

Gabriel H.: A university student with philosophy interests
Conversation After Gabriel Debrief Interview

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the ??? interview with Gabriel that is available on YouTube at ???. In green are comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

AG = Amber Goto

CK = Cody Kaneshiro

Gabriel = Gabriel H.

0:00 RTH: Things where you can always erase at a recording, but you can't.

0:05 Gabriel: Yeah, exactly.

0:06 RTH: Record, re-, re-record this one. I don't, I, I don't know whether it's a good idea to record it or not. But, so what I think we're doing here today is that I said in our debrief meeting, that I had difficulty tracking something that you said.

0:24 Gabriel: Yes.

0:24 RTH: And, and I tried to be sort of straightforward about that, that, that this is a characteristic of more, more, maybe, maybe more of mine than of yours. And, uh, and I would, I'd be interested in knowing why that is. But for me it's when we, when I get, when I hear the kinds of things that you were saying in *that particular portion* of the meeting (it's not usually when I'm talking to you), but in that particular portion of the meeting [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] that it's just that I, I just, I automatically tune out and I, I can't do anything about it.

0:56 Gabriel: Okay. Got it.

0:57 RTH: And so the question is, well, *why is that?* And the fact that I *don't* do it most of the time with you, but I do it at that particular time, I thought that was interesting and, and I thought maybe I, or we, or somebody would learn, learn something about it if we talked about it.

1:11 Gabriel: Okay, well, I'd be happy to talk about it.

1:13 RTH: And then in the, in the context of doing that, then it happened one more time in the *next* meeting. So I sent you a recording of that. I didn't transcribe it, but I sent you a recording.

1:22 Gabriel: Right. Yes. I, I saw that. I think the second one, the second time it happened was more of a re, result, was more result of me just, uh, not explaining it well, like getting a tripped up over my own words. The first one, um, I don't think that was happening as much, but I think the second one was a result of that.

1:42 RTH: Well, maybe. I, I think I have a fairly high tolerance for people getting lost for words.

1:49 Gabriel: Okay.

1:50 RTH: But what, what, so I would, I would say what we oughta do is we should watch one of them. And I've [Gabriel: Okay, got it.] I've queued up one of 'em, but I actually don't know which one I queued up. I queued it up before I went to the meeting so that it would be ready when, when the time came. And then I, then I, that didn't work out, so I don't actually know which one I queued up. But I would say, I'm guessing it's the, the, the debrief meeting.

2:14 Gabriel: So, okay, so lemme open the email real quick.

2:17 RTH: Let me share my screen.

2:19 Gabriel: Oh, okay. That works.

2:34 RTH: The question is, which screen is it that I wanna share? So it is the debrief one. [Gabriel: Okay.] Can you see the, can you see now?

2:48 Gabriel: Yes. Yeah, I can see that. I don't know if I'll be able to hear it, but

2:51 RTH: I, I have hooked it. I have clicked the box that says you should be able to hear it and I've done this stuff...

2:56 Gabriel: Oh, okay. Good.

2:57 RTH: Alright. So I, I'm not, not expecting there to be a problem there. And somewhere I have opened up the document (where did it go) with the transcript in it?

3:10 Gabriel: Hmm.

3:10 RTH: Yeah. So I don't, I don't have, I don't have a plan for how to have this conversation.

3:26 Gabriel: Okay.

3:26 RTH: Except I, except maybe that we should, y'know, watch a few seconds of the video and then see what, see what, if anything that inspires in us and, uh,

3:38 Gabriel: Right. Okay. That sounds good to me. That's sort of what I expected would happen.

3:44 RTH: Okay. And, and, y'know, I wanna make it, I wanna make it abundantly clear. I'm not, this is not a teaching deal from my point of view. It's a, I'm trying to learn something deal.

3:58 Gabriel: Okay. Got it. Good to know. Thank you.

4:03 RTH: So this is the, this is the excerpt that I transcribed.

4:09 Gabriel: Okay.

[Video plays]

27:00 Gabriel: Um, well, I, I think what happened for me, what made it like easier, I guess

4:15 RTH: And can you hear that?

4:16 Gabriel: Yes.

[Video rewinds and plays]

27:00 Gabriel: Um, well, I, I think what happened for me, what made it like easier, I guess was, um, I just, I did, I sort of decided to operate on the *assumption* that, um, in the same way that like in this current moment in the present, there are always things

4:46 RTH: So I, I have, I have the same reaction. I'm having the reaction right now. And even though, even though we're in, not into the content, it's, it's interesting to me, which is why I thought it might be interesting to talk about it. It's like, [Gabriel: Okay.] the words just *don't penetrate*. My, my experience is *you're saying words and, uh, and you might as well be talking Greek or something like that*. Like, I don't,

5:09 Gabriel: Huh! Okay. Um, okay. Do you wanna continue? Or do you wanna talk?

5:14 RTH: Well, if you've got something to say about that, I'd be happy. I

5:16 Gabriel: Well, do you remember the, the general problem that is causing me to say this? Because I de, I described like the general I, and I think we went over it like once or twice before, which is the general thing that, like, it makes it difficult for me. It, or at least it made it difficult for me to do DES at the beginning.

5:44 RTH: So if the question is *do I rem, do I remember it?* And, and, and the answer is vaguely I remember it. It it, it was about you had to do with, you weren't, you weren't sure about what was retrospected or what was introspected, something like that.

6:00 Gabriel: Right, exactly. Basically that, that's exactly it. Because, um, the whole point of, uh, or as, at least as far as I understand it, the whole point of DES is to like, to, um, give, y'know, random samples of what's directly apprehended by a person at a given moment. Um, and that makes perfect sense to me because at any given moment, what's in your direct experience is perfectly clear because you have direct access to the present. But you don't have direct access to the past, right? So the, you don't ha there's no way to directly apprehend what *was* in your conscious experience. Um,

and so that left with me with like, so I felt like I had to infer it. So I felt like I was left with two options. One was that I can *infer* what was in my direct experience based on certain cues, like what was the most vivid thing in my memory at the time. Um, and or, or maybe other things like, oh, well I was talking to myself at the time and that, it seems like language is pretty conscious so I'm guessing that was directly apprehended. And then I, I guess, yeah. And then I talk about the second solution, which is what I ended up kind of going with. Um, but do you, do you, does that problem make sense?

7:42 RTH: [pause] So I was, I would, I would say that, that your explanation of that problem there, I encounter in the same way as I encounter the,... it's one of those things where it's hard for me to, it's hard for me to track. [Gabriel: Okay.] [pause] And, and I, and y'know, the, the interesting thing for me to just to try to articulate *why it is* or what it... And, and the first thing I think, as a general rule, is when I, when I'm interested in these kinds of things, is the question is *what is the phenomenon?* And, and [pause]

8:24 So I, so I *take it* that what you said then, and what you were saying in this clip too, I think is something like, *well, on one theory I could do this, and on another theory I could do that.* [pause] And it's like, on one theory, I, I could say that I'm having experience, and another theory I would say I'm *not* having experience, or I don't know what that experience is.

9:02 Gabriel: Mm-hmm. Well, we, uh, I'm not sure I know what you're saying there, but I do have one question, which is: We would agree, I assume (correct me if I'm wrong), that there are things, there are details that are logged in memory that were not directly experienced. So like five, if, if I thought about something, I might be able to remember something that you were doing five seconds ago, but it wasn't in my direct experience—it just happened to be like unconsciously logged in memory. Would that be accurate? That there are things like that?

9:51 RTH: [pause] Well, now I have to, I have to act like a philosopher because I, I have a promise, I have promise with what *logged in memory* means, and [Gabriel: Okay.] because I don't think memory as an, as an existing thing exists. I don't think there is such a thing as memory. [Gabriel: Hmm.] I think that I think there.... So if, if what you meant was, are there things that happened five seconds ago that I responded to, or that, that I organismocally responded to, y'know, the airwaves on my ears or smells in the environment or whatever, I, I respond to those don't, don't recognize them, but they impact me. So that later on I have, I have, uh, it can be shown that I have been impacted by that. The answer to that is *yes, for sure*. Lots of things happen that impact me and can be in demonstrated that impact me.

9:51 Russ comments: Re "promise"

In reviewing this video, I don't know what I meant by the word "promise." Perhaps it is a corruption of "problem" and "premise," but that is speculation. I don't know what I meant.

10:51 Gabriel: Okay.

- 10:51 RTH: That I didn't, that I didn't, that weren't in my direct experience at any particular moment.[Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] If that's what you meant, then yes.
- 11:02 Gabriel: That *isn't* quite what I meant. What I really meant was: Let's say I, I wanna recall, let's say I like report what happened to me five seconds ago, and I recall it. In, in DES, I can't just report everything that I remember about what was happening five seconds ago. Because I mean, that's how I see it. Maybe I'm *wrong*, you let me know because, uh, as far as I understand, if I reported everything that happened to me five seconds ago that I remember, I would report on a bunch of things that *weren't* in my *experience*, that I wasn't actually, that weren't, I wasn't directly apprehending.
- 11:40 RTH: That's correct.
- 11:40 Gabriel: But nonetheless are still, I can still recall them. [pause] Is accurate? [pause] Right?
- 11:56 RTH: Well, re *recall* is a little bit, a little bit tough, but if you, if you were to say, if you, if you asked me what was going on at the moment of the beep, I could report a lot of stuff that I could *infer* was, was ongoing but not experienced. [Gabriel: Okay.] So I could *infer*, I, you could *infer* that your hand has been on your chin, your hand isn't on your chin. Now, you don't feel it having been moved for the last five seconds. So probably my hand was on my chin in five, five seconds ago. [Gabriel: Okay.] That would be a *true* statement. It *was* there five seconds ago. We can objectively rewind the video tape and demonstrate that.
- 12:33 Gabriel: Right. But that, yeah, that's an *inference*, though. That's an inference. [RTH: Right.] Um, so then would you say that there isn't any, there are no details that you can recall? And I'm not, I'm not saying *infer*, but I'm saying like, like if I remember looking at the Mona Lisa or something like that, if I, if I remember looking at the Mona Lisa, is it possible for me to notice a detail that wasn't in my direct experience while I'm looking at that? Like, while I'm remembering it? Is it possible for me, notice...
- 13:08 RTH: Lemme lemme, lemme interrupt that question because [Gabriel: Okay.] at the, at the, when I, when, when "think about looking at the Mona Lisa" or whatever you said about that, I have that reaction right at the very beginning of that. I, and, and I *think* that reaction is: you're, I, it *seems* that my reaction and.... I, I don't really know about this, so I'm, I'm all, everything that I'm saying is up for grabs here. [Gabriel: Okay.] The, I *think* my, my reaction is that you're advancing something as an experience, which *isn't* an actual experience, and we're gonna, and, and I just *can't* go there. [Gabriel: Okay.] So you, you say, well, "when you're looking at the Mona Lisa" as if I'm supposed to be able to remember what it's like to look at the Mona Lisa. And, and I, and I just don't think that there's any hope for that conversation to be productive.
- 14:17 Gabriel: Okay. Um, well, I'm not necessarily trying to say, I want you to like, give me a, a DES sample of what it was like to look at the Mona Lisa. I'm just saying if you like, try to recall the Mona Lisa, like imagine the Mona Lisa, basically.

- 14:34 RTH: Okay. So I can imagine. So I, I don't have any trouble with that. I can sort of imagine Mon Lisa.
- 14:39 Gabriel: Yeah. Or maybe the view outside your window or something like that. Is it, is it possible to, when you're imagining that, see a detail in this imagining that was not directly experienced, but nevertheless is real. So like if you actually went out there, you'd see the detail. So you, you notice the detail for the first time, or at least you directly apprehend the detail for the first time, in the imagining.
- 15:15 RTH: So (a) I'm having that reaction. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] The reaction, the reaction that I seek to understand comes and goes in our conversation. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] [pause] And, and, and, and, and I wanna, I wanna reiterate, I'm not blaming you or holding you responsible or whatever.
- 15:15 Russ comments: For the record, I have the same reaction when I am now watching the video in the task of reviewing/cleaning up the transcript.
- 15:37 Gabriel: Okay! I understand.
- 15:38 RTH: It's a, it's a, it's a clear reaction for me, and I would like to understand it.
- 15:43 Gabriel: And, okay, got it.
- 15:45 RTH: And, uh,
- 15:49 Gabriel: So some bit of what I said seemed, uh, I don't know, maybe somewhat nonsensical to you, maybe.
- 15:55 RTH: Well, what it, the way it *seems to me* is that I, I have some sensors out there, [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.], and maybe you, maybe you're right—nonsensical sensors. And when those nonsensical sensors go off, then I just shut down.
- 15:55 Russ comments: Today, as I am watching the video in the task of reviewing/cleaning up this transcript, I think *nonsensical* sensors is a bit too strong. Today, it seems more like *I-don't-know-what-he-means-and-I-doubt-that-he-knows-what-he-means-and-we-could-spend-a-long-time—perhaps-a-lifetime—trying-to-sort-out-what-he-means-and-if-we-did-so-we-would-not-have-advanced-our-understanding-of-important-things* sensors. And when those sensors jangle, I tune out.
- 16:13 Gabriel: Hmm.
- 16:14 RTH: And I, and *intellectually* shut down. Like, I just filter it out.
- 16:21 Gabriel: Okay.
- 16:21 RTH: And, and, y'know, that's not necessarily a *good* thing or not necessarily a *bad* thing. I'm trying to understand *the thing* without [Gabriel: Sure.] without, without trying to take a position on, on whether, whether it's good, or bad, or indifferent.

16:37 Gabriel: [laughs] Okay. All right.

16:40 RTH: Hmm. So, so let's, so try me again. Let's see what, so something about the Mona Lisa or outside. Could I do something? But I can't remember what the rest of it is, cuz, y'know, I filtered it out.

16:54 Gabriel: Okay. Well, why don't, okay. Can we talk about visual memory? Or is that a problematic term for you?

17:02 RTH: Well, I don't know. Let's talk about it.

17:04 Gabriel: Okay. So if I just saw the Mona Lisa for the first time, and then I'm recalling it in visual memory, so I close my eyes. Now that I've closed my eyes, it's memory because I'm not looking at anymore. Um,

17:25 RTH: Okay. So I got it, I, so it happens, and, and it happens *right at the beginning* of that sentence. "So if I'm looking at the Mona Lisa" bam!

17:35 Gabriel: [laughs] Okay!

17:37 RTH: And I, I shouldn't say bam!, but it's like, it it, because it's, there's no, there's no anything about it except the, the grate shuts. The, [Gabriel: Hmm!] the entry, entry points shut.

17:51 Gabriel: Hmm. Okay.

17:53 RTH: And it's, and, and, and the best that I can say about it is, it's because I can't imagine the possibility that we can have a constructive conversation at the end of that sentence. Something like that.

18:13 Gabriel: Well, I'm not really asking you to introspect here, though. I don't think.

18:22 RTH: So. I'm, I'm, I, I, I would *like* to get to the end of the sentence. So, so lets... So start over again. So "if I see the Mona Lisa [Gabriel: Okay.] for the first time...." I'll try.

18:31 Gabriel: Okay. You, you've already stated that things can impact you, things can impact us without us being aware of it in the moment. Uh, which, y'know, is pretty trivial, but I... So can elements, visual elements of the Mona Lisa, impact our visual memory without us being aware of it. So in other words, I look at the Mona Lisa, and then I close my eyes. Now there are details about the Mona Lisa which are in my visual memory, but I wasn't aware of those details directly when I was looking at the Mona Lisa.

19:24 RTH: [pause] So what's the question here?

19:26 Gabriel: Is that possible? I feel like I've, I've always assumed that was sort of a fundamental assumption that was, um, in DES. So is that, is that right?

- 19:40 RTH: So is the question" if I look at the Mon Mona Lisa for the first time, [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] and then close my eyes, [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] can there be some visual recollection, in my recollec in my recollection, that wasn't present when my eyes were open?
- 20:02 Gabriel: Yes.
- 20:20 RTH: [pause] I don't know the answer to that. Probably, but I don't, I don't know how I [Gabriel: Okay.] I don't know how I would know the answer to that. [Gabriel: Okay.] I don't, I know, I know there's lots of, there's lots of Sperling-type studies out there where people, people can show that you've got more, you got more information than you thought you had.
- 20:20 Russ comments: RTH is referring to studies where you watch a fixation point and then an array of numbers is presented tachistoscopically; some of those numbers are close to the fixation point, some are farther away. Careful design can show that even though you cannot say what the far-away numbers were (even when probed very carefully), you have ingested some aspects of those numbers (for example, if asked to guess whether a probed number was or was not displayed, your guesses are better than would be expected by chance alone).
- 20:38 Gabriel: Hmm. Okay. Well, I thought that it was part of DES to a large extent, because there would be things like, well, I wasn't like direc, like right now, I wasn't, uh, five seconds ago, I wasn't directly aware or like making a thing out of the blueness of your shirt. Right. I was experiencing, uh, Dr. Hurlburt, um, I wasn't experiencing the, your blue shirt really, but I could still think, like, close my eyes and say, oh, yeah, well, you're wearing a blue shirt.
- 21:22 RTH: So I agree with that....
- 21:23 Gabriel: Okay. So it, to me, that's sort of like a visual, uh, that, that's sort of, of an example of visual memory that wasn't directly experienced.
- 21:36 RTH: Okay. I'll, I'll accept that as a definition.
- 21:39 Gabriel: Okay. And so my point is, when I recall when I get beeped, all of a sudden, well, after, once I get the notepad out, I have to use my *memory* to report what was on in my, in my experience, which means that somehow I have to sift through all those details, like your blue shirt and, uh, I don't know, the color of the blinds and, and things like that. I have to sift through those details and figure out which of them, if any of them, were actually in my direct experience; and which were not, which were,
- 22:24 RTH: So at the beginning of this paragraph, the paragraph that you just uttered, you said something like, "y'know, right now I'm noticing the blue of your shirt; five seconds ago I was noticing Dr. Hurlburt, I wasn't noticing the blue of his shirt."
- 22:41 Gabriel: Mm-hmm. Yes.

22:48 RTH: What, how, what would lead you to say that?

22:54 Gabriel: If, what would lead me to say which, then?

22:57 RTH: That a few seconds ago I was, I was in, interested in Dr. Hurlburt, and now I'm interested in his shirt. And back when I was interested in Dr. Hurlburt, I, I was no doubt taking in his shirt, but I wasn't really experiencing it because,

23:12 Gabriel: Right. That's, uh, I mean, okay, what would lead me to say that?

23:18 RTH: So, so what the way it seems to me is that, you *know* what you mean by *experience*, because you can say things like, "well, five seconds ago I wasn't paying attention to, it was a blue shirt, and now I am."

23:32 Gabriel: Right.

23:34 RTH: And *yet* you say, "I need a theory to tell me about what's in experience."

23:39 Gabriel: Well, that *is* my question though. Like, how do I, how do I know that, right? How do I know that I wasn't interested in your shirt five seconds ago? And, uh, I see there being like two options to that, which is: One, because I, I know we, we can agree that I don't have direct access to my experience five seconds ago, but I think there are two options. One is that, um, somehow the details that are consciously or like directly experienced are somehow tagged in memory as consciously or directly experienced. So that when I'm sifting through them, I can say, *oh, this one has the directly experienced tag, or this one doesn't*. Or the other option is I make an *inference*, and maybe I'm doing it without even knowing it. Um, maybe I, maybe people get pretty proficient at that kind of thing. Like, for example, well, I don't have, I, I can't see any *reason why I would've been* interested in the particular blue of your shirt, and I don't have the memory of the words, of any words in my head that directly had to do with the blue of your shirt. So I don't have an extra reason to think that I was interested in the blue of your shirt for that reason either. Right? I, I feel like it, that's a, to the two options, right? Is there inferences? Or somehow the, the consciously experienced ones are tagged, that, and it separates them from the other ones.

25:17 RTH: So, so given that this is a conversation about my experience, that ... My, my experience is that when I think, I guess, when it seems to me like you believe that you can answer the question that way that the question can be answered that way, then I can't go, I can't track it.

25:42 Gabriel: You can't what?

25:43 RTH: I can't track. It's, uh, I don't have, I don't have, it's, it's more than, I don't have any faith. It's, it's that I have, [pause] I, I have a detector that says *that question can only be answered theoretically*. And in the theoretical, the, the, in the theoretical space isn't of the real world.

26:24 Gabriel: Mmm. And we're talking about which particular question?

26:34 RTH: Well, you said, "well, there's two possibilities. There's either it's inference or it's a, something was tagged." [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] And, and there is a way that you say that, which is the philosophy, what I'm, what I'm gonna call the philosopher's way.

26:54 Gabriel: [laughs] Okay.

26:55 RTH: And, and, and this may very well be a figment of my imagination. I'm not, I'm, I'm, this is not a criticism of Gabriel [Gabriel: I understand.] or whatever. I'm trying to tell you, [Gabriel: Okay.] I'm trying to figure this out from, from ourselves, I guess, at your expense *for myself at your expense*, I guess something like that.

27:15 Gabriel: [laughs]. No, I, I think it's fun. I'm enjoying the conversation.

27:20 RTH: So the what I, what I, so what, what, what I think it is, as far as my experience is concerned is, there's a sss, I guess the word is something like a smugness. [Gabriel: Hmm.] It's the philosopher's smugness [Gabriel: laughs] that says *it's either this or it's, or it's that*. And it's usually, and it's usually said with a smile [Gabriel laughs], uh, what I would call a smug smile. [Gabriel: Okay.] And be, and that's, and that's, and that's a smug smile that I'm, that I'm familiar with for a long time. This is not *just* a characteristic of Gabriel. I think we could, if we rerun the tape, I could point to this one [Gabriel laughs]: *That's that's, that's what I mean*. But, but, and, and maybe it's gonna be here on the, on the one that we've got two seconds into here.

28:17 Gabriel: Hmm. Um, [laughs],

28:19 RTH: But I, what I think that smile, or something like that, my detectors tune, tune me out.

28:28 Gabriel: Okay. Got it.

28:30 RTH: cuz, because I think it, it, it indicates to me, rightly or wrongly, I'm not, I'm not claiming omniscience by any means. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.], rightly or wrongly. It, it says to me, this is a, I'm, I'm gonna make a theoretical point, and maybe I'm gonna contrast this theory with that theory or whatever, but I'm gonna make a theoretical point. And there's, and there's nothing.... It's, it's the smile, the, the smile, I think, rightly or wrongly (I don't know how many more times I have to say "rightly or wrongly" to establish that what I'm saying here) [Gabriel: Okay.], but the, the smile, the smile says to me, I know what I'm talking about, that I don't really believe it.

29:27 Gabriel: Hmm. Okay.

29:28 RTH: But I am, but I have theories that say *this is the truth*. [Gabriel: Hmm.] But the smile says, *I don't believe it*.

29:40 Gabriel: Hmm.

29:44 RTH: And, and I have learned, I guess, or acquired or whatever, that, the, an inability to get past that.

29:52 Gabriel: Hmm. Okay.

29:53 RTH: And I don't, I don't, y'know, that's, that's my speculation at this particular moment. I don't, [Gabriel: Okay.] I'm not sure about that.

30:02 Gabriel: Well, I will say that...

30:03 RTH: [interrupts or continues] There is, there is something about the smile: philosophers give their theories with a smile.

30:11 Gabriel: What was that?

30:12 RTH: Philosophers, in my experience, philosophers state their theories with a smile.

30:17 Gabriel: Hmm. Okay.

30:19 RTH: What I would call a s, what I am calling a smug smile.

30:22 Gabriel: Okay.

30:23 RTH: And, [pause] and, [pause] and it, it to, to my aesthetic, I guess you would say, to my aesthetic, it means *they don't believe what they're saying*. [Gabriel: Hmm.] They're saying something which they have in a comparative philosophical realm established as smart. Something like that.

30:58 Gabriel: Well, I would, I would like to say, um, the reason that I explained this in this video that we're watching, and the reason, um, is because, uh, wasn't to make a point to you or anything about DES, but it was to explain, um, it was to explain the process I went through to like eventually get more proficient at this, at, at this, and like get around the, that logical construction or what, whatever you wanna call it. Um, because I thought that maybe that would be informative, or maybe, maybe you'd find it useful. I didn't know if you would or not, but maybe you'd find it, uh, important. But maybe, maybe like unconsciously, I don't believe any of the things I'm saying. Um, but I will say that I do know for certainty that this thinking did affect my ability to do DES, at least at first.

30:58 Russ comments: This passage describes Gabriel the way I originally understood him—that is, I did *not* understand him to be trying to make a philosophical point. I *did* understand him to be trying to explain his process.

32:13 RTH: So the fact of the matter is that I *am* totally interested in what you had to do in order to do DES. [Gabriel: Okay.] And I do understand that that's what you were saying at 27:02, and in a, in a, in the debrief.

32:28 Gabriel: Okay. Got it.

- 32:29 RTH: And, and, and I am interested in how you, how you came to do DES from a variety of different ways, which I've tried to be as candid about it as I can. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] And, and, and some of that is totally personal about Gabriel. And some of that is in my sense of Gabriel's similarity to the philosophers that I've known my lifetime. And, and, and, and you know, what I, what, what I think about all that stuff. I don't, I don't trust any of that stuff, including for myself. So I, so I'm, I'm interested if, if, if I can understand what Gabriel went through, well, that would be useful. And so I'm *delighted*, and I probably said it in the, in the, in this interview, I'm delighted that you were telling me about it, even though I couldn't, even though I couldn't track it.
- 33:27 Gabriel: Sure.
- 33:29 RTH: And, and so from my, from my point of view by saying "I can't track it," I'm, I'm honoring you as best I know how, actually.
- 33:40 Gabriel: Okay.
- 33:42 RTH: Because I could have just shined you on. I'm, I'm capable of doing that.
- 33:45 Gabriel: Okay. Well, [laughs] Well, thank you.
- 33:47 RTH: And, uh, and I didn't. And, and so I was, I was saying, I'm basically, I want to, I want to know what we're doing here. I want what *Gabriel and Russ* are doing here. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] And, uh, as two red blooded individuals, not Gabriel as a instance of psych, philosophers and Russ as a, whatever he is, but as two individuals.
- 34:18 Gabriel: Okay. Sounds good. Yeah. Um, I, I am curious though, if you were to assume, just for the sake of argument, that those two options I gave you were correct. Like, if, if you were to, to assume that... Actually, let's just assume that the inference thing is the, let's just assume that you believed wholeheartedly, that you could only tell what was in your direct experience based on inference. Um, and then you started doing, like, DES sampling. And, um, every time that you, y'know, tried to say what was in your experience, you'd obviously get the feedback, *well, it sounds like maybe you're making an inference there*. So eventually you have to like, try to cut away all the inferences... If you be, if you actually *believe* that you have to make inferences and like, you can't stop yourself from believing that, then can you see how it would, you wouldn't even know what to do?
- 35:30 RTH: Well, I think that's exactly right. [Gabriel: Okay.] And I think that's, uh, I have offered the DES to quite a few philosophers over the years, [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] and, and most of them run, run the other direction.
- 35:44 Gabriel: Okay.
- 35:45 RTH: And I think it's because they recognize that if they were to take it seriously, that their inferences would've to be... it would challenge their inferences.

35:53 Gabriel: Right. Well, that's true. Uh, but I'm saying like, if you actually wholeheartedly believe you *have to* make inferences to make those reports, then, and then, and then, so you come up with the challenge of having to make those reports without making any inferences at all; that, and you, if you actually believe that you, you'll feel like you can't even do it, honestly, because you'll be like, well, I don't really feel like I'm being honest here because I can't, I'm just basically saying random stuff at this point if I'm not using inferences. Um, and that's sort of what I felt like at the beginning, at some points. I was like, *well, I don't even know what I can say here*. And because if I can't make my inferences, then I don't know how I could even honestly report anything without just like, essentially random words coming out of my mouth. Um, so that, that was like the diff, a difficulty at the beginning.

35:53 Russ comments: It seems to me that the issue is not whether "you actually wholeheartedly believe you *have to* make inferences"; the issue is whether you *actually* have to make inferences. That is, it is one thing if it is true that Gabriel requires inference as the only way he can distinguish between actually seeing the Mona Lisa and having seen the Mona Lisa a few seconds ago and is now remembering it; and it is quite a different thing if Gabriel has, for whatever reason, some theory about inference requirements and intercalates that theory in between an experience and a description thereof.

I would, I believe, be equally happy for either option to be true; I would, I believe, work equally assiduously to discover the details either way. What I won't do, apparently, is to happily accept what seems like a theory-based account that is masquerading as a high-fidelity descriptive account. I would require some evidence outside of a nexus of theory words for me to accept the theory. I would be delighted, I think, to explore that experientially descriptive evidence, and how it hangs together with the theory words. For example, if Gabriel had a sample where he was driving and stopped at a red light, and then saw a green light and couldn't determine whether the light was now green or that he had seen it as green a few seconds earlier, and it wasn't until drivers were honking at him that he entered the intersection. If he had such a sample, I would credit that as evidence that Gabriel requires some kind of inference to trust his experience—he would have to infer that the light was actually green rather than directly apprehend its greenness. I would, I think, find that descriptive account interesting / informative / revelatory / evidentiary.

But there haven't been any such samples, so I am not impressed by the theoretical explanation.

36:57 RTH: [pause] So ab, about inferences: [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] It, it is certainly the case that in DESI will point out fairly, fairly frequently, *that's the result of an inference*. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] But I think that the, I think most philosophers have a much, much more granular, when if they're interested in inferences, they have a much more granular thing about it. So that the, the inferences that I'm pointing out are, are 10-ton inferences, and they're, the inferences that they're talking about are, are, uh, y'know, mil, millimeter, millimeter inferences.

37:36 Gabriel: Okay.

37:40 RTH: And, and, but it, but the, but the words make it hard to, hard to keep those things separate.

37:59 Gabriel: Right. Okay.

38:01 RTH: I mean, there's, I think there, there are a lot of consciousness theorists out there who *think* that in order for something to be conscious, there has to be some higher level of consciousness that is attached to that.

38:12 Gabriel: Hmm.

38:13 RTH: And I would say on the basis of DE.... First off, I would say I, I don't know anything about that. But the, I, there are certainly some times when I see, and DES, and the DES studies where people have a meta-awareness of themselves at a particular time—I was thinking, and I was thinking, I was noticing that I was thinking. That's fairly frequent. Not... I shouldn't say *frequent*. That's not uncommon. [Gabriel: Okay.] Hap, it does happen.

38:42 Gabriel: Okay.

38:43 RTH: But I don't think that's what the philosophers are, are talking about. That's [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] Philosophers think that kind of thing happens all the time, unconsciously. And I don't know what to say about that.

38:53 Gabriel: Okay. I don't know. I don't know what to say about that either.

39:01 RTH: So, so I, I, I *am* interested in... So when we got to the... In my recollection... So lemme see. I can, so when we got to the end of your sampling [scrolls on screen through the sample descriptions, stopping at sample 13.6], so we said (just like, I'm picking a beep more or less at random). So you're innerly saying something in your raspy voice. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] You seemed to me to be pretty confident that it was innerly spoken and it was in my inner, in, uh, was in my *raspy* voice, [Gabriel: Okay.] at the, at the *end* of sampling.

39:56 Gabriel: Okay.

39:59 RTH: And

40:00 Gabriel: So, oh, go ahead. I'm sorry.

40:02 RTH: And so I, I, I'm wondering how, how we got from the, the first day to the last day.

40:08 Gabriel: Okay. So [pause] a few times when I mentioned like how it, y'know, on the first day, on the first few days, [Gabriel may be referring, e.g., to the discussion of sample 2.1, particularly from about 7:50 to 21:17] when I mentioned how I had difficulty not making inferences, um, you would mention, I think, something along the lines of saying, um, that for most people, they don't have that issue. For most, most people they can just, y'know, say what was in their experience and, uh, they don't feel the

need to like, make deductions on it or something like that. And so what, what I decided to do was I decided to sort of take that to heart as best I could, and, uh, basically forced myself not to make inferences. And how I did that was, and I, that's what I described in that video. I, um, I said to myself, let's just assume that, uh, Dr. Hurlburt is right about all of these things. And, um, if *he* is right about these things, then, uh, when I, when I, when I think back to what happened, right when the beep occurred after I got my notepad out, whatever is, y'know, it's just gonna be obvious what was there. And so among those details, the ones that were conscious or unconscious, directly experienced or not, I sifted through 'em and I said, okay, these ones seem the most probably like that to me, the most. So, so if Dr. Hurlburt is right, then it's gonna be these details.

42:06 I don't *know* if it's these details *really*, but if Dr. Hurlburt is right about all this stuff, then it's *these* details and it's not those details, then it's nothing. Or, or then he is wrong about all of this [laughs]. So that was sort of the, what I went through my head, and that allowed, that allowed me to not really make too many inferences. And, uh, I, I hope, I don't know, I hope that makes sense, what I'm explaining.

42:06 Russ comments: I've now gone back and re-watched the day-2 interview, and it now looks to me that the interviewers bear some responsibility for the difficulty in sample 2.1.

Gabriel's sample-2.1 opening salvo (0:56 in day 2) straightforwardly suggests that Gabriel is innerly seeing Magnus Carlsen:

I was thinking, uh, uh, about Magnus Carlsen. So I had the image of that guy in my head. Uh, and, uh, I'll, I'll describe that image. So that was not like in front of me or anything like that. ... This image which wasn't in front of me spatially, it was just an image in my head. Uh, and it was an image of him, uh, in a, like streaming cuz he does streaming sometimes. And, uh, I saw some, I saw a decent amount of detail. His head was tilted down and, uh, but also there was sort of a vague sense of a white outline around the whole image.

Later (7:50), Gabriel adds details, including about the blotchiness of this seeing:

Um, so I see this, this guy. He's sitting down, uh, in front of a desk. I don't see the desk, but that's where he is. And his head is tilted down kind of like this, [tilts head down and to the left] um, because he's looking at what's on the desk. Uh, so that's sort of what I see. He's wearing a white shirt. Um, I see his hair. And, and basically all of this is kind of vague blotches of color. Um, it's not detailed. Um, it's just kind of abstract, uh, kind of impressionistic. And that, yeah, that's what I see. And then there's sort of, um, a, a vague outl, or like a hint of an outline, like this feeling of a white outline around the image. And I think that's because I had been watching this on YouTube and the, the, like, the outskirts of the YouTube video are white.

So far, this is description of seeing Magnus, without any talk of inference.

However, AG (with RTH's encouragement) asks (10:05)

So am I seeing Magnus Carlsen, or am I seeing these blotchy sh, like blotchiness that I understand to be Magnus Carlsen?

AG intends that question to be about experience, but it is ambiguous, and (it now seems to me) that Gabriel understands it to be a question about the underlying process. That leads down the theory / speculation road, which takes a while to correct.

In sum, my diagnosis of the issue: Gabriel gives a description *I'm seeing Magnus*. AG asks *Are you seeing Magnus?* Which implies that Gabriel's first description was off the mark, so Gabriel responds with theory.

- 42:37 RTH: But it does make sense. And, and it's what you said before and, and now that I've cleared the air enough, I can pay attention to it more than I could before, whatever. [Gabriel: Okay.] And, and so when we got to the end, did you decide, well, Dr. Hurlburt *is* right, and I don't really care about the answer to that question? [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.], I mean, obviously I do care about it, but the, but that's not the primary motivation, the motivation for the... Or did you just get sort of skill at pretending that Dr. Hurlburt was right
- 43:17 Gabriel: [laughs]? Well, I don't know the answer to that, honestly. Um, it, I mean, it definitely felt like I got better at *something*. Um, and, but I, I don't know. I don't know if I actually got better at, uh, y'know, uh, doing what you, you want me to do, um, what DES...Y'know, I don't, I don't know if I actually got better at doing that, or if I got better at just like making all of those inferences as unconscious as possible. Um, so it, it *feels like* I'm not making inferences, but really they're split-second inferences that are happening. Um, but I am confident that *if you are right, I did it*. That, that, that, that I *am* confident about.
- 44:18 RTH: [pause]So it is a dilemma for me, because I would rather be right than to *think* that I'm right. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] And, *and* I think that I, I, and I *think* that rightness or wrongness is probably not the right way to think about it. [Gabriel: Hmm.] Because I think, I think DES is an approximation. It's not, it's not that Gabriel *has* inner experience. So I call, I call it pristine inner experience. And that's probably not, not really a good term. I don't really mean pristine inner experience in a, in a perf, perfect, perfectly pristine way. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] What I mean by *pristine inner experience* is no, not screwed around with big time.
- 45:27 Gabriel: [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.]
- 45:29 RTH: Y'know, it's like the, the question about the Mona Lisa, that's a long way away from pristine experience. You wanna know what my experience of the Mona Lisa. [Gabriel: Right.] Well, I gotta imagine that there's, that, I'm gotta imagine that there is a Mona Lisa and I gotta imagine where it is and that I'm there and what my experience was or whatever. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] that's a *long* way away from what DES is trying to do. But that doesn't mean that DES.... [Gabriel: Okay.] That doesn't mean that DES really can do what, uh, a close reading of what I have written would say that it can do. [Gabriel: Hmm.] So, for example, I think it's *possible* that we, you and I, have colluded by saying, *y'know, when we talk about the raspy, raspy voice, everybody seems happy. So why don't we talk about the raspy voice?*
- 46:29 Gabriel: Yeah.
- 46:34 RTH: And, and I don't think that necessarily means that there was actually, at the moment of the beep, in Gabriel's experience, a raspy voice. Certainly one possibility is that in the vicinity of the beep (and the moment of the moment of the beep is, is in my, my

view of an approximation in itself, cuz I think it takes you a while to process the beep.) Y'know, it's, [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] there's not really a moment, y'know: you, the, the electromagnetic acoustic vibrations, whatever happened; and after a bit of those, you recognize (whatever that means) that as a beep. And, and that starts this chain of behavior of stopping the, pushing the button, and trying to pay attention to what was going on or whatever. That that's, that's a, that, that's a fuzzy that the, the beep—when the beep actually occurs is a fuzzy thing in my head.

[pause] And, uh, but the, but to have the, but to have this conversation isn't the same thing. it doesn't seem to me, as to have a *theory* about it. Or it could be this, and it could be that, and it could be, and, but there, the theory divides the world into disjunctive possibilities, and we gotta pick one or the other. And one's true in the other, not true. Which I don't think that's the way the world is, but I, y'know, I don't really know that either.

48:24 Gabriel: Okay. Sorry about the glare. It looks like the sun just got in my camera.

48:38 RTH: No problem. So shall we, shall we watch this video?

48:42 Gabriel: I'd, yeah, I'd be happy to [inaudible]

[Video excerpt plays]

27:00 Gabriel: Um, well, I, I think what happened for me, what made it like easier, I guess.

[Video stops]

49:02 RTH: I gotta, I gotta say that even, even now that I think what happened, it's, uh, I have a, I have a reaction in my heart, in my gut, somewhere down, somewhere down here. I'm not exactly sure where it is, but it's like vertigo or something like, sort of the same...

49:22 Gabriel: Really! Wow! Hmm.

49:25 RTH: The same kind of reaction when you're standing on the edge of a cliff, or something like that.

49:29 Gabriel: Hmm. Okay.

[Video excerpt plays]

27:02 Gabriel: Um, well, I, I think what happened for me, what made it like easier, I guess, was, um, I just, I did, I sort of decided to operate on the assumption that, um, in the same way that like in this current moment in the present, there are always things that are directly, uh, there. Um, I decided to just assume that somehow the things that are directly present to me.

[Video stops]

50:08 RTH: So it's tough for me. And, and I would, and I would say that the philosopher's smile is lurking, lurking there, [Gabriel laughs]. And that's,

50:20 Gabriel: I I, I thought I might have been seeing what you were noticing there.

50:25 RTH: I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm not claiming that there's anything objective about that. I think [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.], I think it's, it seems to me that there's probably something objective about that. And by objective, I mean, other observers would see the same thing if we pointed it out to them or whatever.

50:39 Gabriel: Okay.

50:41 RTH: But, but for me, it's, it's a fact of my universe is all I can tell you, a fact, in my visual universe.

50:49 Gabriel: Mm-hmm.

51:00 RTH: Like, even even that, even that right there, [uses mouse point to circle Gabriel's face on the frozen video screen] that's,

51:05 Gabriel: Yeah.

51:06 RTH: That smile to me is I'm in touch with the philosophical truth, or whatever. [Gabriel: Hmm.] And I'm, I'm, I'm not, I'm not advancing that as the Truth by any means. [Gabriel: Sure.] I'm abundantly clear about that.

51:30 Gabriel: Okay.

[Video excerpt plays]

27:12 Gabriel: I guess was, um, I just, I did, I sort of decided to operate on the assumption that, um, in the same way that like in the [stops]

[video rewinds]

27:11 [replays] assumption, that, um, in the same way that like [stops]

[video stops]

51:56 RTH: That's the smile

51:58 Gabriel: [laughs]

51:59 RTH: To my, to my aesthetic.

52:03 Gabriel: Hmm.

52:04 RTH: And it, all I can say is the, it squeezes my heart,

52:13 Gabriel: [laughs],

52:14 RTH: and not in a good way. I mean,

52:16 Gabriel: Okay. Okay. Hmm.

52:20 RTH: And, and I, and for the 20th time here, I wanna make it clear that I'm talking about *my* experience. This is,

52:27 Gabriel: I understand.

[Video excerpt plays]

27:16 Gabriel: ...in this current moment in the present, there are always things that are directly, uh, there. Um, I decided to just assume that somehow the things that are directly present to me are logged in memory to some extent. And, and that, and on that *assumption* I said, okay, well *if there are things that are lodged in memory about what was directly present to me, and I just assume that*, uh, then it's those, it's these particular things from the past, this past experience. Like, if it's not those, it's nothing else. So that's what I went with.

27:58 That, so I operate on that assumption. So I would say I kind of like just, uh, in a sense, uh, used, just *assumed* that to, and then ignored the, the, the philosophical problems I had with it. Cuz I felt like that was in line with the whole not letting logic get in the way of what is in your direct experience. Uh, and like not using *reasoning* to figure it out as opposed to just what's directly there. Um, and I said, *okay, if I assume that is, that is possible, this is what it was*.

28:36 RTH: So, so what, what I would, what I would say is, is your exposition of what it is that you did [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] I thought was very interesting and al, and almost impossible for me to track.

28:51 Gabriel: Oh, really? Okay.

28:52 RTH: And I'm, I'm just being honest, [laughs], I'm not telling, I'm not saying it's good or bad here. I'm just saying, I'm telling you about what's in *my* experience. My experience is that kind of exposition, I just can't track it. [Gabriel: Hmm.] I

[video excerpt ends]

54:24 RTH: That's just the excerpt that I sent, obviously the, [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.], we can probably watch more of it if we want to, but.... So I sounded to me like I was saying the same thing then as I was saying now.

54:40 Gabriel: Yes, [inaudible] although you did, you, did you, you, a few minutes ago, you, you said you at least understood what I was saying. Um, now that we, I think you said now that we've like aired it out or something like that, you, you understood a little better. So, but yeah, basically definitely the same, same thing overall.

55:19 RTH: [pause] It's, it's, it's an interesting thing

55:30 Gabriel: I will say. I don't think that, um, that, uh, I'm smiling for the reason you think I'm smiling, but, uh,

55:38 RTH: So why do you think you're smiling?

- 55:40 Gabriel: Well, I, I think that if, um, we, I, I would say that if we look through any of the sort of DES stuff, you'd see that I smile probably a lot when, when I'm reporting on my experiences. Um, and probably somewhat out of nervousness as well, because when I'm explaining—I smile a lot and laugh a lot out of nervousness sometimes. And when I'm explaining that, what I was explaining right then, I knew it was something that probably you disagreed with to some extent, or found issue or saw issues with that I probably wouldn't be able to really fully understand if you explain them without having a bit back and forth like we're having right now. And so there's probably some level of nervousness that was causing me to smile at that moment as well.
- 56:34 RTH: Okay. [pause] So, so it could very well be that what I take as smugness is more, uh, defensiveness or something girding, girding, my loins on the possibility that I'm gonna smack you down or something. I could, I could, I could get behind that.
- 57:08 Gabriel: Okay. Maybe. But I think in general, I probably smile a lot during our DES uh, samples.
- 57:19 RTH: So I think that's probably true. Uh, but I also, I think I would give myself credit for being able to differentiate different kinds of smiles, I think. [Gabriel: Okay.] I think I would, I would be keeping track of,
- 57:34 Gabriel: Okay, well obviously I can't, uh, I can't give you any proof, but I, I don't think that it's, uh, it comes from a smugness or anything like that. [RTH: Okay.] Uh, [laughs]. But it might, maybe, I don't know. I could be wrong.
- 57:56 RTH: So I, I, I, I have no iss, no problem at all giving up the smugness thing. What, what is, what is clear to me, and (is the result of this conversation, and then I, and I appreciate it), is, is that I'm, I haven't, I haven't really ever noticed the bodily aspect of my reaction to it.
- 58:17 Gabriel: Right.
- 58:18 RTH: And, uh,
- 58:22 RTH: That's, [pause] I have, I have certainly noticed my cognitive space out or whatever of it. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.]. But I haven't really noticed that, how pretty strongly bodily it is at the same time. [Gabriel: Hmm.] But I, I don't know what to make of that either. And, and, and, and, and as a general rule, I think, I'm not trying to figure out what I don't, I don't think there's much to be gained by trying to figure it out.
- 58:58 Gabriel: Okay.
- 59:00 RTH: And that, and that might be where, where the, where, where the issue is: that the philosophers are trying to figure it out, and I don't think that's possible.
- 59:12 Gabriel: Okay.
- 59:13 RTH: What I think is possible is to *explore* it.

59:17 Speaker 6: Okay.

59:19 RTH: And, uh, maybe I'm, maybe I'm dense about that. I just can't figure it out.

59:28 Gabriel: Well, I, I, I doubt that. But I mean, after all, I feel like these kinds of topics have been discussed for, uh, 2000 years without much progress.

59:52 RTH: [pause] Yeah. So I, and I agree with that.

59:57 Gabriel: Mm-hmm.

1:00:03 RTH: [pause] And, but it, what, but I will, I will say that the, I guess I do think it is, I mean, has swung us, it's like: these problems have been discussed for 2000, 2000 years, but I've got the answer. And, uh, that doesn't seem too likely to me. [pause] Well, I've got, I don't know that I've got any more further to say about it. I'd be happy to have your reaction to this conversation and or [Gabriel: Okay.] whatever, whatever, whatever turns you on to be saying.

1:01:11 Gabriel: Well, um, [pause] well, I will say one thing, which is that I would also argue that it's unlikely that I have any of the answers to like any of those 2000-year-old problems. *But* we've talked, uh, about like how presuppositions, um, often, often play a role in DES, right? And, um, uh, even if I don't nec, even if I think it's unlikely that I have the answers, um, whatever thoughts I *do* have, maybe there's some level of unavoidable interference that they'll put in my samples. I don't know. But I, I don't, I don't know if that would, that would necessarily be a result of me thinking that somehow I'm all knowing and I have all the answers, but just a result of the fact that whatever framework I think is most likely is, is probably gonna affect the way I think about stuff, no matter what. [pause] Uh, so I don't, does that seem reasonable?

1:02:39 RTH: [pause] I'm, I'm trying to digest it.

1:02:41 Gabriel: Okay.

1:02:42 RTH: So I certainly think that whatever framework that you have is going to affect what you experience.

1:02:55 Gabriel: Mm-hmm.

1:03:00 RTH: And I don't mean that just by you, I mean people in general. Whatever framework affects their, affects their experience. I don't think there's any question about that. What you, but that isn't what you said. What you said was *what I think about that framework* affects my experience.

1:03:19 Gabriel: Oh, well I, that, that would, that was poorly worded. The, the framework will, will affect what I, my, my experience, or at least what I think my experience was, maybe. Even if I think the framework might be wrong, I can't like necessarily get rid of the framework.

1:04:02 RTH: [pause] So that's a fundamentally important question.

1:04:22 Gabriel: And to some extent, the reason I'm saying that, it's a little bit of a defense of my, uh, myself. And I'm just trying to say, I don't think I'm, I don't think I'm arrogant enough to say that I have the answers to these 2000-year-old problems, but whatever answers that I happen to think are most likely, I don't know if I could stop them from affecting me, even if I assume that they're wrong, or something like that. Or try my best to.

1:05:02 RTH: I'll have to think about that.

1:04:22 Russ comments: I think much depends on how committed you are to "whatever answers that [you] happen to think are most likely." Here's an example.

I recently did two days of DES sampling with Caroline Steel, host of the BBC radio program *CrowdScience*. The *CrowdScience* format is to elicit scientific questions from listeners; then Caroline interviews experts to help answer the questions. In September 9, 2024 episode, the listener was Frederick, and his question was about inner speech. Here are excerpts from the beginning of that episode [<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct5rhk>], where Caroline and Frederick were sorting through what the question was:

2:04 Frederick: My question is, what's the science behind the voice in my head, that is usually associated with thinking? Like, where does it come from? How does it come about?

2:11 Caroline: So when you think, can you literally sort of hear words? Is that what your experience is like?

2:18 Frederick: So it's like, I can't think without actually saying stuff to myself in my head.

2:24 Caroline: I mean, what sort of stuff are you saying to yourself in your head? Is it sort of mundane things, like "Oh! I must sweep the floor!" [Frederick laughs] Or is it more complex than that?

2:35 Frederick: So for example, just before talking to you guys, I was thinking like, "Okay, what are some questions I'm expected to receive, and how will I explain this?" So the thinking was actually me talking to myself in my head about all these things. I don't know if that makes sense! [laughs]

2:58 Caroline: No, it does! I mean I think I'm similar. [Frederick: Okay.] I wouldn't go as far as to say "I hear my voice in my head," because it's not like when I'm talking out loud. It's quite different. But it's definitely *my voice* that I'm reacting to.

Then Caroline and her producer Jo Glanville enlisted a couple of scientists (including me) to help answer Frederick's question. In the course of her first interview of me, during which I described DES and what we have found, it became evident that Caroline would like to try DES for herself, so I sent her a beeper. We undertook two DES sampling days, which she described in the episode. Here's her conclusion:

15:00 Caroline: Spending a couple of days with the beeper really changed how I think about my inner world. In those two days I rarely had inner speech. I thought mostly in images. Sometimes I was just having a sensory experience, like focusing on a blue shiny car. And other times I was thinking about something and not using words or images at all. I wondered, am I typical?

Caroline is absolutely typical of DES participants in two ways: (a) she began her DES participation with a framework about her own inner experience—in her case, the framework was that she frequently (perhaps always) engaged in inner speech; like Frederick, she experiences and reacts to her own voice in her head. And (b) she *ended* her DES participation with a radically changed view of her own inner experience.

At issue in the discussion with Gabriel, I think, is not the *existence* of a framework but the *level of commitment* to that framework. Caroline's framework at the outset involved understanding herself as having frequent and important inner speech. However, she did *not impose / force / compel* that framework. She did *not* use that framework to *drive / examine scrutinize* her at-the-moment-of-the-beep experience. When at one beep she was innerly seeing herself on a stepladder, she did not enforce her *a priori* framework—she did not go searching for words that *must have been* there. When, at another beep, she was attracted to the shiny blueness of the car ahead of her, she did not insist *Oh! I was saying "blue car."* That is, she was not attached to her *a priori* framework, and gave it up easily when encountering her own contrary evidence.

What worried me on Gabriel's day 2 was not that he had a framework—in his case, that things must be somehow tagged in memory as consciously or directly experienced—but that he might have more attachment to that framework than to the straightforwardly apprehended phenomena of his experience. That is what I have called the philosopher's gene.

1:05:08 RTH: And... [inaudible] time...

1:05:13 Gabriel: 5:25.

1:05:15 RTH: 5:25. That does, I'm gonna, I'm gonna wanna listen to what you said about that.

1:05:23 Gabriel: Okay. I'm gonna be thinking about this conversation as well. It, it would be, it would be nice to have a recording of it. Uh, if, if you would be willing to send it over.

1:05:34 RTH: I'll do that.

1:05:35 Gabriel: Okay. Thank you.

1:05:36 RTH: And, and I would say that, that, that we should treat this conversation as between you and me. [Gabriel: Okay.] And, uh, I won't put it on YouTube and you probably shouldn't either.

1:05:48 Gabriel: Okay. Of course.

1:05:53 RTH: But yes, I, it'll, it'll take me a, a bit to get it to you, but I, well, I probably, I probably will send it tonight.

1:06:02 Gabriel: Okay. Thank you. And I, I did have one question, which is just related to DES, but I'm sorry to take up too much of your time, but, um, is that alright? [RTH: Yep.] Uh, which is, so I didn't end up getting into UNLV for the graduate, uh, program, and I'm wondering if there are, because it sounds like you probably won't be accepting graduate students, um, in the upcoming future. I'm wondering if, y'know, if there are any other, um, schools that do DES or have like a DS lab or anything like that?

1:06:34 RTH: I think the answer to that is *no, there aren't*.

1:06:36 Gabriel: No. Okay. That's too bad. I would've been interested in applying those, bu...t

1:06:48 RTH: Yeah, it, it's a dilemma. I, I will, I will say that you've probably gotten as good an education for me as anybody ever has. So whether, whether it ends up in a credential on your bookshelf or whatever. But we've, we've spent a lot of what I would call pretty high-quality time, trying to sort through some pretty important things. [Gabriel: Mm-hmm.] That doesn't pay the bills, obviously, but, uh,

1:07:29 Gabriel: Well thank you. And thank you for the, uh, thank you for the meeting today. I feel like, uh, I've got a lot to think about so,

1:07:36 RTH: Well, and, and I too, so I, I appreciate it greatly. And I will send, I will send you the video shortly.

1:07:41 Gabriel: Okay. Alright. Thank you very much.

1:07:45 RTH: See you.