-way (like you're thinking to yourself, *oh, now I'm stretching my glute*) but just, it just has, I, I think of that as the contrary of passive where, y'know, the, the nurse is putting your arm in position for the blood withdrawal or whatever, and you just let her do it, versus active where you're, you've sensed that you're the one doing the thing, or maybe *neither*, maybe there's just the feeling with neither a sense of passiveness is being done to me, nor a sense of activeness I'm doing this. And maybe there's some other categories, I don't know. But that was my best shot at trying to nail down this whole active versus passive thing. And again, emphasizing that, I don't mean by any of these categories that there's any kind of *thinking about oneself*. Is there any of those categories speak to you or not? [laughs]?
- 10:29 Russ comments: RE "this offers the perfect opportunity, so I'm glad I waited"
 First, my experience has been that it is nearly amazing how often such "perfect opportunities" arise in DES sampling—I often wonder about some phenomenon, and then a sample arises a few beeps later that clarifies that wonder. (It nearly makes one a believer in Jung.)
 Second, I think that it is almost always (and maybe always) better to wait for such an opportunity than to "bring it up at the beginning," and that is at the heart of the DES iterative method. Bringing it up at the beginning is an analytical / theoretical / conceptual / speculative exercise. It presumes that we have enough evidence to resolve the issue, if we can just reflect on it properly. By diametric contrast, the DES way is to be open to the possibility that *some new empirical encounter* (i.e., a new sample) may offer a new perspective that may cause us to abandon whatever analytical / theoretical / conceptual / speculative approach we might have adopted based on the old data.
 There is a risk that if we wait for the opportunity, such an opportunity may not present itself, and therefore we may not resolve the issue we were interested in. I think cultivation of the acceptance of that risk is worthwhile, because (a) if we don't get more instances to consider, then perhaps the issue wasn't as important as we had thought; and (b) today's reaching of an inadequate analysis / theory / concept / speculation (based on insufficient data) is more inimical to tomorrow's progress of understanding than is today's lack of analysis / theory / concept / speculation. People and their systems are far too enamored of their own theories and concepts and are far too susceptible to confirmation bias—anything that we can do to restrain that is a good thing.

10:39 Russ comments: RE “there’s been some back and forth about this whole notion of active versus passive”

See the Agnes interview 5 transcript and comments at 30:24 and 31:48.

11:21 Russ comments: RE “I’m gonna call *passive*, but all I mean by that is it’s as if someone’s doing it to you”

I feel your pain, Michael, and I have used “as if someone’s doing it to you” myself, but it is a problematic locution because it brings a *someone* into the situation that wasn’t at all there prior to the question. That *someone* has social and interpersonal implications, but those (while problematic) are not the most problematic. Regardless of whether Agnes experiences herself as doing the action, she is in fact doing that action exactly in sync with her intention: she is pulling *just so*; pulling *just when*; and the like, in response to the firings of her own neurons. *Someone* (a masseuse, say) cannot do that, regardless of the skill of the masseuse. The masseuse may pull *just so*, and the masseuse’s *just so* may well be more skillful than Agnes’s own *just so*, but it is *not* the same as Agnes’s own *just so*.

When Agnes rejects the passive-as-*someone-else*, that rejection is not necessarily a rejection of the receptiveness of the passive; it may be a rejection of the not-just-so-ness of the sensation.

Regardless of whether or not the *action* directly apprehended, the action is just so—Agnes is pulling as hard as she wants in the direction she wants at the time she wants (where *wants* is an organismic reference, not necessarily a conscious or explicitized reference). So the action-as-just-so might seem better to Agnes, even if she has no direct apprehension of the action at all.

Michael comments: The potential problem of introducing a ‘someone’ in order to get across the idea of ‘passively’ is clear and I hadn’t appreciated that point, so thank you. I suppose more discussion could encourage a distinction between “not being a someone else because it doesn’t feel just so” and “not being a someone else because this is not a case of passive reception”. But, of course, making that distinction reliably in practice could prove very challenging, and send one down a bad path. What else is to be done to try to nail down this notion? (By ‘nail down’ I think I mean: (a) all parties feel like they can assent to the (i.e., grasp the) notion—we feel like we’re talking about the same thing; and (b) the notion is at least plausibly applicable to experience (in the context of doing DES).) Perhaps ‘done by someone else’ could be eliminated in favor of just ‘not done by you’ or something like that, although that locution might then be too vague. (One response is of course “that’s the best we can do”. I never like that response, but I understand that sometimes it’s true.)

I’m curious whether there are (potentially) better approaches. It does feel like something in the neighborhood of ‘active vs. passive’ is an interesting contrast to explore (allowing, as we discussed, that it is non-exhaustive).

Russ comments: I think neither active vs. passive nor ‘done by you’ vs. ‘not done by you’ are useful distinction for most people. Let’s use your sample 6.5 (Michael Dickson interview 6.5) and contrast your experience with the kind of experience had by most people most of the time. So that we can unambiguously talk about individuals, let’s personalize that by calling such a person “Anne”. Michael, in his

sample 6.5, was walking across campus and singing a tune. Anne, our more-or-less typical but imagined individual, is also walking across campus singing a tune.

The tune Michael is singing in sample 6.5 has a complex 8/8 (3 + 3 + 2) lilting rhythm. As he sings that rhythm, he clicks his (right hand) thumbnail and middle fingernail together, making a specific Da da da Da da da Da da [the underlining/capitalization indicate the accents in the 3 + 3 + 2 rhythm]. Simultaneously, Michael synchronizes his steps to the rhythm, matching his step particularly to the rhythm of the sensation in his fingernail. That makes Michael's walking active and 'done by Michael'. Michael directly apprehends the song and the walking (and the nail action).

Anne is singing a tune while walking. Anne (standing in for most people who sing while walking) experiences the sung tune, *but does not at all experience the walking*. The walking is happening, and Anne is in fact making it happen, but she has no experience of it. That makes Anne's walking active and 'done by Anne'. Anne directly apprehends the song but she does *not* directly apprehend the walking.

So: both Michael's and Anne's walking are active and 'done by Michael/Anne'; that is, those terms do not distinguish between Michael's and Anne's experience, even though experientially they are hugely different: Michael directly apprehends his walking whereas Anne does *not* directly apprehend any walking.

In short, Most people do *not* synchronize their walking to any internal rhythm; Michael did so twice in 45 samples. For most people, walking is active but not directly apprehended; for Michael, walking is active *and* directly apprehended.

12:26 Agnes: So...

12:26 RTH: So, could I, could I add, could I add one category to that? [MD: Yeah, of course.] So, so as a, as a maybe a subset of *neither* is that *it doesn't matter*, it's not that it's neither, it's that this, this is not relevant to the current sample.

12:26 Russ comments: RE (11:21) "maybe *neither*, maybe there's just the feeling with neither a sense of passiveness is being done to me, nor a sense of activeness I'm doing this."

I reacted to this because of what I take to be its implication: We *must* consider Agnes's experience *through the active/passive lens*. And for the reasons I have stated, that might not be the best or even an appropriate lens.

		Passive	
		Yes	No
Active	Yes	Both	Active
	No	Passive	Neither

RE (12:26) "maybe a subset of *neither* is that *it doesn't matter*"

This was my way of saying that the active/passive lens might not be appropriate; that it might be better to stick to experienced vs. not experienced.

12:46 Agnes: Yeah. So I mean, first of all, I understand the lack of self-referential part. Um, I would say that it certainly *was not passive*. Like it *wasn't as if somebody's stretching me*. Um, was it, but then when I asked myself *was it active?* um, that also doesn't quite fit. Like the passive *doesn't fit more* than the active doesn't fit, [laughs] if that makes sense. [MD: That makes total sense.] So, so I guess so, so I guess the answer, like I wasn't experience... Like, I guess *neither* would be my best answer. Like I was

neither experiencing it as active or passive. Um, but I was yeah, the, the passive fits, yeah, maybe *neither slash it doesn't matter* um, would be my best answer to that question.

13:57 MD: That's helpful.

14:04 RTH: So does that answer your question, Michael?

14:06 MD: Yeah, sorry, I said, I said maybe I didn't say it loud enough. I said "that's helpful." Yes,

14:10 RTH: No, you, you did, you did say it, but I didn't, but I didn't understand that whether you meant that as being the final, the final answer or, uh,

14:19 MD: Well, I, I don't know what a final answer would be, um. That, that, that in, that was, that was informative and that's all I was seeking was information.

14:30 RTH: So, so the d, the difference between neither, and it doesn't matter, is that neither makes it a category and neither means it's not relevant or, or neither *could mean* it's not relevant to the, to this situation.

14:53 MD: Yeah. I, that's sort of what I meant by neither, I think. Okay. Um, uh, I think other, because I think the other forms of neither would have to be, I, I agree that, that what you said is a kind of sub subcategory in some sense, but I, I think it's the subcategory I had in mind because it feels like other, other ways of being *neither* would involve some kind of reflection on the fact that it's neither, whereas *it doesn't matter*, it just means this, this wasn't an issue at all, that like, it's just not an, it is not a question that needs to be answered for us to understand this experience or something like that. Um, maybe that's the best way of putting it, is what I meant by *neither* is *this is not a question that needs to be answered in order to understand this experience*. The, the active versus passive question, I don't know if that's the same as what you mean by it doesn't matter.

14:53 Russ comments: RE "what I meant by *neither* is *this is not a question that needs to be answered in order to understand this experience*"

I think if RTH had understood Michael's *neither* in that way, then the discussion might have been very different.

15:47 RTH: Well, I think maybe we're in the weeds of the words and which is a place that I don't like to go very often. [MD: Right.] But it, it's something like, we, we could ask, well, "how, how much was the war in Iran a part of the stretching experience?" And the answer to that I'm guessing, is it just, *it's not relevant*. It's not that the war in Iran is not a part of it, it's that it wouldn't occur to us to inquire about the war in Iran or, or the definition of "xylophone," or, y'know, billions, billions of things which are just not, not relevant in this in this moment. It's not that they don't exist. And, and I'm, so, I'm, I'm, I'm fully in understanding that the war in Iran probably does affect *in some way* this stretch. She is stretching in this particular way, in, *in some minute*

way, probably, affected by the pressures of the war in Iran, y'know, but probably *not much*.

17:01 MD: Right, [laughs] I mean, [Agnes: So I think I would say “not at all!” [laughs] I mean, I think our discussion just a second ago (may, maybe this is worth saying before we move on, I know we're in the weeds now) um, suggested to me that it's not, it's not as irrelevant as the war in Iran, uh, this question, because she felt like she could say pretty readily, well, it definitely wasn't passive, and it sort of also wasn't active. [laughs] So there seemed to be a distinction being made there. Granted a weak one; granted, one we would never be able to quantify, et cetera. Um, so maybe it wasn't as irrelevant as, y'know, we're, y'know, how did the war in Iran, uh, play into this experience? But I, but it does feel, given her answer, it does feel like *not important*, *not relevant*, something like that is, is the, the right general category to put it in.

17:53 RTH: Yeah. So this, this, and this discussion is a pretty good example, I, I think, of for me, of, of what *being in the weeds* is about. I don't think we can tease these things apart, and the attempt to tease them apart is to make it no longer weedy. And that's, and that's worse! [MD: Mm-hmm.] It's, it's just, I'm, I'm, I'm happy to leave it as being *irrelevant*, and I'm not so happy to leave it as being *Well, it's neither*, because that makes it too specific and that makes the, the, the weeds less mucky than they really are.

18:34 MD: I see. Okay. I, I don't, I don't, I, I, I'm happy to have identified where the weeds are. I don't feel like I have to get out of them either. Um, but maybe we learn something by knowing that we're in the weeds now.. [laughs]

18:49 RTH: Yeah. I, I haven't fully articulated what, why I have antipathy towards being in the weeds, but this is probably, I thought about it long enough, might be helpful in, in that regard. So are we done with the, with the stretching aspect?

18:49 Russ comments: RE “I haven't fully articulated ... why I have antipathy towards being in the weeds”

First, RTH misspeaks here. He has no antipathy whatsoever about being in the weeds—he's happy as a clam in the weeds. His antipathy is toward the effort to distinguish between *nothing* and *a little*, as if that were important; that is, his antipathy is toward hyper-cleaning what would better be left in the weeds.

Here's a shot in the present instance. I'm happy to say that Agnes has *little or no experience* of the act of stretching. I do *not* mean that as a disjunctive option: that either it is *a little* experience of stretching or it is *no* experience of stretching. I mean by that that *I cannot determine* whether the act of stretching is slightly experienced or not experienced at all, and that the effort to make that distinction is bound to distort the experience itself. *A little or no* experience is in the weeds, and it is best left in the weeds. I just don't know whether it is 0.000 experienced or 0.016 experienced or 0.072 experienced—one way or the other, there is *not much, if any*, experience of the act of stretching. That is, I think Agnes's experience of the act of stretching is in the weeds.

19:04 MD: Yeah.

- 19:05 RTH: And then there's the seeing the room. And is that ex in, in my experience, more than just my eye eyeballs...?
- 19:14 Agnes: Yes. That's in my experience.
- 19:15 RTH: And, and what do you see?
- 19:18 Agnes: Um, so I'm sitting on the floor and I'm kind of looking out towards my right and down, and I'm seeing, um, like the bottom right hand corner of the window and the wall around it, um, in, in a like non-focused kind of way.
- 19:41 RTH: And, and so in a, in a meta-conversation kinda way, I would, I would say the description that you just gave to me makes, it makes me *wonder*, let's put it this way, make, makes me wonder whether this is a reconstruction thing rather than a recollection thing, which is a,
- 20:01 Agnes: It's a recollection thing.
- 20:03 RTH: And so that's, so that means I'm seeing the bottom of the window without seeing the whole window.
- 20:10 Agnes: No, I mean, I'm seeing, sorry, you asked what I was seeing. I'm, I'm not *not* seeing the whole window. That's just where, um, my attention is most directed there. But I'm also seeing.... Like, that, that's what I'm describing is what is in front of me, right? So my, my eyes are directed, and I know that this is, sounds like a, just like a reconstruction, but it's not. Like I'm, I'm intending to try to tell you, um, what I am seeing and what am I, what I am seeing. Isn't the whole window like this straight ahead of me, because it's not. I'm kind of directing my head that way. So I'm seeing this part as part of this bigger picture.
- 20:59 RTH: And do I see this as a window? I see the window? Or just I see I, this,
- 21:08 Agnes: Yeah, I mean I, I see it as, um, I'm seeing the scene ahead of me as the room, right, where, where the window, because it's not that I, I'm not focusing on the window, I'm seeing the window, I'm seeing the wall, I'm seeing part of the floor, part of the closet door. Um, so I'm seeing it as *the room*.
- 21:08 Russ comments: There is substantial discussion about this below (from 33:29 to basically the end of the interview)
- 21:34 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good about that.
- 21:43 MD: Michael. Yeah, I'm good. I'm okay with that.
- 21:46 RTH: All right. On to number 2.

[Sample 6.2 discussion starts here](#)

21:49 Agnes: Okay, so two was from this morning, the first one from this morning. Um, and I had been making a to-do list and I had finished, like I, I had kind of paused in making the to-do list and I was just looking up from the list and I was paying attention to, um, the breath moving in and out of my nostrils. And I am, I was seeing, the list was on my reMarkable; um, I was seeing the list, so I was kind of looking down at it and the desk, but I wasn't focused on it anymore. Um, so I was, so, so there were two components of my experience: the visual experience of seeing the list on the table, but not in a focused way. I wasn't reading the list or anything like that. Um, and this attention to the breath in my nostrils flowing in and out of my nostrils.

21:49 Russ comments: FYI, a "reMarkable" is a brand of electronic tablet.

RE "attention to the breath in my nostrils flowing in and out of my nostrils"

Typical breathing rates are in the ballpark of 15 breaths per minute. So the breathing in lasts for 2-ish seconds, and the breathing out lasts for 2-ish seconds. RTH will wonder how it is possible that the beep can catch the "flowing in *and out*" of my nostrils. See the discussion beginning at 33:29.

Michael comments: For what it's worth, when Agnes said 'in and out' I did not understand her to mean "I had an extended experience that encompassed both 'in' and 'out'" but something like "I was experiencing the cyclical flowingness of the breath" (so 'flow' but with no particular directionality, but also somehow imbued with the idea of 'in-and-out-ly', cyclically). (That understanding of Agnes reflects the fact that I think I have that sort of experience fairly often -- the danger of basing my understanding of Agnes on that fact about myself is clear!)

Russ comments: I'm no mind reader, and it is not my job to try to interpret what Agnes (or anyone else) says. I do give myself credit for being a careful listener, and I use that skill to identify locutions that I think need to be clarified.

If Agnes had said something like "I was experiencing the cyclical flowingness of the breath," I would likely have accepted that as referring to 'flow' with no particular directionality (but including some notion of 'in-and-out-ly' or cyclically), as Michael suggests. But that is not what she said. Instead, she talked about *nostrils*, and *in and out* in the nostrils ("this attention to the breath in my nostrils flowing in and out of my nostrils"). The careful listener in me has to ask whether a careful speaker such as Agnes would say "in my *nostrils*, in and out of my *nostrils*" if her interest at the moment of the beep was on cyclical flowingness? Agnes's locution would give the nostrils credit for integrating across time to get to cyclical flowingness. That is of course possible, but it is at least a surprising way of speaking (as it seems to me). I'm no mind reader, so I won't try to interpret what Agnes says, but I will inquire further about it.

22:59 MD: Um, okay, so let's start with the seeing. Um, so the, the, the first time you said you were seeing the list and the desk, and then the second time you said you're seeing the list on the table. Is one of those a better description than the other?

23:19 Agnes: The first one. The, the second was, um, I mean, okay, the, the most accu... Sorry, maybe I wasn't being accurate enough. What I was seeing was my reMarkable on

the table. It had the list on it. Um, so I'm seeing the reMarkable with the list on the table, but in an unfocused way, very similar to what I just described with the room a second ago.

23:19 Russ comments: RE "What I was seeing was my reMarkable on the table. It had the list on it."

That *sounds like* a description of reality: in the real world, the reMarkable is on the table, and the reMarkable has the list on it. The DES interest is *not* about the real world; the DES interest is in Agnes's experience, which is to be bracketed away from the real world (DES calls that process the epoché). So we will have to untangle that, and we will spend much of this interview trying to do that. See, among other places, the comment at 26:41.

23:49 MD: So you're seeing the reMarkable, I'm just saying your words back to you, and then I'm gonna ask you a question. I wanna make sure I got the words right. We're seeing the reMarkable with the list on the table.

24:01 Agnes: Yes.

24:01 MD: Okay. And so does that involve seeing the list or does that involve seeing the reMarkable where I know the list to be? Is that, is that a meaningful distinction?

24:13 Agnes: See the list? I see the list, like the, the words, um, the list is there, to me, it's not blurry. I'm not reading it anymore.

24:21 MD: Okay. Right, right. So I,

24:22 Agnes: But it's present to me. Yeah, yeah.

24:23 MD: No, that was, I was just trying to understand.

24:25 Agnes: And it's present to me like as a list. Like I see that I've made that, that there's this list here. It has, it's not just reMarkable on table, it's remarkable-with-list on table.

24:37 MD: Right. But the *with* means you're seeing both the reMarkable and the list that's on it. You're [Agnes: Yep.] not seeing the reM... [Agnes: Yeah.] that's, that's all I was trying to unpack the word *with* there, [Agnes: Yes.] which [Agnes: Yeah.] [they laugh] they... Okay.

24:49 RTH: So lemme let, let me, lemme try about that. So is it, is it, I see the reMarkable with the list, or I see the list on the remarkable?

24:58 Agnes: [laughs]

25:00 RTH: So am I seeing the tablet or am I seeing the list, [laughs] or, or doesn't, or is that in the weeds that just,

- 25:08 Agnes: Uh, this is like the, in the, this is like an *in the weeds* to me. Um, like, [MD: Well, but let me make a distinction...] lemme tell you... okay...
- 25:17 MD: ...because be, be, I, I, I mean, I know it feels silly that we're unpacking the word *with* right now, but I think it really could mean a lot of different... Like if the, if there's an apple and an orange on the table, I could say I see the orange with the apple on the table, right? But there's just, I'm, that's just a way of saying, *I see these two things*. Or I could say, *I see the orange with a bruise on the table*, right, where... (or the *apple* with a bruise, I guess that's easier) and which, which feels like I'm seeing one thing, y'know, but, and as, but also kind of focused on one aspect of it. And so I think there are distinctions to be made here. I mean, I get may maybe, maybe we can't make them...
- 25:56 Agnes: But now you've made a distinction be like between two very... The distinction you both are asking me about (I think!) isn't the same as the distinction you've just raised between an apple with an orange and an apple with a bruise. Um, like to use that example, I mean, it's a reMarkable with a list in the same way as it would be an apple with a bruise rather than an apple with an orange, if that answers your question.
- 26:28 MD: Well, but, but also different from say, um, an apple with a *core*, where you *know* the core is there but it's not part of your experience.
- 26:36 Agnes: Correct. Yes. Different from an apple with a core.
- 26:39 RTH: Or *fruit*. I see *the fruit* on the table.
- 26:41 Agnes: Or fruit, yeah, exactly. Exactly. But I mean, I guess if we're talking, I mean, the reason I'm kind of laughing and saying that this is in the weeds is because if what we're trying to get at is my visual experience at the time, like, I am seeing this reMarkable tablet that has this list on it. Um, I'm not seeing any, I'm not seeing like a, I don't know even how to distinguish between reMarkable-with-list or seeing the list-on-the-reMarkable, like *I don't even know what those things mean*, those kinds of distinctions. So that's why I am...

- 26:41 Russ comments: This is, to my ear, a hugely important conversation, that is working at getting to the heart of the epoché. At right (courtesy of ChatGPT) is the scene we are discussing. Look at that picture for a minute. Here's my fantasy about what most people will experience in such minutes: they will feel their gaze wander around the scene: Now I am seeing the light reflecting on the orange (and the apple and table are not really of interest); now I see both the orange and the apple; now I am interested in the red color (that happens to be on the right side of the apple, but really the apple is not of interest to me, nor is the orange, or the table, or the chair); now I see the chair (and the orange and the apple fade into disinterest); now I remember that I parked my car in a metered space and need to tend to that; now I am seeing the apple (which happens



to be bruised, but the bruise, the orange, the table, the chair are not of importance in this particular seeing); now I am seeing the bruise on the apple, focused almost entirely on the bruise; and so on.

That fantasy illustrates the figure/ground nature of visual perception: the perceptual system organizes the experience into the figure (which is generally perceived to be object-like, closer, with clearer edges) and the ground (which seems more diffuse, farther away, less structured, less of interest). Most perception is assumed to be organized in a figure/ground way: e.g., when you hear one voice in a crowded party, the one voice is figural and the remaining voices are the ground.

The photo fantasy is a basic epoché observation: experience does *not* correspond to the real world. Sometimes it is tied to the immediately present perceptual world (I see the orange or the apple or the chair); sometimes it is entirely free of the immediately present world (I recall the parking meter). The real world stays the same; the retinal image stays largely the same; but experience varies dramatically. The epoché is the effort to bracket the real world and attend only to the experiential world, regardless of whether it is tightly, loosely, or not at all tied to the “real.”

RE “I don’t know even how to distinguish between reMarkable-with-list or seeing the list-on-the-reMarkable, like *I don’t even know what those things mean*, those kinds of distinctions.”

The last two items in my photo fantasy above are designed to be parallel to Agnes’s mentions in that quotation: seeing the reMarkable-with-list ≈ now I am seeing the apple (which happens to be bruised, but the bruise, the orange, the table, the chair are not of importance in this particular seeing); seeing the list-on-the-reMarkable ≈ seeing the bruise on the apple, focused almost entirely on the bruise.

Agnes says “*I don’t even know what those things mean*, those kinds of distinctions.” What should we make of that?!? She’s smart; she seems motivated to describe her experience. Does she not have the kind of experiences I described in my photo fantasy? *I don’t know!* Our discussion with Agnes has raised what seem to be important questions, and it has *not* answered them.

The good news is that DES is an iterative method, and this is exactly what DES is designed to deal with. We’ve raised questions; we’ve explored those questions; we’ve clarified them to some extent. Maybe some later sample discussion will capitalize on the effort we have extended here, and *then* considering that new sample may provide some or all the answers we seek. Or maybe not; DES happily resides in that maybe. (That is the same point I was making at 10:29.)

- 27:24 MD: No, I wasn’t, I wasn’t trying to distinguish those two things. I was just trying to establish that the, that the, the actual, there was, there was an actual visual experience of the list and not just a visual experience of the reMarkable, where I happened to know the list resides.
- 27:40 Agnes: Yes, there was an actual visual experience of the list, not the latter.
- 27:45 MD: Okay. That, that’s all I was trying to establish. I [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] Yeah, that last distinction you made, I also don’t know what that would mean.

- 27:45 Russ comments: I tried in my 26:41 comment to make clear what / think that distinction means.
- 27:51 Agnes: Okay.
- 27:52 RTH: So, so let me see whether I can help us out about what the, what the... So the, the difference is about is, is from my point of view is about *experience*. The question is what is it that you are *experiencing*. And what you're experiencing *has to do with*, but is not caused by or tied to or whatever, what is falling on your retina or, or, or whatever.
- 28:15 And so for example, if I said, would it make sense to say, I see my, what I'm seeing is *my desk*; and the desk is holding up the, the reMarkable that has on it the list. And my guess is you would say "This is not about *the desk*." [Agnes nods affirmatively] This is so, so that it's not, it's *not about* what's on your retina—the desk is *on your* retina. The question is: does your experience create the list (which is sort of surrounded by the reMarkable and the desk and the, and anything else that's on your retina)? Or does your experience create the remarkable (which happens to have a list on it)? [Agnes: I mean, my experience...] [interrupts] Or, or your, or your experience *does not make* that kind of differentiation—your experience just soaks up the visual aspect without, without making about the, about the list or the, or about the reMarkable.
- 28:15 Russ comments: RE "or your experience *does not make* that kind of differentiation"
That third option is an example of RTH's bracketing his own presuppositions—the photo fantasy (in the 26:41 comment) embodies the well-accepted figure/ground understanding of perception. RTH's "or your experience *does not make* that kind of differentiation" is his way of saying: let's bracket the typical figure/ground way of thinking about perception. To bracket is to have no preference one way or the other: to be equally open to Agnes's experience *having* figure/ground organization or *not having* that organization. RTH believes that most perception is indeed of the figure/ground type, but he is bracketing that belief, giving Agnes the possibility of describing experience that does *not* conform to that pattern. Such bracketing is a fundamentally important aspect of DES.
- 29:24 Agnes: That's what I wanna say. The last thing. Right? [RTH: Okay.] My visual experience, um, like in my visual experience, there was the reMarkable with the list on the desk without making any of those features somehow more prominent or significant or anything like that.
- 29:49 RTH: Okay. And I think you, I think you... Go ahead, Michael.
- 29:55 MD: I, I was just gonna say, I think that clarifies it for me. Uh, so if you had something else to say, say it.
- 30:01 RTH: I, and well, I would say I think Agnes has been fairly consistent about that. I would also say it's fairly remarkable, or I should, [Agnes: No pun intended!], say unusual, I should say usual, *unusual* or something so as not to confuse the pun. But the, the,

but I, but I, and, but I think it's gonna be clear in a little bit. So let go ahead, finish the rest of the, of the sample, and then we'll double back to this, maybe.

30:32 MD: Okay. Uh, so I was gonna turn to the, the breath. [RTH: Yeah.] Um, so you're, you're attending to the breath, uh, in your nostrils. Is that, is there some particular aspect of it you're attending to: the rhythm, the, the temperature, the feeling, the flow or the, or is it just breath?

30:55 Agnes: It's just breath. Um, if I had to... [pause] So this reminds me of when, um, last time when we were talking about something about what does it mean that I'm feeling grounded or in my body or something like that. Um, if you ask me this kind of question, I think I can answer it as in ... [pause] Actually, I don't know. I don't know if I can answer it. I mean, like, I think I can attempt to answer it, but I'm not sure if that would be true to my experience. Um, because I wasn't like, I was not paying attention to the rhythm of the breath, *per se*. I was not paying attention to the temperature of the breath. Um, I was basically, it was this moment like, like just, this is all by way of background, but I had, the reason I was creating this list is because I was feeling very stressed about all the things that I had to do in the next few days. So I was like, okay, make a list and like see if you are blowing this out of proportion, type of thing.

32:19 And when I actually made the list of the concrete things that I had to do, the list was pretty short. [laughs] And so I was sort of just pausing and kind of like breathing, but, but I wasn't doing that intentionally. I wasn't like, *oh, I've made the list now, now breathe!* Like, there was nothing like that. I had just made the list and I was just breathing, like that's what was happening. So I wasn't paying attention to like, if I was paying attention to anything, it was more of like this... I don't know. I think I'm confabulating now

32:53 MD: A little bit. No, no, that, that's helpful. So you're, so you're, you're really just paying attention to breathing or breath rather than some [Agnes: Exactly.] physic, physical feeling in this area.

33:03 Agnes: Um, yes and no. Um, I *was* feeling the breath primarily in my nostrils.

33:10 MD: Oh, oh, sorry. So I didn't speak well. So I, so you were feeling, you, you were feeling something physical in this area, but it was just breath, not temperature. [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] Or flow. [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] Or that, sorry, that I

33:21 Agnes: Exactly. Yeah. Yeah.

33:24 MD: Okay. That, that, that's, that's fine then. I'm good with that.

33:29 RTH: So at the moment of the beep, was the breath inhaling or exhaling?

33:29 Russ comments: See the comment at 21:49.

33:36 Agnes: I don't know.

- 33:43 RTH: And, and does, "I don't know" mean that that was not relevant to my experience, even though I said at the outset I was feeling the breath going in and out, the actual in and outness doesn't really matter to me?
- 34:00 Agnes: So what I was, um, so I guess when the beep went off, um, going back to our conversation from last time about what the moment, like, what, what is the length of time that the, that we're investigating here? Um, when the beep went off, it wasn't like *breathing in, breathing in <beep!>*. Oh, I was *breathing in*. But when I, when I paused after the beep went off to kind of investigate what was I experiencing, it was clear that I was, um, paying attention to the breath going in and out of my nostrils. But I don't know where in that experience the beep came.
- 34:54 RTH: So if one had a spirometer or whatever those things are called, and a video camera and a rec and a recorder, one could hear the beep and one could say: *at the moment of the beep, when the, when the physical beep happened, Agnes was in fact inhaling*. And or we could be more precise about that: two-thirds of the way across the inhaler or whatever. And it would...
- 35:20 Agnes: I would say... [they overspeak] Oh, go ahead.
- 35:22 RTH: But whether that's relevant to Agnes's *experience* is a, is another question. That's a, this, this is part of the epoché. This is the, the, in the, in the *world of objects*, one could say that the beep occurred two thirds of the way across the inhale. In the *world of experience* that does, that's not necessarily true. And that, and that's what we're trying to, to get at. That's what DES is trying to [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] trying, trying to tease, tease apart in a dispassionate way, because Michael and I cannot enter into Agnes's experience. So we have to translate it into, into some way that makes sense to Agnes and, as well, to Russ and to Michael.
- 36:14 Agnes: So I guess, um, my answer is still, I don't know, like, I don't know if it's relevant where the beep came, whether that's something that I could have experienced or not.
- 36:31 MD: I mean, it seems like it'd be possible to be paying attention to not, I, I, and that's not, (I've, I've should have learned my lesson, not say those, that phrase anymore). It should, it, it, it, it seems like it's possible to have an experience of in and out without that experience distinguishing the ins from the outs.
- 36:54 Agnes: I think in that experience, the ins were distinguished from the outs.
- 36:58 MD: Okay. So, so, so it's really just a case of you're not sure which one you were experiencing in the moment?
- 37:04 Agnes: I would say so. Um, but I, yeah, like I, I, I would say so, but I'm not confident. This is one of those things where I feel like, um, I still feel like when the beep goes off, most of the time there's a bit of, I feel like, like it's rare that I'm like *experiencing, experiencing, experiencing, beep! okay, this was my experience*. There's a bit of like,

um, a bit of a reconstruction that I have to do to even remember what was going on right before the beep. So, [MD: So, so this is,] [they overspeak] yeah, go ahead.

37:46 MD: So, so, so in, maybe, maybe there's a distinction between this and the previous one, then. Um, cuz it, because it sounds like we arrived at the last time, at the last time we, it sounded like we arrived where at a point where we were saying, *well, was it active or passive?* And, and we ended up saying, well, maybe a tiny bit, one more than the other, but it's not really important question. It's too far in the weeds. Irrelevant question, whatever. But would it be right to say in this case that the question *was it in or out?* is not irrelevant? We just don't know the answer?

38:21 Agnes: I think so.

38:22 MD: So you think you were experiencing the ins and the outs, you're just not sure which one was happening at the moment?

38:27 Agnes: Yeah,

38:28 MD: Because that's different from saying that in and out is not relevant.

38:32 Agnes: Yeah. I'd say, um, the first thing that, that it is relevant, but I'm not sure of the answer. Okay.

38:40 RTH: So I think there's reason to doubt whether that's really true. And, and, and I'm not disbelieving, I'm, I'm, I'm honestly skeptical here. And the reason for the honestly skepticism I think comes from the fact that breathing in and out is a pretty a, a, a pretty slow thing (I mean, we're a couple of seconds on the *in* and a couple of seconds on the *out*), and the beep in the real world is a pretty rapid thing by comparison to that. And so if the experience is of the *in* when it's happening and then of the *out* when it's happening, *but then I can't remember* (which is what I took Michael to be saying just now, or Michael and Agnes to be sort of *agreeing to* right now) that is a pretty remarkable, (I guess that's, we're, we're infecting that word or whatever) but the, but that, but, but that's a, there, there's a lot of, there's a lot of time....

39:43 If the, if the, if the, if the beep happens when Agnes is inhaling and she notices the inhaling and then forgets it, that's there, there's, that is, there's a, there's a lot of time for her to have noticed that it was an inhaling and keep track of that long enough to be able to tell us about it in, in this interview. [Agnes: But I just...] But if the in, if the experience is *not* of the inhaling and the exhaling as being separate things, but the experience is of something of the cycling and the what, whatever that has to do with the, in, in the *inning* and the *outing*, then the presence of the beep in there doesn't much matter. The temporal presence of the beep doesn't much matter.

40:33 Agnes: I disagree with that because in my experience with the beeper just mo, more generally, when it beeps, it really interrupts my experience such that I find it hard to, to know what was going on like in the ten second before that. So *to me*, like the, the timeframe of the breath going in and out is very short compared to other stuff

that I'm trying to discern. So, so I'm not, um, I don't think that the short timeframe of the breath has anything to do with that, because when the beep goes off, I just, in general, uh, my experience is that I have a hard time... I find it disruptive in general, and I have a hard time knowing precisely what was going on *at that moment* rather than at the moment of the beep and following the beep. [laughs]

41:42 RTH: So in that accounting, the *disruption* is of a greater magnitude or timeframe or whatever, [pause]

41:56 Agnes: Than the breath. Yeah.

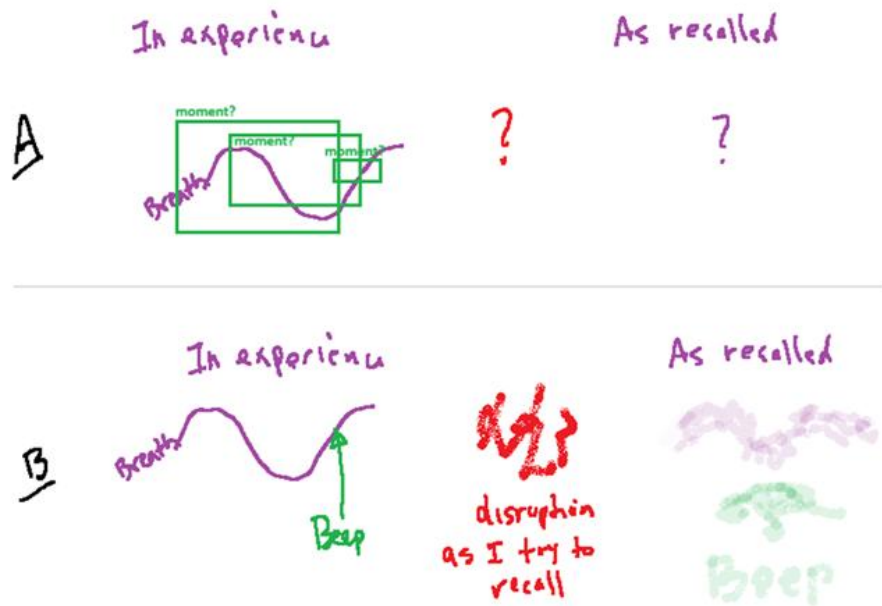
41:57 RTH: Than the then the breath. Right?

41:59 Agnes: Yeah.

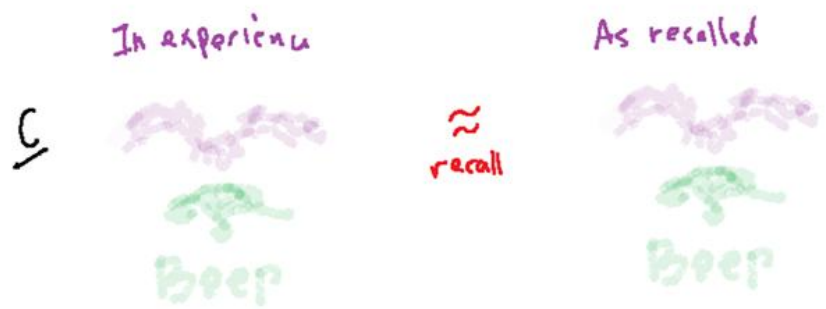
42:08 RTH: [pause] Okay.

42:10 MD: That's, I, that's all I was wanting to get at from, from that one or about that one.

42:18 RTH: Me too. [pause] So the, the beep always is disruptive; there's no question about that. There might, there might very well be big individual differences in the magnitude of the disruption, or how long it takes for the disruption to seem like it settles down and move to something else. And that, and that might very well be conflated with characteristics of experience. But in either, either way, there are limit, limits of the method. I mean, it's, ... [pause] So I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm done with that musing. I shouldn't say *I'm done with it*, but it's, I'm ready to move on and see whether we can figure out something.



42:18 Russ comments: It seems to me that there are at least three very different possibilities here, which I have tried to schematize at right.



Panel A schematizes a methodological misunderstanding, where Agnes is trying to describe what experience (breath) is *happening in the moment*, but she can't figure out what a *moment* is: if the moment is small, then experience seems one way, but if the moment is large, then experience seems quite another way. As a result, she has a very difficult time describing what was happening experientially. The cure for that is to help Agnes see that the DES interest is *not* in what is *happening in a moment* but is instead in what is *caught in flight at a moment*. In that understanding, the length of the moment is not an externally imposed slice but is instead an inherent aspect of the experience, and confusion over the length of the moment may diminish.

Panel B schematizes a disruption of memory consolidation, where Agnes's experience (breath) was caught in flight at a moment—the beep did in fact catch a point in the inhale—but the task of grasping the beep is disruptive—by the time Agnes settles into the *this is what I will report* task, she can't remember the ongoing-at-the-beep experience. The cure for this is to reduce as much as we can any complexity and/or anxiety around the process—reassure Agnes that we are aiming at doing what we can do, not at perfection.

It is possible (perhaps even likely) that panels A and B feed back on each other: the Panel-A difficulty of defining the moment might contribute to the Panel-B disruption about what to recall.

Panel C schematizes a faithful recall of experience, but the experience itself, and the beep itself, are not characterizable in an at-a-particular-moment kind of way. For example, if Agnes's experience is not organized in a figure/ground sort of way, then a faithful description should not be organized in a figure/ground sort of way. If Agnes's experience is not easily graspable with temporal specificity, the a faithful description should not strive for temporal specificity.

This is not a multiple-choice scheme—there may well be other options, and the object is *not* to decide among these options. The aim here is to talk with each other in a way that might advance our ability to talk with each other with greater fidelity—"No, it's not option B, but it is sort of like B if we could change...." That is, this is one grind in the iterative mill.

We have not sorted these things out. It is possible that we will never sort them out; it is possible that as we try to work things through on subsequent beeped experiences, that we will gain some insight into this. Or not.

Michael comments: RE "the length of the moment is not an externally imposed slice but is instead an inherent aspect of the experience"

This issue has come up several times, including during my own interviews ([Part XV of Inner Experience Of...](#)). Most of the time for myself—and I think some (but not all) of Agnes' beeps could be interpreted this way—the 'appropriate length' of the 'moment' was fairly clear, because *something* was 'caught in flight', and the length of the 'moment' was (taken by me to be) the duration of that 'something'. ('Something' means "something of which one is conscious in the moment, and conscious of it 'as that something'." It could be 'axe head hitting wood' or it could be 'doing the chores'. As it happened, in my case, 'moments' tended to be more like the former, and that seems (?) to be the case for Agnes as well. It does feel like the process of DES encourages shorter over longer 'somethings', but it isn't clear why it feels that way.)

BUT: It didn't always work out that way (for me) and maybe not for Agnes either. There were times when a certain lack of clarity about the experience itself ("was I aware of this going-on as 'axe head hitting wood' or as 'completing my chores' or both or neither?") meant that clear identification of the appropriate duration (of 'the moment') was not feasible.

Maybe that story lines up with your scheme A; however, it isn't a consequence of a methodological misunderstanding, but rather of an inability to be sufficiently clear or univocal ('both' in the question above) about the experience to know which of those moments is the 'right' one. (There may also be an element of scheme C involved in this story. Of course, disruption (scheme B) could also be part of this story, though in my case, at least, I don't think it was.)

Russ comments: RE "It does feel like the process of DES encourages shorter over longer 'somethings', but it isn't clear why it feels that way"

I think that it is not right to say that DES favors shorter somethings. I would say, instead, "It does feel like the perceptual nature of figure/ground-based experience encourages shorter over longer 'somethings'." (1) Most people have perceptual figure/ground experience; (2) those people have some sense of the duration of the current figurization; (3) those people have some sense of the mostly constant-ness of the real environment while the figure changes dramatically from one moment to the next; and therefore (4) those people understand their directly apprehended experience to be related to the figurization in their experience; (5) most perceptual figurizations are of short duration; and therefore (6) experiences are short rather than long.

Michael's and Agnes's experiences, as it happens, are, apparently, *not* of the "most people" variety. Michael's figure/ground phenomena are (as it seems to me) unusual—they have an all-figure-no-ground character. Agnes's figure/ground phenomena are also (as it seems to me) unusual—they have an all-ground-no-figure character. That is, both Michael and Agnes are figure/ground unusual, but their two kinds of unusual phenomena are very different from each other. I have frequently, across our sampling with Agnes, tried to imagine what sampling-with-Agnes must be like *for Michael*: what must he, with his very unusual all-figure-no-ground perception, be making of Agnes's all-ground-no-figure perception? Sometimes it seems to me that it would have been better if Michael's first DES-interviewer encounter had been with someone of more-or-less-typical figure/ground perception. But sometimes I think sampling with Agnes is the perfect first-DES-interviewer opportunity for Michael—he knows Agnes and trusts her in a prior-to-DES way. But mostly I think it is not given to me to know what is good (or better) for Michael.

43:28 Agnes: Me too. Okay, sounds good.

43:30 RTH: Number 3.

43:31 Agnes: Okay. So for the next beep.

43:33 RTH: Um, and, and, and I want, I, I, I would like to say if anything that I have said (ever, probably, but I'm speak, speaking mostly of today) sounds the least bit critical of Agnes, that I don't want it to be, uh, I, I don't want to be understood as being critical of Agnes. I take Agnes as being, *I'm doing the best I can to answer your questions*. And, and I take Russ as saying, *I accept that the questions may not have answers*. And, and that's neither a criticism of Agnes, nor of Russ, nor of Michael. I mean, it's, it's close to the, the weeds, I guess, but it, but in a, but we have to, we, we have to be that close to the weeds, something like that.

43:33 Russ comments: A substantial portion of the DES skill is recognizing the difficulty of the task and trying to ensure that that is not taken personally.

44:26 Agnes: Understood.

44:29 RTH: Number 3.

Sample 6.3 discussions starts here

44:31 Agnes: [pause] Okay, so now I'm sitting outside and I'm working on that paper again, [laughs] [inaudible] revisions. Um, and I had just paused, like I was in the middle of writing a paragraph and I had paused and I was looking like up towards my left. Um, so at the moment of the beep, um, I was seeing... So my, my backyard has like this upper deck and this lower deck. I was sitting on the lower deck and I was kind of looking up towards the upper deck and I was seeing that upper deck, but not focusing on anything in particular. Like, again, like with the other two examples of seeing what was in my visual field was just there. I wasn't focusing on anything. I was just in this pause in working on my paper.

45:27 Um, and when, like, the moment before the beep went off, um, I had just (or maybe the beep even interrupted this saying, I'm not sure) um, but in any case, at some point before the beep, I had just innerly said, "suppose that they..." um, as I was composing an example for this paper. Um, and I was sort of thinking about how to fill out this example precisely, but in the, in the moment of the beep, um, what I mean by I was thinking about, so what the beep interrupted was just kind of a blankness in my mind. Um, having just said, "suppose that they..." and then there was this, I didn't know it was exactly gonna come next. I mean, I, I had been, I had been thinking about this example and I was working out the details of how to present this example and what was important about it. Um, but in the moment of the beep, I was just in this pause having just said that, and my mind was kind of blank.

46:49 RTH: So does the beep interrupt, the caught in flight portion, the leading edge of the beep, that the leading edge of the beep is the, is the moment that we're interested in, or actually one microsecond just before the leading edge of the beep, that's what we're calling *the moment of the beep*, what we're *trying to call* the moment of the beep, whether we can get there or not. We'll see. Does that seem to catch this pause the blankness, or does it seem to catch the saying "Suppose that they..."

47:20 Agnes: The, I believe it was the blankness. I believe that what happened was I said, "suppose that they..." and I didn't finish that sentence because I didn't know what was, I was trying to figure out what was happening in that sentence. So I had said that, and then there was the blankness and then the beep.

47:39 RTH: So in our, in our timeline here [enhanced pic at right], if this is time going and this is the beep, and I push the button and stop the beep, I'm saying to myself out here somewhere, suppose that they, and then that seems to be over with, and I'm in this blankness. And the beep catches [Agnes: Exactly.] in the



blankness.

48:03 Agnes: Correct. Yeah. But the but the, that span of time of blank, like the “suppose that they” was very, um, soon before that. So that just that span of time between suppose that they, where the blankness was happening was a fairly short period of time, maybe like a second or two or,

48:31 RTH: But enough, enough to be confident that it’s in the past? (by comparison to the...)

48:37 Agnes: I’d say so.

48:38 RTH: Okay. And so at the moment of the beep, I am seeing the yard *and* my mind is blank.

48:57 Agnes: Yes. The only reason I’m hesitating with the yes is for the, my, *my mind is blank*, how to characterize that exactly. Um, I’d say it’s pretty blank, um, in that moment. But there is still this, I don’t know whether to call it like the remnant of that example that I’m coming up with, or this kind of listening for the rest of how that’s gonna go. Like there is a quality of, um, figuring out this example, figuring out how to formulate it, um,

49:40 RTH: Awaiting the results of it.

49:41 Agnes: A awaiting. Yeah, exactly. But it is a fairly blank state with those qualifiers.

49:48 RTH: And, and I did not mean to exclude those when I said “my mind is blank.” [Agnes: Mmm.] I was just trying to refer to the two, two, two separate.

49:54 Agnes: Yeah. [RTH: Two separate...] but yes, yes, you’re right. Yeah.

49:57 RTH: And do those seem equal? Or parallel in different, different worlds and its equality is

50:06 Agnes: Yeah, I’d say equal. Yeah.

50:14 RTH: Okay. And so about the *seeing*, I am understanding myself is, is that I am, I am seeing my yard and its terraces or whatever, but I’m not particularly seeing the terraces and I’m not particularly seeing the rhododendron or the oak tree or whatever, but I *am* seeing the rhododendron and the oak tree and the terraces and whatever else is there, but without any differentiation of them.

50:47 Agnes: Yes, um...

50:47 RTH: Any spec without any specific, specific focus.

50:50 Agnes: Yeah, I, I wouldn’t have used the word “differentiation,” because they are differentiated. If anything like, I mean, I’m, I’m most prominent in my visual field is the, um, like the upper deck has like a railing and that railing, and then there’s this kind of trellis thing. Those are most prominent. Um, but only because the, they’re kind of in the foreground of my visual field, not because I’m trying to *make them*

prominent or I've *noticed anything* in particular about them. Um, they just happen to be closest by, and the other stuff is more background. Um, but I, but I see, but it's all like in my visual field, and I'm experiencing it as such.

50:50 Russ comments: That sounds like Agnes is describing a seeing that has no figure/ground experience (see the comment at 26:41). Is that what she intends to describe? In the turns that follow (through 1:01:23), RTH will try to sort that out.

51:44 RTH: So it's *not true* to say I am seeing the railing. It is true to say I'm seeing my yard, and at this particular moment, the railing happens to be in the center of my visual field or something. [Agnes: Yeah.] Not that I, not that I have latched onto the railing *per se*.

52:12 Agnes: Yeah, exactly. I haven't latched onto the railing *per se*.

52:21 RTH: And so Right, right. Now you, you're looking at a Zoom window. How many, how many... Tell me what you see. Do you see three Zoom windows? One of me and one of Michael and one of you?



52:30 Agnes: Um, yes.

52:31 RTH: Or do you see two windows?

52:32 Agnes: But I see three, but I'm now focused on the one of you. I'm focusing on you, and seeing the others in the background.

52:43 RTH: So they're there on the screen, the other two are there on the screen. And so is, at this moment, you're looking at the one that's of me and the other two are, are *made peripheral*. They're, they're not just peripheral, but they are experientially in the ground, and you could, and you have made Russ, the Russ window,, and you could, and... What, so what happens when you move to the Michael window?

53:12 Agnes: Now the Michael window is the figure and the rest are at the ground.

53:18 RTH: And so you, and, and does that mean that when you're looking at the Michael window, it's not just that your eyeballs are aimed at the Michael window, it's that Michael becomes prominent and clear and central and whatever, and Russ almost disappears or entirely disappears, [Agnes: Yes.] shadowily disappears. [Agnes nods affirmatively] So, so you have, in, in this, at this moment, it sounds like, a pretty clear figure/ground phenomenon [Agnes: Yes.] where, where you, you figure-ize this screen in a way that either makes it *me* or makes it *Michael*.

54:00 Agnes: Exactly. Yep.

54:01 RTH: And when it, and when it's me, it *wouldn't* be fair for you to say, "I'm seeing a screen with three windows on it." It would be fair to say, "I'm seeing Russ" (or "the Russ window") or something like that. [Agnes: Yeah.] Probably. I'm seeing Russ and

the other stuff is present, but not, not really experientialized or whatever. Does that seem right?

- 54:01 Russ comments: With this Zoom discussion, RTH has been seeking to establish (a) whether Agnes at least sometimes has figure/ground-organized perceptions and (b) whether Agnes and Russ can talk about such perceptions without talking past each other. The answer to both question seems to be Yes: she sometimes has figure/ground perception and we might be able to talk informatively with each other about instances where figure/ground perception is or is not a feature.
- 54:24 Agnes: Yep. Yep. That seems right.
- 54:25 RTH: But that is *not* what's happening at the moment of the beep in the backyard.
- 54:29 Agnes: Correct. I'm not making the railing the figure or anything like that.
- 54:34 RTH: Okay.
- 54:35 Agnes: It's as if like, if I were looking at the computer, I, I were almost looking kind of through it and not at any window in particular.
- 54:45 RTH: Okay. And it seems like that would be more or less the same way about the reMarkable and the, and the list. [Agnes: Yeah. Yeah.] That I'm, I have, I have *not* made figure *either* the reMarkable or the list or the table or anything else, but I'm seeing them all without creating a figure for myself.
- 55:13 Agnes: Exactly. I mean, in, in all of those cases, I was like, *unlike* this Zoom call where I'm talking to *you* or to *Michael*, um, and I have made one of these aspects, the figure in all three of these examples, I'm not looking at anything in particular. I'm just like, my eyes are open and I'm getting an image, but I, but I'm not figure-izing anything.
- 55:43 RTH: So what I'm, what I'm getting from this conversation is we know how to talk about figure/ground phenomenon *when it happens*, but at the moment of the beep, *it's not happening*. And it's not just that we're, that we, we don't differentiate the language or we're forgetting to talk about it or, or whatever. We are *saying* that *at the moment of this beep*, I have, I have visual experience that is not figure/ground, figure, figure/ground-y.
- 56:11 Agnes: Exactly. Yeah.
- 56:13 RTH: Okay. And I'm guessing that's pretty common *for you* actually, and we will go back and look at your samples. There's quite a, quite a lot of those, [Agnes: Yeah.], I think.
- 56:25 Agnes: I mean, it depends on the context of course, but yes, in the context of these samples, it has been. Whenever I'm kind of pausing and look staring off into space, I don't have a figure/ground-y phenomenon. But if I'm doing something more intentional that with like a visual component that is intentional, I do have that. I

mean, um, well, we won't get to it today, but one of, in one of my samples, like my sixth one for the, for the day, um, did have that, I was writing a letter and I was honing in on the specific passage that I had just written, and there *was* the figure/ground thing. But when I'm just staring off into space as I seem to be a lot of the time, [laughs] um, I don't do that.

57:12 MD: But it's still, but, but you're saying this is still a visual experience?

57:17 Agnes: Yeah.

57:22 MD: Okay.

57:25 RTH: So in the, in the first beep when (the stretching beep) [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] was the, was the stretching figure, figural in the sense of I am making the stretch the figure of my experience? Not visually, but experientially figural?

57:49 Agnes: I would say. So, yeah. I mean of co... (Sorry, I'm like, now hesitating to say, I was gonna say of course, but then I realized that I'm probably shouldn't say that.) I, I was about to say, of course there were all these other things of myself, other aspects of my felt experience at the time, such as like, y'know, the feeling of sitting on the mat or whatever. But I, I don't feel that I can say that. Um,

58:16 RTH: So that's exactly the question that I'm asking. Uh, is on that beep, had you made the stretch aspect of, of the welter of, of sensory phenomenon that would be available to you at that particular moment, I am clearly into the, the stretching of *this part of my body* and all the rest of those stuff is in the ground? Or is it this, all that stuff is going on, and I gotta tell Russ about something, and so I'm gonna tell him about the stretch.

58:54 Agnes: I understand the distinction, but I'm not sure I can accurately remember what was happening at the moment of the beep. [RTH: Okay.] Like, which, like, I'm not sure I can accurately distinguish between them for that experience.

58:54 Russ comments: RE "I'm not sure I can accurately remember what was happening at the moment of the beep."

Excellent. We have, over the course of the last many minutes, clarified our understanding of figure/ground perception. Such clarification is the heart of the iterative method. And a main principle of the iterative method is that such clarification should be considered useful *for future samples* but *not* for samples from the past. If we had to work to refine some characteristic (here, figure/ground perception) we should accept that Agnes did *not* have that distinction adequately at her disposal in previous samples at the time that she needed it (that is, immediately following the beep). (I made this same point in my comment at 7:45.)

Why, then, did RTH ask (at 58:16) Agnes to apply this later figure/ground understanding to the previous (stretching) sample? I'm no mind reader (even for RTH), but I would interpret RTH's question as an effective way of demonstrating that the figure/ground distinctions apply to phenomena other than visual.

59:17 RTH: Fair enough. So I'm ready to turn onto the turn, turn to the blank, what, what we're calling the blackness or the awaiting this or the, or the whatever, without making too much of any one of those words. So what I understand is that there is, there is some inkling of a process going on here. I'm expecting, I'm ex in, in, I'm in some expectantly kind of state or whatever that I'm, there's an example that's going to materialize. And I'm know, I know in the, I, I'm understanding I am, in my experience, there's some hints of what that example is. It is about *this* and not about the war in Iran, or, or, and that is not

1:00:13 Agnes: Even more like,

1:00:14 RTH: Go ahead.

1:00:15 Agnes: Yeah, I mean, I, I even, I basically have the outlines of the example and, um, and it's a question about framing the example. Um, but in my experience, yeah, that's kind of like a, a rem like in the blankness, um, there's just this expectancy of that framing coming to me soon.

1:00:43 RTH: So it's not like I'm focused on the framing, on the framework. [Agnes: No.] I'm not focused on the example. *I can say* my experience is in some way framework-y and in some way example-y, but it, that's, those are I guess in the weeds portions of [Agnes: Yeah, yeah.] my experience. [Agnes: Yeah.] Not irrelevant, but they're not explicitly present either.

1:01:14 Agnes: Yeah.

1:01:18 RTH: And I think I'm good about that.

1:01:23 MD: Yeah. I mean, I, I think I, I had some questions that I think got answered in that whole discussion, so I, yeah, I, I don't, I don't think I need to ask anything.

1:01:23 Russ comments: The reader may recall that Michael (= MD) was a DES participant in the months before sampling with Agnes. Michael's experience also involved an unusual figure/ground characteristic that is very different from Agnes's. Michael's everyday experiences were *all figure no ground*. That is, whereas most perceptual grounds are understood to be less focused, less attention-y, Michael's perceptions had *no ground at all*. Michael may wish to comment on this, but my understanding is that if Michael were to look at the apple/orange photo, he might see the orange, *and when doing so, the apple and the table and the chair would not exist, period*; and then me might see the bruise and when doing so the orange and the chair and the table *and also the apple* would not exist, period.

A characteristic of such perception is that if Michael experiences seeing an orange, the seeing itself does not reveal whether the orange is real or imagined; the determination of what is "real" must be the result of an explicit cognitive-analytical analysis of probabilities.

It is also worth emphasizing (1) there are varieties of perceptual organization: (a) "typical" figure/ground perception creates/promotes one figure and deemphasizes /demotes all else to the ground; (b) Agnes's perception that

(sometimes) sees everything without making anything the figure or the ground; and (c) Michael's perception that makes one thing the figure and entirely obliterates all else; (2) These varieties are not well known to psychology, even to perceptual or clinical psychology; (3) One reason that these are not well known is the care and effort necessary to discover them—we are three smart people in Agnes's sixth sampling day (to say nothing of 11 sampling days with Michael), and we are still trying to iron out these features; and (4) Another reason they are not well known is that they may well be invisible in a laboratory setup. Agnes might always have figure/ground perception when performing her required task in a laboratory perceptual experiment—her no-figure perceptions occurred only when she was not engaged in a particular task.

Michael comments: I was invited to comment here, and I wanted to as well, because I'm still trying to understand this figure/ground business. Prior to doing DES, I would have said that *yes I do have 'figure/ground' in my experience*. I understood 'ground' to refer the idea that "other stuff is around but not being attended to." Until the DES interviews, I had no notion that this 'awareness' of the 'being around' of the other stuff is supposed to be perceptual.

So three comments (but things are still quite unclear to me so don't take any of them too seriously):

(1) I don't think it is perceptual for me. I've tried! (See #3.) I think it is purely propositional—I believe that there is certain other stuff around, apart from what is in my perceptual experience, and most of the time those beliefs are reasonably accurate.

(2) I do think that this way of experiencing introduces challenges something like what you mentioned. I suppose it would be difficult to disentangle various potential sources for those challenges. Here is one quick example: The other day I had the recurring feeling that my arms don't belong to me. I noticed that the feeling was especially strong in the moment that I would make a visual check—just prior to those moments, the arms were not perceptually experienced at all, and then suddenly there they are! Where did they come from? Whose arms **are** those? Then I would (quickly) work out that they are mine, but then a couple of minutes later the same thing would happen. (This sort of experience is not uncommon.) I'm now wondering whether this kind of experience has something to do with the arms (or whatever) moving in and out of perceptual attention. The moment of 'crossing the boundary' feels like...a moment. (I'm not sure how to describe it.)

(3) I can still attend, perceptually, to more than one thing. Even 3 or 4. In fact, since doing DES, I've struggled to try to have the 'figure/ground experience' where 'ground' is perceptual rather than propositional, but I find that what happens is either my attention shifts rapidly from one thing to another, or I begin attending to 2 (or 3 or 4) things all at once, though not necessarily with equal attention. If I recall our discussions of a couple months ago, this kind of 'attentional multiplicity' is not uncommon, but also is not the same thing as figure/ground. (Everything in perceptual experience is figure; there is no ground.) It seems also not the same as "Agnes's perception that (sometimes) sees everything without making anything the figure or the ground".

(I also am not 100% confident saying that I **never** have figure/ground perceptual experience. Maybe (??) it is just less common, or not the norm, or something.)

Russ comments: RE (from [Michael's](#) ninth interview, at 1:06:38): “when I say something is real or not, all I mean is other people would also see it if they looked, or hear it if they listened, or whatever. That’s a survival technique for me, if you like.”

Somewhere the three of us had a conversation where I said something like “The world *is* real to me” and Agnes responded something like “It is for me, too”. <<<If either of you can tell me where that happened, I’d appreciate it. I’d quote it here>>> I think (1) It is possible (or likely) that Agnes’s and my certainty about the reality of the world comes from the ground of our figure/ground phenomena. When I make my computer screen the figure, my keyboard is part of the ground; and then when I reach for my glass of tea, the keyboard is still part of the ground, seen from a slightly different perspective; and when I scratch the itch on my neck, the keyboard is still part of the ground, seen from yet a slightly different perspective and with a slightly different degree of clarity; and when I type on the keyboard, the seen *and the heard and the fingertip-felt* keyboard is part of the ground; and when I stand up to go get a book off the shelf, the keyboard is still part of the ground, in a changing set of perspectives as I walk the two steps to the bookcase. Then I come back and see the keyboard in preparation for typing, and the seen keyboard is now the figure; and then I look again at the screen, and the keyboard is again part of the ground. And the feel of the keys is also ground in a way connected to the keyboard. The point here is that *the keyboard is always there in the ground* (or the figure), in all those different perspectives and manners and situations, and my perceptual process therefore makes the keyboard real.

So to paraphrase Michael: “when I say my keyboard is real or not, what I mean is it is already there in the ground, and I could make it figure if I looked, or hear it if I listened, or whatever.”

Michael can make the keyboard the figure. And then he can make the screen the figure *and the keyboard ceases to exist as a perceptual object*; and then he can make his glass of tea the figure *and the keyboard does not exist*. There is never an existent keyboard for Michael until he makes it the figure. That is, it seems to me, hugely experientially different from Russ’s (and Agnes’s) experience, where the keyboard *always* perceptually exists. As a result, the keyboard *is real* for Russ and Agnes, and *is propositional* for Michael.

RE “(3)...Since doing DES, I’ve [unsuccessfully] struggled to try to have the ‘figure/ground experience’ where ‘ground’ is perceptual rather than propositional”

I’ve thought about what kind of exercise or “mental calisthenic” Michael might engage in to develop/acquire figure/ground phenomena as a perceptual rather than a propositional characteristic, and I don’t know what to suggest. Furthermore, I don’t know whether it would be possible for Michael, a 58-year-old man, <<<Please correct that age>>> to develop that ability—perhaps his perceptual skills are pretty much set by now. On the other hand, I have seen some pretty dramatic inner experiential changes in adults (e.g., Fran).

But this is the scenario I had in mind when I wrote in my comment at 1:06:38 in Michael's ninth sampling interview: "I think that it is possible, or even likely, that had we had these DES interviews when Michael was in his mid to late teens, it might have expedited his 'figuring out' process and perhaps saved him some police drama." Imagine this: (1) Suppose that it becomes established as a fact of cognitive psychology that one's sense of reality arises from the ground in figure/ground perception (as I just described about the keyboard); (2) Suppose further that developmental psychology has established the developmental sequence of how figure/ground perception arises; and (3) Suppose that clinical psychology had discovered that 16-year-old (maybe it would have to be 14-year-old or 12-year-old or whatever) Michael is on a developmental trajectory where figure/ground phenomena would have been expected to have occurred (or, better, where a known precursor to figure/ground phenomena would have occurred). At that age, would there possibly be a "mental calisthenic" that Michael could engage in that would enable him to acquire figure/ground phenomena? I don't know. I'm pretty sure nobody knows. But it is, in my view, a likely outcome in a mature science of inner experience.

In short, I think it likely that the stability of objects in the ground of perception is the source of what is *real*. I think Michael's lack of ground in his perceptual phenomena leads to no stability in the ground of his perception, which leads to no sense of anything being real. I think that lack of reality leads to difficulties for Michael (sometimes minor, sometimes dramatic). I think it likely that other people share the same kind of difficulties that Michael has, for the same inner-experiential reasons. I don't know how many such people, because, like Michael before DES, people don't know the characteristics of their own inner experience, and psychological science doesn't take inner experiential characteristics seriously.

1:01:32 RTH: Okay. So in that discussion, there was a, there was, the number 6 is different from the rest of these things in some way. Is that right? And, and my, my question is, should we, should we do number 6 next?

Discussion after sampling

1:01:47 Agnes: Um, I should probably get going because I have an appointment soon and I wanted to eat something before the appointment.

1:01:55 RTH: Okay. Alright. So should we, should we do this again? Seems like, seems like today's discussion might have clarified some stuff.

1:02:12 MD: I, I'm happy to go either way. We had our next one *was to be* the, the green thing, but I, I'm happy to do it, uh, either way.

1:02:21 RTH: Me too.

1:02:23 Agnes: Um, I could do it either way as well.

1:02:23 Russ comments: They consider their calendars and agree to have another sampling day in a few weeks.