

Kerry 9.
Kerry Interview 9

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the December 4 interview with Kerry that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/VlnjKoicw0c>. In brown are conversations about the Descriptive Experience Sampling process that took place during the interview. In green are Russ's comments, and in blue are Julian's comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process inserted after the interview. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

JBK = Julian Bass-Krueger

MM = Mel May

Kerry = Kerry U.

0:01 JBK: Um,

0:01 RTH: And, uh, the order? Anybody have a

0:04 JBK: Mel, do you have an order preference? Do you wanna be second? First? Third? Not at all?

0:10 MM: Okay, sure. Why don't I try going *first*!

0:13 RTH: Go for it. [laughs].

0:14 JBK: Do it.

0:16 RTH: So Mel, Julian, Russ?

0:18 JBK: Sounds good.

0:19 RTH: Okay.

SAMPLE 9.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

0:21 Kerry: Cool. So I did these beeps last night. Um, so the first one was at 6:59 PM. I was talking in the kitchen with my housemates, um, about Hinge, actually. Um, and we were like... (The context, like a little bit prior to this beep, my housemate Gracie was complaining, um, that men want a relationship after one date. And in response to that, I said, "That's *not* been my experience!") [they laugh] Um, so I was, [laughs] I was laughing as I said it, um, looking like directly at her, saying that out loud, so that was not in my head. Um, I didn't really have anything like going on in my mind. I was like fixated on her, looking at her, looking at her face and saying that out loud. Um, yeah, so inner

experience felt, I guess, very present in what was physically happening in my world at that moment. And that's it. [laughs].

1:28 MM: Hmmm. [Kerry laughs]. Okay. So you're, you're mid-sentence saying, "That's not been my experience."

1:42 Kerry: Yeah.

1:46 MM: This is tough for me because [laughs], this is interesting because I, I go cool! [they laugh] I regret going first [they laugh]. Like I don't wanna over complicate it. So I already want a handball to Russ because I'm so curious, cuz for me, I feel like any question that I ask here is just gonna pick apart something that might overcomplicate, but I'm curious what, what Russ said.

2:21 RTH: Well, let me, let me give you a hint. And, and, and that is, it's possible that there's nothing going on in her experience other than she's in absorbed in the conversation she's speaking. And that occupie— that occupies all of the experience that there is. [MM: Mm-hmm.] And so you're right, you don't want to go any, any more than that if that's all there is. But what you wanna find out is whether there's anything else beyond that.

2:21 Russ comments: Here, Russ has focused on the speaking, which overlooks/neglects an important feature—perhaps the most important feature—of Kerry's experience. She summarized her experience in her opening salvo (0:21): "I was like fixated on her, looking at her, looking at her face and saying that out loud." Russ's question neglects the "fixated on her, looking at her face" portion, which is a pretty major oversight and which substantially damages the upcoming exploration of this sample.

2:45 MM: Okay.

2:46 RTH: And so I would ask, it could be that all yours, that all that's going on is that you're involved in ros... in speaking and that's it, and there's nothing else, else in your experience? Or maybe there is. And if so, what is it?

3:03 Kerry: Um, I, I mean, I, I really couldn't think of anything more to say. Like, I felt very, I think because it was kind of like a funny moment. Um, and I was laughing as I said it. Um... I, yeah, I just felt very present in that. Like, I wasn't visualizing anything. I didn't have any auditory thoughts because I was speaking out loud already. Um, I mean, the only other thing that I could have been aware of in the moment was like I was, the stove was to my right and I was cooking dinner, but it was just kind of like baking away in the oven. It wasn't, um, I wasn't super present in that either. So I felt in this moment very, like locked in to what I was saying.

3:03 Russ comments: RE "So I felt in this moment very, like locked in to what I was saying." That is very different from what she said at 2:21: "I was like fixated on her, looking at her, looking at her face and saying that out loud." We can't know how much of that is due to bad questioning (see the comment at 2:21), but likely quite a lot.

4:02 MM: Yeah. Like, my response here is to be like taking you on your word and I feel like it's fraught with danger to, to dig apart too much. And, uh, e— everything that I would ask feels like a leading question.

4:20 RTH: Well, what would, what *would you* ask? Cuz I, I agree it might be leading, but that's what, what, what might you ask?

4:28 MM: Um, like what I, what I want to try and ask—and I haven't thought about how I would ask this because I can't do that in my head, so this is thinking out loud—um, is like whether there was an emotive experience attached to this, which is somewhat based on the way she told, the way she's recounted this be and the context of it. But it feels like I'm leading her to consider that rather than her necessarily having that as part of her inner experience.

[pause]

5:11 Kerry: I don't, yeah, I, I don't, I, I guess the only emotion I was like, sort of feeling was like, um, *wow, that's so different to my experience*. Like almost, uh, like, uh, I guess it's not really, I don't know if that qualifies as an emotion, but I, it was more like *struck* by the difference, I guess. Um, but I think that was honestly like, um, manifesting just in my laughter more than a, more than a conscious thought of, *wow, that's so different*. Does that make sense? I don't know. Right.

5:52 MM: But it doesn't have to be a conscious thought, like the thing, and this is me projecting some, some of my own experiences here, which is why I'm so fraught with this line of questioning it all. But like, I think you can have as part of your inner experience a vibe that is very hard to describe, but that can clearly be part of a, a, a part of your presence. Um, so whether that's, and it gets very challenging to describe whether it's a light, a lightness, whether it's a warmth, whether it's a something. But I think that that can be personally experienced in the same way as your, inner monologue. But I don't want to make you overanalyze yourself and drum up something that is just not there for do.

5:52 Russ comments: Being as clear as we can be about what MM says here is the heart of DES.

RE "it doesn't have to be a conscious thought"

About the *conscious* aspect: if by *conscious* one means directly present before the footlights of consciousness, then something *does* need to be conscious before it is considered part of what DES tries to describe. DES does *not* concern itself with the unconscious or the pre-conscious.

About the *thought* aspect: if by *thought* one means some analytical or cognitive process, then many things that are not *thoughts* are described by DES—feelings, or sensory awareness, for example.

RE "I think you can have as part of your inner experience a vibe that is very hard to describe, but that can clearly be part of a, a, a part of your presence."

If by *vibe* you mean something that is directly apprehended, then *a vibe that is very hard to describe* is a central part of the DES effort. Our job is to try to describe as best we can that which is directly apprehended but hard to describe.

But if by “a part of your presence” you mean something in your bag of neurons and bones that has been shaped / impacted / affected by your past experience but is not directly apprehended, then that is *not* part of what DES tries to describe. There are millions or billions of aspects/events in Kerry’s life that is a part of her presence in the way she reacted to Gracie’s comment: her date with Sam last week; her date with Bill last month, her relationship with her mother, the impact on her of Trump’s election, the particular configuration of her synapses, the contribution of her particular genetics, and so on, uncountable impactful whatevers that no doubt shape the lightness, or warmth, or whatever of her presence. Whereas those affect her presence, they are not individually directly apprehended. Is the presence itself directly apprehended? Maybe—DES will try to sort that out. But DES will *decline* to infer a presence that is not directly apprehended.

RE “But I think that that can be personally experienced in the same way as your, inner monologue.”

I agree that presence *can be* personally experienced in much the same way as inner monologue is experienced. The question is whether it *is* experienced in much the same way. And you’re absolutely right when you worry that “this is me projecting some, some of my own experiences here which is why I’m so fraught.” Mel’s inner experience, as I recall it, involved many instances where nothing or nearly nothing was experientially present—for Mel, a vibe was the most that can be said in the attempt to describe her experience. By substantial contrast, Kerry’s inner experience, as I recall it, frequently involves something that was unquestionably directly apprehended—inner seeings, inner speakings, and the like. For Kerry, a vibe was about the *least* that can be said in the attempt to describe her experience. Kerry, for whatever reason, experientializes (directly apprehends) with vividness—yurts from one place seen in another, and so on. Mel, for whatever reason, doesn’t do that. The idiographic art is *not* to inquire *about Mel* the degree to which she mashes up visual experiences (an interest that might be spawned by Kerry), but also *not* to inquire *about Kerry* the degree to which her experience is predominantly vibe-y (an interest that might be spawned by Mel).

6:46 RTH: I, I do think the art, the art is to try to figure out how to, how to, what the limits of those questions are. And I think that *is* very difficult. So here, I think Kerry has said she is laughingly saying “that’s not been my experience” or whatever that, whatever those words are and the, and the laughingly... shock or whatever the is, is part of the wrapped up in the conversation, part of the, part of the conversation. [Kerry nods affirmatively] I don’t think anybody would disagree with that. The question is whether there’s anything that’s separ— separable away from that. And the answer, apparently, is *No*.

6:46 Russ comments: This continues the neglect of the staring at Gracie’s face (see the comments at 2:21 and 3:03).

- 7:30 MM: Yeah, I would agree with that. So if you were to ask questions here, Russ, what would you have asked? Because I didn't wanna ask any of them to be honest. But what would you have asked?
- 7:40 RTH: Well, basically what I just said, so I understand, I would've said something like, "I understand you to be laughingly saying, 'well, that's not *my* experience'. And, and that was conveyed with humor and good naturedness and whatever, all all that stuff was there. The question is: any, is any of those things separable from the speaking or is this all sort of a one piece of the, my experiences of responding in that way? And if the answer to that is a believable *No*, that I, that would be the end of it for me. Julian may have a different take on that.
- 7:40 Russ comments: Continuing the comments at 2:21, 3:03, and 6:46, a better question would have been something like: "In your opening salvo, you said something like you were staring at Gracie's face. Is that context—as a matter of fact I was looking at Gracie—or is that experiential—I'm noticing her face at the moment of the beep?"
- 8:18 JBK: Mm. Not really.
- 8:21 RTH: I think, I think it's, it is very often the case when people are speaking that there's nothing else going on other than what they're speaking.
- 8:28 MM: Mmm.
- 8:33 RTH: And, and you don't wanna make something happen, make something appear to have happened when there's nothing else going on. But that doesn't mean that every time somebody is speaking, I'm just gonna write it off and say, well, y'know, that's, she's speaking, that's it. [MM: Mm.] But question is whether there's anything else. But, but she believably denied that. That's when she was saying, well, there wasn't any image and there wasn't any speech. Some people, some people have inner speech separate from the outer speech. They can, you can be saying, some people will say, "I'm saying *this* innerly as at the same time, I'm saying *that* outwardly," and those are two, two different things.
- 9:08 MM: But like Kerry, you've even had sort of examples of that. I'm pretty sure, if I remember correctly, I feel like I remember your nose bleeding and you were thinking one thing and saying something else to a housemate or something. So like [Kerry: yeah] I was also like, I, I'm aware of other times when she's described a different thing, but this felt very confident in that it wasn't that. So it, it is an interesting beep, to be honest. I like it! [they laugh] I have no further questions, your honor.
- 9:41 RTH: No cross-examination either. [they laugh] So onto beep, onto beep number 2?
- 9:46 Kerry: Okay. Um,
- 9:47 JBK: Could you just pin down the words? Was it, "that's not my experience" or "that's not been my experience"?

9:52 Kerry: Uh, “that is not my experience.” [laughs pretty hard]

9:56 JBK: That’s, that, that *is*, or *that’s*, that’s not my,

10:00 Kerry: That I, maybe, I probably said “that’s not my experience.” Probably shortened it.

10:00 Russ comments: RE (9:47) “Could you just pin down the words?”

There is a risk to that question in that it may be understood as a natural-attitude question, as it apparently is here. “Probably shortened it” sounds like Kerry is making a theoretical judgment (this is situation A so I probably engage in behavior B).

The important DES distinction is between accuracy and fidelity. DES wants Kerry to describe her experience with fidelity, *not* (or at least not necessarily) to describe the contents of her experience with accuracy. Said another way, it’s not so much about the words as about the experience.

Differentiating the words is often an effective way to get participants to focus on their experience, but that would have to come very early in a sample discussion. And if the reply was similar to the one Kerry gave at 10:00, then we would have to give a mini lecture about the difference between recollection and speculation.

Situation	Differentiate the words?	Why?
The participant says “I was talking to myself about”	Yes	Because “talking about” can mean inner speaking, but it may also mean any of a wide variety of other experiences. Inquiring about the words may help to disambiguate the experience.
Early in sampling, the participant says “I was innerly saying this to myself:” and then quotes what was said.	Yes	Because it would be desirable to get a high-fidelity understanding of the inner speaking. For example, is the speaking a complete sentence or an abbreviated version (as Vygotsky and others have suggested).
Late in sampling, speaking aloud	No	Because a focus on the words themselves may (as here) distract us from other aspects of the experience (here, laughingly, surprisedly), or give the impression for future sampling that getting words right is the most important thing (which may interfere with apprehending other aspects).

In the present case, it does not interfere with sample 9.1, but it may ratchet up slightly the future difficulty of bracketing the natural-attitude.

10:09 JBK: Beep number 2?

SAMPLE 9.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

10:11 Kerry: Okay. Beep number 2 is honestly quite similar. Um, I was then (I now go on Hinge with my housemates because it's less depressing, so I'll have them help me swipe.) Um, and so we were looking at this guy's profile specifically, like the information section, so like where he's from, his height, whatever, um, and it said he was from a place called Lake Geneva. Um, so I was reading that text, um, or I was, I, I guess I *had* read that text. I was, but I was looking at it and I said out loud to my housemates, "Where is Lake Geneva?" Um, and yeah, so I guess I would say my experience in this moment was split from like, looking at the text (I had just read it, so I was really just like staring at it, not necessarily reading it in my head), um, and then saying out loud, "Where is," "Where is Lake Geneva?" so kind of ignoring the rest of the information on the screen, just, just like looking at that bit of text.

11:16 JBK: Okay. And what's most present to you here?

11:22 Kerry: Um, I would say most present actually is the visual of the text. Like, I was staring at it almost as if staring at it would help me figure out where it was, where it was located. But um, yeah. And then I was kind of, I would say like the words coming outta my mouth, like I knew I was speaking, but I wasn't, it wasn't, um, a very articulate thought. I, I was just kind of like blurting it out, but like looking at the text is mainly what I was focused on.

11:59 JBK: So looking at the text. Is there more to say about that? Are you noticing anything in particular or just generally just looking at it?

12:08 Kerry: Um, just looking at it. Like I had, I had already read it, so it was more just like the black and white, like minimal font. Um, I think almost like focusing in as though if I looked at it longer, I would figure it out. [laughs] Y'know what I mean? Um, yeah, there's not, not much more to say. I think it was ki— a little bit of a moment of like slight confusion. Like I was kind of wondering if Geneva was foreign, but apparently it's in Wisconsin. [laughs], um, [laughs]. So, but that wasn't a, I, that wasn't like a conscious, um, auditory thought. Like I wasn't, um, saying, "Oh, I wonder if this is a foreign place." It was just, I was asking the question and looking at the text, but kind of underneath that, and the reason why I was asking, is because [laughs] I thought it might be, um, somewhere nice, but it wasn't.

12:08 Julian comments: When Kerry mentioned it's not a "conscious, um auditory thought," I thought of the possibility that it was unsymbolized thinking, but she was discounting it since there was no inner monologue. I asked about it.

Kerry calls it context for the speaking. But this in itself doesn't say much. Is it experienced or not? Kerry probably understood something different from context than what I meant. The question is: is it directly experienced or not?

13:14 JBK: Okay. [laughs]. So you say it's not a auditory thought, but there, there's also the possibility that it is a thought, like, but not, you're not hearing it. There's no like [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] monologue, but you're still thinking, or *where is that? Is it foreign?* Or it could be that that's more just context or that that came after or, um, so between those options, is there a more accurate?

13:46 Kerry: Um, I think, I think my speaking out loud was in response to this underlying, um, feeling or, or, or wondering. Um, and so I think that, I think classifying it as like context would be a good way of putting it.

14:06 JBK: Okay. But there *is* a kind of wondering that's part of the speaking.

14:10 Kerry: Yes.

14:11 JBK: It's not just like, I'm, I'm curious cuz you said you're just blurting it out. Do you experience the, the speaking and the words, or is it more you experience the wondering and the words are just very automatic? And

14:11 Russ comments: This turn reifies the wondering more than is warranted—there is no choice in this turn that allows the wondering to be not experienced. Here's what I think happened:

12:08: Kerry said "Like I was kind of wondering ... that wasn't like a conscious, um, auditory thought." This utterance is ambiguous: the described "kind of wondering" could be either *not conscious at all* ("that wasn't like a conscious... thought"—that is, is context) or could be *conscious but not auditory* ("that wasn't like an... auditory thought"—that is, is unsymbolized thinking). Because she describes the wondering as "underneath" near the end of 12:08, I give a little more weight to Kerry as trying to say that the wondering was not conscious, but regardless of how I might weigh things, the distinction needs to be explored.

13:14: I think JBK's question translates as: So it's not inner speech, but it might be unsymbolized thinking, or it could be context. That question has a good framework—the three major possibilities are present—but (a) JBK has to be sincerely open to any of the three options, and it seems in the upcoming that he favors the conscious-but-unworded option; and (b) I doubt that Kerry fully understands the present-in-Kerry-and-enacted-in-her-laughing-style-but-not-directly-apprehended option; that would take some work to convey.

13:46: Kerry says that it's context.

14:06: JBK is ambiguous—either he reifies the wondering or he thinks Kerry is wonderingly speaking (in which case he has not been adequately, or at all, clear about what that might mean).

14:11: JBK asks about the words, but in doing so entirely reifies the wondering.

Julian comments: I agree with your play-by-play.

14:31 RTH: Lemme interrupt this line of questioning, cuz I, I'm not sure that I've heard her say that she has an experience of wondering. I've heard her say that wondering is somewhere lurking around, but not necessarily experienced.

14:43 JBK: Okay. I guess the way I kind of, I'm thinking of it is you're kind of wonderingly saying "Where is Lake Geneva?" is. Is, so, is that accurate? Or is the wondering kind of lurking background? Or you're not sure about it at all?

14:43 Russ comments: If by "wonderingly saying" JBK means that Kerry's saying expresses wonderment but there is no direct experience of wonder, and he wanted that to be a live option at 13:14, then he would have needed to make that explicit and understandable to Kerry, which would have taken some explanatory effort. That is different from merely mentioning context, which is what happened at 13:14

Julian comments: No. I meant it as there is a direct experience of wonder but it's not separate from the asking. Kind of like how in sample 9.1 Kerry was surprisedly saying "that's *not* my experience". There's no separate surprise feeling but it's wrapped up in the speaking. It's different than if she was just robotically speaking those words.

When Russ wrote the description of this sample, he wrote 'Kerry was laughingly, surprised saying out loud "that's not my experience".' Does that mean that the inflection expresses surprise but that direct experience of surprise is not part of the sample? I took it that some surprise is lurking, wrapped up in the speaking. But correct me if I'm wrong.

Russ comments: Yes, that is how I took it. I happily accept that the distinction between (a) feeling surprise and expressing surprise, and (b) being surprised (without feeling it) and expressing surprise is a subtle difference, perhaps impossible to make in the present situation. I would, however, like us to be aware of the distinction and not to assume that one's expression of surprise (or some other emotion) necessarily implies that one feels surprise (or that other emotion). Emotion is a process or state that can occur and be expressed without being felt.

14:59 Kerry: Um, it, I would say that, um, the staring at the text is like probably number one. The wondering maybe number two. And the words are like blurted out in reaction to those two things as number three in terms of, uh, like ranking the hierarchy of this experience, I guess. Um,

15:24 JBK: Would you say the wondering in the words are separate or that they're kind of together, you're just talking wonderingly? Or maybe

15:34 Kerry: No, they seem, I think they seem separate. Um, yeah, it's kind of anytime I have like a vibes feeling or thought, it's really hard to explain that [laughs], but okay, so how, how I'll compare it is, um, right now I feel very, very focused on what I'm saying and how I'm saying it and how I'm articulating myself, whereas that, that spoken "Where is Lake Geneva?" almost like fell outta my mouth sort of thing. So it didn't feel like a huge part of my experience in that sense. Um, so I felt, I guess more present in the text and like looking at it and, and this underlying wonder. Like sometimes when I speak I think it's in reaction to a general feeling or, [laughs] um, or, or, uh, yeah, I guess it's a feeling or vibe.

16:53 JBK: But I, I kind of, I'm with Russ on, I'm wondering about the wondering because you did bring it up late in the convo.

16:53 Russ comments: This has the flavor of blaming Kerry, when I think JBK initiated the reified wondering (more than did Kerry).

17:01 Kerry: Yeah,

17:03 JBK: So I, I brought up that there's another possibility that it could be part of the looking that you're wonderingly looking.

17:09 RTH: That's the way it's appeared to me at the outset. Exactly like, exactly that.

17:14 JBK: So,

17:15 Kerry: So the wondering is, is part of me staring at the text is that,

17:19 JBK: Yeah, you're wonderingly staring at the text or it could be a separate thing. Like, I don't wanna write that off if that's what your experience was. Or maybe we just forced it too much in general.

17:34 Kerry: I could see it being related just because I don't know why I'd be staring at the text that I've already read for a long period of time. Um, but that's what I was doing.

17:44 RTH: So my, my my take on this is that at the outset, you, your, your first gloss was something like I was looking at this text, staring at it, hoping to get an answer, something like that. That's what you said. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] And then you said, Well, I was looking at the font, it was small and plain or whatever, and I was, I, if it had been my turn to be asking questions, I would've said, "well, are you interested in the visual characteristics of this font? It's color and size and whatever, or are you interested in the waiting for the answer to appear portion of it? So is this a semantic or a wonderingly looking or, uh, uh, um, sensory characteristics looking?

18:33 Kerry: No, I'm definitely, I'm, uh, in this moment not curious about the font or anything. Like I, I, I mean I was *staring at* it, so like I was *seeing* it, but that's not why I was staring at it. I was staring at it because I was trying to figure out where this location was.

18:51 RTH: And *then* after that it would've been natural to ask. "Well, so is this wondering where the location is sort of separate from the staring or is it part of the staring, this staring is a wonderingly staring as Julian put a little bit ago."

19:07 Kerry: Can you say that again? Sorry.

19:10 RTH: So I'm staring at the text, I'm occupied with the text. That seems like the primary thing for me. I'm looking at the text. And is the looking at the text... does, is, is there separate a separable thing from the looking of the text a wondering *where is Lake Geneva*? Or is that part of the looking, the looking is connecting the, where is Lake Geneva?

19:40 Kerry: I think it's part of it.

- 19:45 MM: I find the difference there very hard to, I know it's fine Russ, but I still, I'm none the wiser there personally. About the distinction that you're trying to offer.
- 19:57 RTH: So I didn't, I didn't understand what you said. You don't understand the distinction. Yeah. Is that the, is that the question?
- 20:02 MM: Yeah.
- 20:06 RTH: So the distinct, the distinction is: Kerry originally said, I'm staring at the text and didn't say anything about the wondering. What she said was, "I'm staring at the text almost like if..." (I'm quoting her from memory now), but something like she said, "I'm staring at the text almost like the staring of it is going to tell me where this place is." And *that* makes the wonder— that that way of talking makes the wondering integral part of the seeing, not a separable wondering, which then, *well I'm gonna, now I'm gonna look and see whether I can get the answer*. So the and, and I generally think that the, if you really understand what the first crack is, that that's where the best answer is. Kerry, Kerry, Kerry knows more about her experience in her first saying of it [Kerry: Mm-hmm] than anywhere else. And that's not just about Kerry, but just about everybody. That's not always true. But, but the, the first, the first blush had two things going on, staring and speaking. And then to add a third thing, a separable wondering, seems like pretty un— I would vote against that being likely, put it that way.
- 21:25 MM: But then my devil's advocate thing there is that I fear that because it—not necessarily for Kerry, but in general—it can be hard to articulate, that I don't want someone to avoid trying to articulate that part of an experience because it's really challenging. And that is definitely a relevant factor here. Because like how do you ever trust that perhaps Kerry just never gives weight to that element of an experience—the, it might never be part of our experience. I'm just hypothesizing of like, because it's really challenging to sum up. Whereas other things like in a monologue and all of these things are easier to grab at, y'know, like that's the fear of like knowing how much to question and then you're just opening up a can of worms, it wasn't really present. Or trying to help encourage, consider an element of your experience that may or may not be there. But it's just really, really hard to describe.

21:26 Russ comments: This is an excellent observation, and there is a lot that deserves consideration.

First: When an experience is difficult / inchoate / vibey / subtle / whatever, the questioning has to be very good in the sense that both the interviewer and the participant have to fully but dispassionately understand the nuanced possibilities. Here, RTH's comment at 14:31 ("Lemme interrupt this line of questioning, cuz I, I'm not sure that I've heard her say that she has an experience of wondering") is RTH's way of saying that, in his opinion, the questioning hasn't been good enough to make subtle distinctions. Anything that RTH asks or says after that should be understood as being iterative training—aimed at building tomorrow's skills—rather than trying to discern yesterday's experience. We had our chance to make fine distinctions at 13:14, and we weren't adequately careful. There's no repairing that about this sample; the

best we can do is to try to make distinctions that might be useful in some future sampling.

Second, I fully accept there is usually (or perhaps always) some part of experience that is what I call “in the weeds”: inchoately present, hard to describe, not as present as some other aspects, or so on. That’s why I say that DES aims for fidelity, not accuracy. DES aims to get the big parts right but accepts that it falls short of completion or perfection. (What makes DES interesting is that most people, including most psychologists and consciousness scientists, get the big parts wrong; DES tries to do better than that.)

Third, the challenge *for Mel* is that, *for Mel*, the difficult / inchoate / vibey / subtle / whatever is (as I recall) often (usually) the most differentiated aspect of *Mel’s* experience (even though it was largely undifferentiated); whereas for Kerry, the difficult / inchoate / vibey / subtle / whatever is often (usually) a minor aspect of *Kerry’s* experience (which was otherwise majorly differentiated). As my mother would frequently say: Don’t judge others by yourself.

22:27 RTH: So I, I think there probably is not an answer to that question. I think that is a worry that goes all the way down. So the risk, the risk is if you introduce wonder as its own separate thing, then we start to analyze, well what is this w—? How, how did this wondering take place? And where, where, where was the wondering when there probably wasn’t (or maybe at least maybe wasn’t) any separable wondering. And if you *don’t* talk about it, then you might miss it. And uh, and, and so I think there are limits as to what DES can do. So I think, I think we’re, when we get to the end of this, this discussion about this beep, we’re gonna say, Kerry has a complicated set of neurons and whatever that’s doing a lot of stuff. And it probably doesn’t easily divide up separably to this part of it is doing wondering and that part of it’s doing seeing, staring. But the, but we just can’t really, can’t really make that distinction clear enough, clearly enough.

23:32 MM: True. I guess you just find the limits of what’s able to be described.

23:32 Russ comments: That is exactly correct. It’s not perfect, but it’s good enough to dramatically differentiate the characteristics of Kerry’s experience from Mel’s experience (etc.) in ways that probably neither Kerry nor Mel recognized prior to this undertaking.

23:38 RTH: Right. The, the, from my point of view, it’s a worse risk to isolate out the wondering as if there was a *separate wondering going on when there’s not* than to leave as *well, there was a, this was a wonder-y- a won— a wonderingly staring*. That’s, that to *my* aesthetic seems better. But I’m not sure whether that’s a Russ-ian aesthetic or whether that’s a, a general truth that everybody should aspire to. I don’t, I don’t know the answer to that. Maybe there *isn’t* an answer to that.

24:23 What I would say, I guess I would, my, my logic there is, that that much of psychology tries to separate things out and ask, well let’s, let’s, let’s think about this wondering and let’s rate it on some kind of wondering rating scale or whatever, stuff, stuff like that, which I think is probably a mistake. So I work against that. But maybe I work harder at, harder against that than I should.

24:53 MM: There's a train going past me, so sorry. But the only thing I would add there (which um, again, is probably just projecting a bit of my own experience here for better or worse) but like, I think the only, um, the only way around all of that is conversations like this that then make you, um, consider like different, y'know, ways you can experience or whatever. And I'm talking like Kerry or anyone, then you go, yeah, that's interesting. I've not really thought about that before or whatever. And it's just in the background of your knowledge as you go forward. Like that, again, this just might be a thing that definitely happened for me when we did this and it was helpful. And then just I feel like expanded my ability to, uh, reflect on my descriptions or like, y'know, whatever it is. But I think that that's the only way around it: of having conversations and being like, oh yeah, that's interesting. I've never considered those experiences or whatever. And then noting them, and they might never happen for you or they might or whatever, but I think being aware of all sorts of different ways of experiencing stuff can help without it changing how you describe it.

24:53 Russ comments: I agree, as long as you recognize that *for Mel, we started with is there nothing in experience?* and moved, as the result of considerable effort, toward a vibey inchoateness. *For Kerry, we started with there's a lot of highly differentiated stuff (visual imagery, inner speaking, etc.) in experience and moved toward is there also, sometimes, a vibey inchoateness.* Even though we might call both *vibey inchoateness*, there is reason to think that they are quite different experiential aspects.

26:09 RTH: So, so I would, I would totally agree with that. I would, I would conceptualize it maybe *slightly* differently. I would say that the goal of human existence probably, and DES in, in specific is, is in the *know thyself* realm. And there probably isn't a right answer to the question whether we should split off wondering on this sample. But in terms of what Kerry has profited from this, well, she's tried to, she's interrogated her herself, she's asked Kerry, Kerry has asked Kerry about this, and that has sensitized her to what Kerry does. And that's probably better than trying to be too dogmatic about the answer to the question, which I *think* is what you said, but which I recast in the language that I would use.

27:00 Kerry: That's a hundred percent what I was trying to say. Yes.

27:09 RTH: On to number 3.

27:11 JBK: Sure. Take it away.

SAMPLE 9.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

27:13 Kerry: Cool. This was at 8:14. Um, I was listening to a podcast while doing dishes in the sink. Um, and for context, the podcast was talking about how we used to like buy something and keep it for a really long time, but then in more recent years, we just keep buying cheap stuff and replacing it over and over again. They were talking about the longevity of products. Um, and one of the, one of the hosts made a joke that the other host had been using the same refrigerator for 30 years.

27:49 Um, and when that comment was made, I was imagining, um, my old refrigerator that we had in my childhood, which was white and kind of a little bit beat

up. It had this like, almost, um, like topographic-like pattern in the, in the white panels. There's like a little bit of rust. It was the exact refrigerator from my childhood. Um, I wasn't imagining it within my kitchen. I wasn't imagining a scene. It was just the refrigerator, um, while washing dishes. Um, but I would say like, my focus was probably like 60—40 leaning towards, um, 60% leaning towards the imagined fridge. And I was kind of with like on autopilot with what I was doing with my hands. Um, and then, oh, I guess I was also listening, so I don't know how to break that down [laughs]. But the listening was, uh, listening was maybe even with the visual and then like what I was physically doing was uh the last thing I was focused on.

29:12 RTH: Okay. Well let's, let's start with the visual. And by *visual*, the refrigerator, do you mean when you say I'm imagining a refrigerator, do you mean I'm *seeing* the refrigerator in my imagination? [Kerry: Yes.] This is, this is not just a remembering what the characteristics of my refrigerator were. This is, [Kerry: No it's] I see,

29:30 Kerry: Yeah.

29:31 RTH: And tell me exactly what you, tell me exactly what you see. And I don't care *at all* about the old refrigerator. [Kerry: Okay.] And what I care about is what you *see*.

29:31 Julian comments: I remember at first during the interview thinking the "I don't care *at all* about the old refrigerator" sounds harsh. But the purpose is to push Kerry away from the natural attitude. You care about what she sees. If she sees certain parts of the fridge at this moment then you care about that. But not about the details of the fridge as it exists in the world.

Compare this to my 59:56 turn where I start asking "I've been wondering about this yurt because I can't quite picture a yurt..." And Kerry goes on to respond "A yurt is..." Natural attitude not sufficiently dealt with.

29:40 Kerry: Yeah. Um, I would say like, compared to most visual thoughts, this was quite small. It was just the fridge, and it was like no bigger than maybe like the spatula that I was watch, washing. So, um, like not very immersive, but it was like right in front of me. Um, and I feel like normally I have like blurred edges. Like it's not like a photograph, but this was just like the object. So it wasn't any blurred line, it was just the object, like in my imaginatio—, in my imagination floating like directly in front of me.

30:23 RTH: And so does that mean I see the, I see the refrigerator and I see *only* the refrigerator? I don't see anything blurred out beyond that or no b, no borders to a picture of the photograph. I just, there's the refrigerator.

30:33 Kerry: Yeah. There's no, no borders to a, like a, a frame of a photo or anything like that. There's no like, um, blurred edges of a scene. It's just the object. But I do like it is imagined, so, and I'm aware of that, so I can see past it and I can see past, um, that image in my mind. But it's like a crisp object is what I'm imagining.

30:33 Russ comments: RE "I can see past, um, that image in my mind"

This statement suggests either (a) that Kerry does not adequately bracket away the natural attitude; or (b) that there is some seeing-past that we need to explore.

Regarding (a): in the natural attitude, it is understood that there is an image—a thing—that is seen like other things in the world, and because the image is right in front of her, Kerry has to explain how she is seeing the sink, which is also right in front of her. The DES epoché is to bracket that taken-for-granted belief away, to recognize that is no image (or at least that there may be no image) and instead there is an inner seeing that is experienced as seeing the refrigerator. With the natural attitude bracketed, there is no conflict between external seeing the sink in front and inner seeing the refrigerator in front—these are just two seeings that both have an in-front character.

But regarding (b), it is possible that Kerry's refrigerator-seeing experience *does* have a seeing-past characteristic, that her description is *not* the failure of the epoché but rather a description of an actually experienced detail.

RTH will have to try to sort it out; viewers can judge for themselves the adequacy of his questioning. In so judging, the viewer should keep in mind that Kerry's previous interviews have demonstrated that the epoché is not an easy thing in this interview situation, and RTH may have to lean into this option more strongly than might be desirable. If he does so, he should recognize that he is engaged in iterative training and his too-strong leaning might pollute the present waters.

30:55 RTH: So in, so in reality, are you saying I can see past in, in reality so that this picture is out here, but the dishes are out here too, and I can see the dishes? [Kerry: Yes. Yeah.] So does that mean that the picture seems translucent? Or does it seem like I've got two seeings, I've got a inner seeing of the refrigerator and an external seeing of the...

31:13 Kerry: Um, yeah, two scenes almost like an, an overlay that I can see past. I don't know how to [said with some distress]

31:13 Russ comments: It is an unfortunate linguistic quirk that "seeings" and "scenes" sound almost identical, a fact that contributes to the difficulty of the epoché.

31:19 RTH: ... so the question that I'm asking here is, is that overlaying and seeing-past part of your experience, or is it just the fact that I'm seeing this ahead of me and I'm seeing the sink ahead of me and therefore they *must be* overlaid?

31:33 Kerry: Uh, I would maybe say the second. I, it's not, I'm not like *aware* that it's overlaid. It's, I'm just seeing it, but also doing the dishes.

31:43 RTH: So I see the refrigerator *and* I'm doing the dishes. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] Okay. And, and is the refrige, do I see the refrigerator from the front or the side, or doesn't that matter?

31:54 Kerry: The front.

31:54 RTH: Door open? Door closed?

31:56 Kerry: Door closed.

31:58 RTH: And do I see any of the details of it? Like the handle or the

32:03 Kerry: Um, yes, like, um, the long silver handles, like in like 70s style, um,

32:12 RTH: On the right side or the left side as you look at it,

32:15 Kerry: Uh, it's, it's centered. So it's two center doors that open like this. Okay. Um, yeah, but I'm looking at it straight on.

32:15 Russ comments: For the record, RTH does not care a whit about the specific details. He cares about whether this experience is a *seeing* or a *knowing the characteristics of*. He asks about perspective and door-open-or-closed not because he cares about the perspective or door status but (a) because if Kerry answers those questions confidently and quickly he will understand her as describing a *seeing*; and (b) because these kinds of questions encourage Kerry to encounter her experienced seeing rather than the existing refrigerator (that is, they help Kerry perform the epoché). Perspective-on is *not at all* a characteristic of a refrigerator-*thing*, it is a characteristic of the *seeing of* a refrigerator. Door open or closed is *not* primarily a characteristic of a refrigerator-*thing*, but rather a characteristic of the *seeing of* the refrigerator.

Julian comments: When you say you care not a whit, I assume this is in line with our discussion on not making the details more experientially important than they were. Kerry was seeing a fridge which happened to have these details. She was not fixated on the gleam of light of the 70s style silver handles. Or on the patterns of rust. Or on any other detail.

But I'm wondering if caring not a whit is an exaggeration, partially to try to pull me out of my excessively detail-oriented stance. If Kerry is seeing something that happens to have certain details, isn't it still useful to gather what those details are, so long as they figure in experience? If she was seeing a brand-new, gleaming silver fridge with magnets on it, it would be experientially different.

I do see your point about using details to get Kerry out of the natural attitude and have another crack at figuring out details about the inner seeing. E.g. what Kerry meant by the fridge being small. This refocusing seems more about that than about whether this is "*a seeing or a knowing the characteristics of*". From my perspective, we already know it's inner seeing, but it would be good to figure out additional details.

Russ comments: RE "If Kerry is seeing something that happens to have certain details, isn't it still useful to gather what those details are, so long as they figure in experience?"

No it is not, and this question indicates to me that Julian is still too much stuck in the natural attitude. This question splits apart the seer and the thing seen, which is the same natural-attitude mistake as separating the seer from the image. Focusing on the details is focusing on the thing seen (the image) which is not the important aspect of the experience. Kerry's experience is of *seeing my old refrigerator*, not of noticing the details of the refrigerator. I have to ask about *some* details (particularly things like perspective) to establish that the experience is of seeing, but once that is established, inquiring about further details is counter-productive. At the very best it is a waste of time; usually (as here, I think) it is a reification of the natural attitude, which will make bracketing the natural attitude *more difficult* next time. So...

RE “From my perspective, we already know it’s inner seeing, but it would be good to figure out additional details.”

If we already know it’s inner seeing, we’re pretty much done. Knowing additional details would be useful only if it shed some light on the characteristics of the seeing (*not* of the thing seen).

32:24 RTH: And that is seen clearly?

32:29 Kerry: Correct.

32:31 RTH: And, and seen small! Is that right? [Kerry: Yeah.] So it doesn’t look like I’m looking at a ref.

32:39 Kerry: It’s not like [inaudible],

32:40 RTH: It’s not like I’m looking at a small refrigerator. [gestures a small rectangle with his hands] [Kerry: Yeah.] The, the seeing of the refrigerator doesn’t seem to occupy my whole visual field.

32:52 Kerry: No. It as in like, it doesn’t, it’s not part of this, my visual field is not part of the scene that I’m actually physically seeing. Is that what you’re asking?

32:59 RTH: No, that’s not, that’s not what I, what I meant, what I, what I meant. I, I don’t, I... What I, what I wanna know is, does it seem like it, like my visual field, my entire imaginary visual field might be big, but I’m not using my entire imaginary visual field, I’m only using a little piece of it. [Kerry: Mmm.] *Or* does it seem like in my imaginary visual field, I’m seeing the whole, my whole imaginary visual field is about the refrigerator, but somehow it’s small. Maybe that’s just by comparison to the world around me. What I’m trying to do is to separate us out so that we’re only talking about the, the inner seeing. So does it seem like the inner seeing (forgetting, forgetting it all completely about the external world), does it seem like there, there’s something that’s small about this?

32:59 Julian comments: Is “visual field” ever not a useful concept for experience? Do people ever have inner seeings with no visual field (even an imaginary one). I’m not finding it possible to imagine such a thing. But I was wondering if this is one of those natural attitude things that may not always apply to experience.

Russ comments: Yes, visual field is often *not* a useful experiential concept. Visual field is part of the natural attitude: Webster says “the entire expanse of space visible at a given instant without moving the eyes,” so a typical example would be: I see primarily a car but beyond that the intersection and the buildings are part of my visual field. In the natural attitude, therefore, the object that is focused upon is typically a small part of the visual field.

In Kerry’s experience of the refrigerator, there was nothing to the side of or above the refrigerator—she saw the refrigerator and that is all. There is no visual field that surrounds the refrigerator. There is no visual field at all—the concept of visual

field simply does not apply to Kerry's seeing of the refrigerator. It might be tempting to say that the refrigerator occupied her entire visual field, but that is (a) hugely misleading because it suggests that the refrigerator extends all the way from left to right; and (b) reifies the natural attitude of the object within the field.

BTW, I'm not thrilled with my questioning here. I'm attempting to figure out what Kerry meant when she said (29:40) that the seen refrigerator was small. I invoked the concept of the visual field as part of that attempt. It was unsuccessful (I still don't understand what *small* conveyed) and my injecting the concept of visual field might have muddied the water.

33:54 Kerry: Yes. Um, normally or not normally I, I, I feel like oftentimes I'll see things in life size. So this by comparison feels small.

34:05 RTH: Okay. Then I'm ready to move on unless anybody's got questions, more questions about the inner seeing.

34:17 JBK: Yeah. I'm still wondering about the smallness. Could it be not so much a visual field thing, but more just how it feels? Does that make any sense? Like, like visual-field-wise, it's, it might not be so different from another inner seeing that feels bigger, but it's just, it doesn't,

34:39 Kerry: Can I say a theory [laughs]? Is that allowed?

34:39 Russ comments: It's allowed, but Kerry's invoking the theoretical instead of trying to describe suggests that the previous question was not on target.

34:43 JBK: Sure. So can see if

34:45 MM: Yes, I like conclusions. Go! [MM and Kerry laugh]

34:47 Kerry: I think so. Like when I'm, when I'm, um, really focused on what I'm speaking or what I'm like thinking about. So if I don't have music or a podcast playing and I'm just in my thoughts, it's usually life size. But like the golden retriever in a flower crown [Sample 7.5] was a lyric of a song that I was listening to, I think while I was doing other things. And this one, I'm like doing dish the dishes while listening to a podcast. And this again is a small visual. So it's almost like my level of focus determines *potentially*, (sorry!) um, [laughs], potentially my level of focus determines how immersive or large my visuals are. So, because I had like a podcast, podcast going and I was physically doing something, it just does it, it's detailed, but it's small. It's not immersive. Um,

35:48 JBK: I, I think we'll have to leave that as a... I mean, it's an interesting theory, but I think we'll have to leave it as a theory for DES purposes. [Kerry: Yeah.]

35:55 MM: Of course. But it's fascinating. [Kerry laughs]

35:55 Russ comments: My general rule, gleaned from a lifetime of tracking down such things, is that the more fascinating an account of inner experience, the *less* likely it is to be true. The reason for that is that the fascinating part often comes from the social

aspects of the story (I tell this kind of story because my friends find it interesting) rather than from the experience itself. There are exceptions to that rule, and those exceptions are important (they're fascinating *and true!*). This may (or may not) be one of those exceptions. But my scientific considerations raise some *be careful!* antennae when things seem fascinating.

Julian comments: I agree that theory-bracketing is essential. But some theories may be possible to ground in the concrete. At least once we're in the analysis stage. After finishing interviewing, couldn't we potentially see which of Kerry's inner seeings are more or less clear? Does this correlate, for instance, with multiple experience? For example, when listening to the podcast or listening to a friend is prominent enough to enter experience, are inner seeings more or less likely to be clear?

As I write this a few counterarguments come to mind. a) To conclude anything you'd probably need a much larger sample size than we have. b) It's hard to tell when perceptual awareness is experiential. For instance, here listening to the podcast seems experiential. At least more than the background task in some of Kerry's other samples. But it's hard to be sure. And having just read your following comment, I'm even less sure. c) This kind of theorizing could get you on the wrong track. Even if it's interesting or even right, it may be better left to non-DES-interviewers.

Russ comments: I agree with Julian's points (a), (b), and (c). Point (c) is particularly important; I have phrased that by saying that describers of phenomena should be firewalled away from theorists (e.g., Hurlburt & Akhter, 2008, Hurlburt, 2011).

My current thinking is that DES, as an exercise in describing phenomena, operates in the realm of fidelity, whereas your theories operate in the realm of validity. I haven't written too much about that yet (I'm working on it), but I think those two realms are as different as Cadillacs and holidays.

35:55 JBK: But it did remind me that... [Kerry laughs] To me, it made me think that maybe there's more we could have asked about the, the podcast. Like you're, you're, are you experiencing hearing this at this moment or is it more just kind of background? And if it's experienced, is there a specific line or sentence? Um,

35:55 Russ comments: It is difficult to aim at experience, because the natural-attitude is so pervasive. Here:

RE "maybe ... we could have asked about ... the podcast"

Actually, DES doesn't care a whit about the podcast. It cares about Kerry's experience (which may have included something podcast-y).

RE "are you experiencing hearing"

That is a question about meta-experience. It asks whether the hearing is experienced, for which there is no warrant.

RE "is there a specific line or sentence?"

That is a natural-attitude inquiry about the podcast, not about Kerry's experience. It inquires about the state of the podcast-thing.

So an alternative question might be something like:

We have not asked about whether or to what extent or how the podcast might have figured in your experience. There's no question that the podcast has affected your bag of neurons and bones—it has vibrated (and was continuing to vibrate) your ear drum and has caused you to see the refrigerator in your imagination. The question is whether, to what extent, or how, at the moment of this beep, your experience is of the podcast. It could be that you are skillfully processing it without any or much direct apprehension of it—your experience might be entirely occupied by the imaginary seeing of your own refrigerator (like skillfully driving while having a conversation). Or it could be that you are apprehending the podcast in some way. Either way is fine with me, but I don't want us to fall into the trap of thinking that because I am reacting to the podcast I must be directly apprehending it.

36:18 Kerry: Yeah, I wrote down, um, I wrote down the line that was playing, um, in this moment. Um, so the, one of the hosts lives in a home that was previously owned by, um, the celebrity actress, Vanessa Hudgens. Um, and so the other host said, "Vanessa Hudgens got good use outta that fridge," referring to the 30-year-old fridge. Um, and so that was the line that I was hearing and experiencing in this moment when I was also doing the dishes and also visualizing my fridge, old fridge.

36:18 Russ comments: There are 70-ish words that are natural-attitude description of the podcast and 2-ish words that are descriptions of her experience. Because JBK's 35:55 question didn't adequately bracket the natural attitude, I can't be confident that Kerry understands the distinction.

37:00 JBK: Okay. And I did have another fridge-scene question. You mentioned, uh, rust in some pattern on the fridge. Is that [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] Is that present at this moment? Are you, are you seeing that here or is that, is that maybe that's a, just a description of your fridge, like what y'know it to be? Or is that present here?

37:23 Kerry: Um, I'm seeing it and I think it's informing me that it's *my specific old fridge*. Like I'm not just visualizing a random, like tarnished fridge from the nineties or whatever. Um, like the, the pattern that I'm thinking of like specifically refers back to that memory of that fridge [laughs]. Um, so it, it does feel present in this moment, um [JBK: Okay.] as part of the visual.

37:58 JBK: And, and what is that pattern as you see it here? Maybe not, you don't need to describe what, what it is exactly unless, or just what what's present at this moment.

38:13 Kerry: Um, you can kind of just see little ridges in the door, um, depending on like where the light hits it. And so, um, without getting like too into the minutia of the actual pattern, it's just, I guess it's almost like a thumbprint, like indicating like *this was mine*.

38:13 Julian comments. It's interesting that when I ask about details, Kerry keeps emphasizing that they inform this being *her fridge*. In her 37:23 turn she says "it's informing me that it's *my specific old fridge*". In her 38:13 turn she says the pattern is "like a thumbprint, like indicating like *this was mine*."

In our commentary while writing the description for this sample (attached at the end of the interview) you corrected that I was too focused on the details of the fridge. You emphasized that the important thing here was that it's *her childhood fridge*. We can see that even when I'm asking about the nitty gritty of details, she keeps returning to the essential.

38:35 JBK: And does this, is this more, um, you're just seeing the fridge and it happens to have all these details, the, the silver door handles the patterns, the rest of this and that? Or is it more one thing or a couple things in particular are catching your eye?

38:54 Kerry: Mm. I think like, I'm aware of the rust and the, and the pattern, but it's more of just like the general shape that I'm more focused on because the shape, like again, is referring back to *my* previous fridge.

38:54 Julian comments: And again, emphasizing "*my* previous fridge."

39:17 JBK: Then, then I'm good on this.

39:20 RTH: So I had a couple of questions about the, so the podcast is going on, and you quoted a line about the podcast going on that quotation is I'm gathering as being a, a description of the real world—this is what the podcast was actually saying at that time. [Kerry: Correct.] Now my question is, are you experiencing that? Do you hear that? Or is that filtered that out?

39:20 Russ comments: This question is more iterative training, aimed at tomorrow than experience description about yesterday. Because I think the 35:55 question did not adequately bracket the natural attitude, and even though Kerry's upcoming answer ("No, I'm definitely experiencing that") is confident and definitive, I will remain somewhat skeptical. (That doesn't mean I don't believe her; it means the questioning wasn't good enough to relax my skepticisms.)

39:44 Kerry: No, I'm definitely experiencing that.

39:46 RTH: So I'm hearing the podcast [Kerry: Yes.] with, with meaning, meaning. I'm meaning, I'm hearing and understanding the, what the podcast is saying. [Kerry: Yes.] The podcast is talking about the actress got good use outta the fridge. I'm seeing the fridge.

40:04 And then about the dishes. So I'm, I understand myself that I, I understand that I am doing the dishes, skillfully doing the dishes. I'm not breaking them or whatever. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] So obviously I'm seeing them and processing it. That doesn't necessarily mean that I'm experiencing that, I'm experiencing the dishes. That could be totally on autopilot.

40:25 Kerry: I would describe this as being on autopilot. Um,

40:25 Julian comments: I agree that my initial questions about the podcast didn't sufficiently bracket the natural attitude. The fact that Kerry *did* describe the dishes as being

autopilot but *not* the podcast, somewhat tilts in favor of the podcast being experienced. Agreed that we can't fully excavate it.

40:32 RTH: So I'm accomplishing the task, but I'm not really directly apprehending it.

40:37 Kerry: Right.

40:39 RTH: My experience then is divided up between hearing the podcast and seeing in my imagination the refrigerator.

40:48 Kerry: Yes.

40:50 RTH: Then I'm good.

40:53 Kerry: Cool. [JBK: Alright.] Um,

[There is substantial further discussion of sample 9.3 at the end of this transcript. See COMMENTARY ARISING WHILE WRITING THE DESCRIPTION FOR SAMPLE 9.3]

40:55 RTH: Number 4, which is Mel's.

SAMPLE 9.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

40:58 Kerry: Number 4 was at 8:45. Um, I was reading on my phone, um, a, it's a ski resort called Eldora. I was looking at their website, um, cuz I was trying to see what lifts were open, and I was just like quickly skimming the page and was reading the line, um—or I guess it was like a, a title of a section on the website—and it said "Jenny Creek slash Arestua," (I think I'm saying that correctly.) "Arestua hut access." Um, and so I was saying those words. I didn't say "slash." I just said "Jenny Creek Arestua Hut access" out loud but in my head. Um, and I was simultaneously imagining a, a hut or a, a yurt similar to, um, a hut I've previously like hiked out to, um, and skied around in winter last winter. So I was kind of seeing this hut, but in like, in, uh, the Eldora context. Um, and basically I was in, in, I was trying to like place where this hut would be in the context of Eldora, cuz I didn't know that there was a hut there that you could stay at. Um, this I wrote was more of a vibe. Um, so it kind of feels like there's sort of three things happening.

42:38 And I don't know if this was all at once or like in very rapid succession, but I read the word out loud in my head. So I said, "Jenny Creek Arestua Hut access." And as part of that I was visualizing a hut that I've previously been to, but in the context of a different mountain, because I couldn't figure out, I, I was like, *oh, I didn't realize, um, that there was a hut here*, wondering if I could book it, if I could ski out to it, et cetera, et cetera. But that all those questions of, *oh, I wonder if I could book it* was not auditory. It was like a, again, a wondering. Um, it's a bit going on [laughs] in this one.

42:38 Julian comments: Hearing this again, I don't think we've adequately ruled out unsymbolized thinking/wondering about the hut. Kerry mentions there being three things. It's unclear here if she means voice/yurt/wondering or phone/voice/yurt. Well

here it seems she's including the wondering but later at 48:29 she breaks percentages into phone/voice/yurt.

Her describing this wondering as "not auditory" could mean she counts it as part of experience but is reluctant to describe it as its own thought. She could have a presupposition that thoughts without words aren't possible. She also says she wrote "it was more of a vibe."

In any case, I don't think we've adequately opened Kerry up to the possibility of thought without words. Even on the 9th sampling day, there's more iterative training that could be done. If Kerry *did* have additional thought/wondering about the yurt it still may have been very difficult to figure out during this interview and we could have needed additional training. Kerry has not had much (or any? I can't remember) unsymbolized thinking so we haven't had practice.

Russ comments: RE "I don't think we've adequately ruled out unsymbolized thinking/wondering about the hut."

I agree. However, I think it would have been very difficult (or impossible) to extricate unsymbolized thinking from the implication or context implied by the two central symbolic process. Does the yurt seeing include the wondering, or is the wondering separate from the yurt seeing? Making that distinction is going to be tough.

Unsymbolized thinking is at its most interesting / defensible when there are *no* symbols in the vicinity, as if Kerry had said: "At the moment of the beep there was no inner speaking and no inner seeing, and yet I directly apprehend myself as wondering if I could book the cabin."

- 43:24 MM: So if you attempted to give weight, y'know, percentage-wise to each of those elements, can you?
- 43:33 Kerry: Yeah. Um, the voice was I think the most dominant [MM: Mm-hmm.] Um, and uh, the visual that I had in my head, it was detailed, but it almost felt like faded, like not, um, I keep saying the word immersive, but not immersive. It was like, it was there but kind of just barely. Um, but I, it was a full scene. So I had like the mountains and trees and snow and then this hut. [MM: Um, when you... I'm sorry, keep going.] but I would say, this voice, voice visual. [gestures with hand: higher for voice, lower for visual] Um, and I'm not really sure how to place the wondering again. Um, it's kind of a confusing one, but that's like under it all. Um, but I would, yeah, voice / visual / wondering would be how I would rank it.
- 44:43 MM: And so you're experiencing your voice saying those words out loud but in your head? As opposed to like hearing or speaking them? That's your experience?
- 44:53 Kerry: Yes.
- 44:55 MM: And the, the visual aspect is very fascinating to me in terms of like, is this another one, like the previous example of where you are seeing this in front of your reality? Or like how are you visually experiencing that scene?

- 44:55 Russ comments: As a matter of DES technique, it is generally better to ask about the sample-9.4 experience before asking about how 9.4 is different from or the same as sample 9.3. There are four reasons for this:
- First, Kerry's experience at beep 9.4, which is what you really want to know, is *not* comparative—it is about saying “Jenny Creek Arestua Hut access” and seeing the hut. A question that asks about comparison distracts from the straightforward description.
- Second, by asking about 9.3, you are encouraging Kerry to import details from 9.3 into 9.4, thereby reducing the fidelity of 9.4.
- Third, if you want to know the difference between 9.3 and 9.4 (which I also want to know), it is better to get 9.4 described independently and *then* to ask how 9.4 is the same or different from 9.3. The best perspective on the difference between two things is when you have the two things each as clear as possible.
- And fourth, if your questioning is adequately pure, and in the course of that questioning Kerry *on her own* says something like “Y’know, this is sort of the same as 9.3, but it’s different because...,” *then* you are in the best possible position to accept that Kerry is telling you something about her experience that has not been infected by your own interests.
- In short, I’m entirely in favor of comparing one experience to another—there is often much to be gained by that. But patience is usually in order. (There is an addendum to this comment at 56:08.)
- 45:16 Kerry: Um, this one felt... like normally it’s like a clear overlay. [MM: Yeah.] And this one almost felt, the best way I could describe it is like in the back of my mind. [MM: Yeah.] But I don’t really have a way of visually distinguishing that from my other visual thoughts. Um, like it just felt, cuz I was still looking at my phone and that was more clear in, more clear visually than, um, this scene in my mind. Um, and it was faded and brief, um, is how I can describe it best. But it didn’t feel like a clear overlay, which is what I normally describe. [Sighs] Um, like if instead of it being in front of me, it was almost like it was literally like back here. [gestures with her right hand behind her head] [MM: Mm-hmm.] Um, kind of like literally in the back of my mind. Um, I don’t know if that makes any sense.
- 45:16 Russ comments: RE “back of my mind” and “literally like back here”
Especially when emphasized by her hand gesture, is Kerry saying that this seeing is behind her? We will have to sort that out.
- 46:31 MM: It actually sort of does, um, which is astounding based on my own experience. But like, um, it like another imagined reality in a sense, even though you’re not like psychotic and you’re not thinking you’re in a different reality, but like, it’s a distinctly different scene that you’re experiencing at the same time. But with, it’s not an opacity per se, but it’s not the clarity of the world around you.
- 46:57 Kerry: Yes. Yeah.
- 46:59 MM: And this is,

- 47:01 Kerry: I mean... Sorry, there's a little bit of element of opacity cuz it is like, it feels faded. It's not as like vibrant [MM: Yeah.] as, um, normal visual thoughts.
- 47:13 MM: And you said it was brief. Do you mean in terms of like it's a, it's a, it's a flash of a scenario and then it's gone? Or
- 47:22 Kerry: Maybe brief isn't the right word. Um, I, brief's probably not the right word. It just felt less dominant, is how I would say.
- 47:32 MM: Sure. And it's, um, it's an imagined reality in the sense that you are taking the visual cues of what are in front of you and sort of merging that with another real-life place that you've been or you've entirely made up the location that's in your brain.
- 47:52 Kerry: I, it's kind of like my memory of Eldora, the ski resort, and my memory of this hut that I went to in Wyoming, very far away, I've like placed the hut in my memory of the Colorado Ski Resort [that is, of Eldora] [MM: Mm-hmm.] So it is completely made up, but it's two real places that I have been and I have seen that I've combined.
- 48:14 MM: Mm-hmm. And, sorry, just again, remind me of the percentage levels of experience for you in terms of that visual thing with the you speaking and the wondering that's clearly attached to all of that.
- 48:29 Kerry: Yeah, I would say percentage-wise it'd be like 40% my voice saying, or maybe not, maybe like 35 (down to get super niche!), 35% my voice, 35% my phone. No, hang on. Okay. We'll do 40% my voice, 40% my phone, 20% this weird [gestures behind and to the right of her head] visual behind me.
- 48:29 Russ comments: *Weird* is a strong word when applied to one's own experience. So we will need to follow up on that. It seems related to the *behind me* aspect. (See the comment at 45:16.)
- 49:06 MM: Mm-hmm.
- 49:07 Kerry: Yeah.
- 49:09 MM: And the, the phone element is you looking at it and, um, deriving meaning from the visual cues that are in front of you? As opposed to, like Russ said earlier, like being interested in the font itself or the whatever, y'know, like visually you are looking at your phone screen, you're taking in the words, you're understanding what the words mean and doing that? Or is the visual element experienced in a different way?
- 49:36 Kerry: Um, it's less so about like, y'know, the font or the, the color. Like I remember that, but that wasn't what I was taking in in this moment. It was more like, this prompted like a *Huh*. Um, I didn't know that there was a hut here, even though that, that thought wasn't auditory. But that's, it was more, I guess like contextual. Like the, what I was reading was, was prompting a questioning, kind of.

50:08 MM: Yeah. So like similar to that bit from before where your visual cues were related to the one, the wondering was to the visual aspect.

50:19 Kerry: Yeah.

50:20 MM: Okay. I'm gonna shut up now. I've been talking for a long time. [Kerry laughs]

50:25 RTH: So you, you said it was sort of like behind you. [gestures with his right hand behind his head] Could you describe what you mean by that? Is it the seeing of the yurt?

50:35 Kerry: Um, yes. Uh, I don't know how to get, it was on my right side [laughs] if that's helpful. Um, it was like, cuz I was sitting in bed like sitting upright and my phone's directly in front of me. And so it was kind of, um, it's weird because I was visualizing it as if I was looking at it straight on, but it, it felt like it was behind me almost like I have eyes in the back of my head, um, which is weird. But I,

51:09 RTH: And I'm gathering not only eyes in the back of your head, but eyes *behind* the back of your head because you imagine yourself looking forwards at a scene that isn't behind you. Is that right?

51:19 Kerry: Yeah. Um, yeah, it's a confusing one. Um,

51:30 RTH: So while you meditate on that, let me point out to Mel that she didn't ask this line of questioning. And I'm gathering, I'm *guessing*, I'm presuming, I'm guessing, whatever, speculating, that it's, because it seems like that's not possible when, but when people say something "is in the back of my mind," *sometimes* they mean in the back of my mind, like here. And sometimes they mean that as metaphorical. And *Mel* who doesn't see things in the back of her mind would take that as being metaphorical and so didn't ask about it. And when, when in fact Kerry is quite confident about it being in the back. When, when I look at Kerry talking about this, there's no question about it. It's *here!* [gestures behind and to the right of his head] I don't know why the fuck it's here, but it's here. [gestures] And, and there's no, no ambiguity about that. How to, how to speak about it is a different deal. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] But the experience, the, the experience is pretty clear. [Kerry: Yeah.]

52:26 MM: I actually disagree with that. I think it was actually sort of the opposite. I, I could, I could, I almost believed Kerry *too much*. I could totally understand what she was saying, but I didn't, I didn't do any line of questioning there. But almost like with the first beep where I'm like, no, I fully confidently believe what you're trying to articulate. And I can, I have an awareness of what you're trying to say.

52:49 RTH: Okay. So lemme go back to Kerry. So I'm, I'm gathering that the seeing is, uh, as if the seeing is looking forwards. It's not like I'm looking backwards at the scene. It's like I'm looking forwards at the scene, but the whole seeing is back there somewhere.

53:08 Kerry: Yeah. [nods affirmatively]

- 53:11 RTH: And, and that I would use as an example of we don't, the whole thing about whether something is overlaid in the real world is, doesn't matter. This is this seeing, this imaginary seeing doesn't have to exist—even the *seer* doesn't have to exist—in the same place in imagination as in the real world, cuz the imagining, the imagining seer is somewhere back there looking this way. So they're, the, the seeing experiences can be entirely separate and you don't have to worry about whether something is overlaid or not.
- 53:52 JBK: But on the other hand, it, it could be overlay, could be, I thought some samples seemed like more like could be, but it's either way you're saying that it doesn't necessarily have to be.
- 54:04 RTH: So the what, what makes it difficult— So yeah, so Julian is right. It can, it can be overlaid. But the problem is that people's presuppositions is that *it must be* overlaid. And so when Kerry has said in the past, *well, it's overlaid*, my guess is that much of that is presuppositional driven by the, by the natural attitude. Well, y'know, if this is here and that's here, well it must be overlayed on it, when, when I think experientially that's just not true. So that the, the trick (or the art, and it's a, it's a complicated thing) is to try to try to sort through what what of Kerry and with Kerry saying some this is overlaid, is she saying that because she experiences an overlay-ment? Or is she saying that because, well, it must be overlaid because this one's here and that one's there. And that's why the, the questioning... that contributes to the difficulty of the questioning.
- 55:06 And I think Kerry, we're in the 10th, we're in the 10th day [really the 9th] and Kerry is still somewhat confused about the difference of what is natural, what's what must be, because it's in the natural world and what's in the experiential world. Some people find that easier to give up and some people find it more difficult to give up. And that's not a criticism of Kerry, that's just... Some people by their 10th sampling day would be saying, "well, this is back here then, and that was the scene back there" and they'd be happy with that. Kerry is still saying, well, that's *weird* because it doesn't seem like it could possibly *be* [Kerry laughs]. And, uh, and so our task, our task is always to be to trying to help Kerry, to differentiate the real world from the experiential world. The epoché as it sometimes is called.
- 56:08 So I'm happy with number 4. Mel looks like she's got a question. You wanna ask a question Mel?
- 56:08 Russ comments: At 44:55 I commented that it was generally a good idea to hold off on comparisons until the current sample has been fully discussed. This sample is a good example. Back at 44:55 we were comparing the overlay-ment of the seeings of 9.3 and 9.4 as if they were very similar; now, by contrast, we have established that the 9.4 seeing is very different from the 9.3—9.4 is behind her, so no overlay-ment is necessary. The comparison of 9.3 and 9.4 would be much better now than before, because now we know clearly what we are talking about.
- 56:16 MM: No, it's not, it's not a question. My brain's just doing today's version of storyteller conclusions, [they laugh] and curiosities. Um, but no, I'm not gonna do those right now.

56:32 RTH: So my ver—, my version of that is, it is it, it's that, it's this kind of thing that makes DES from *my* point of view totally interesting. It's like, it, it's like Kerry is presenting a three-dimensional crossword puzzle or something. We're trying to figure out whether this layer [Kerry: Mmm] comes from her presuppositions or comes from her experience. And, and the, the task is to try to get her to, to suspend her presuppositions without talking her out of her experience. And that is by no means a trivial easy, trivia, trivially easy thing to do. But it, it's a challenge and, and it, and it, *for me* it's entirely a, like the sort of the ultimate challenge. It has to do with my ears and my eyes and my body and my, every, everything is involved trying to, trying to get behind Kerry's words to what she's trying to say about her experience. And it's, it's sort of sort of like the ultimate challenge, seems to me.

56:32 Julian comments: This is a great summary of the joys of doing this kind of research. Making a little note in case I ever want to come back to it.

57:44 MM: Mm-hmm. I agree. And it's because like, it, as Russ alluded to then, as well, like, Kerry, it's totally hard for us to be like, *I'm pretty damn confident this was how I experienced something*. But as I'm saying the words out loud, I'm aware *that can't be true!* But I'm certain that that's how—y'know, so when you're saying like, well, I'm experiencing this reality and then there's a *this* reality happening there [gestures behind her head] that I'm definitely experiencing, but like I know that, like, what the fuck am I saying!? [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] But like we can all, when you start to do this, appreciate different versions of that, where you're going, that doesn't make any logical sense, but I get it because I've had a version of my own thing of that that you're like, yeah, but I *definitely* experienced it. [Kerry: Right.] [JBK: Mm-hmm.] That's why it's interesting.

58:37 RTH: The, one, one of the most delightful things about DES from my point of view is watching Kerry struggle to say, [Kerry laughs] "I'm absolutely certain this is what my experience is, but I don't, I don't believe it. It seems weird. I'm a little crazy." [they laugh] And, and wrestle, wrestle with that, because it's, that's like, that's like Kerry at, at, at the *quick!* And it's, and I, it's, to me that's, it, it, it indicates to me that Kerry is trying her best to tell me about what's going on in her experience. And that's, that's, it's an honor to be there and, and an enjoyment to witness it. And a beautiful thing to see from my point of view. And, and it makes the whole effort...

58:37 Russ comments: RE "a beautiful thing to see"
See, for example, the video of Kerry from about 46:15 to 46:30.

59:33 Kerry: Glad you enjoy the struggle. [laughs]

59:33 Russ comments: I do enjoy the struggle, not because I have put Kerry on the spot but because Kerry and Russ, together, are at-the-limit-of-our-abilities genuinely sharing a private, inherently personal aspect of Kerry.

59:36 MM: Generally fascinating. Like, y'know, there are so many times, even today you're like describing these like super visual scenes that clearly I can't do or whatever. And you're like, wow, that is so cool. [Kerry laughs.] That is so interesting.

59:54 RTH: Onto number 5? Which would be Julian.

59:56 JBK: Can I just, uh, I've been wondering, I've been wondering about this yurt because I can't quite picture a yurt. A yurt. Can you describe what you're seeing there?

1:00:06 Kerry: Yeah. A yurt is...

1:00:07 RTH: So let me, let me, let me interrupt...

1:00:10 JBK: Not necessarily what a yurt is, but like here what you're

1:00:12 Kerry: Oh, what I'm visualizing?

1:00:14 JBK: Yeah, yeah,

1:00:15 Kerry: Yeah. Um, I'm specifically visualizing, um, the view of a yurt from the outside on a hilltop that I have stood on. So I'm looking down at a real place. [JBK: Mm-hmm.] Um, it's got a window at the very top and then it's a circular tent held up by like wooden slats with a chimney. So I'm, it's like the way that I'm visualizing it, I'm, because I'm seeing it how I've seen it before, which is like almost top down from a hillside. I'm visualizing that same angle, but the hillside is Eldora, not Wyoming. Um, so it's like a tan circular tent with a, uh, window at the very, at the pointed top and then a chimney like in the back.

1:01:08 JBK: Tent like canvas tent?

1:01:10 Kerry: Canvas. Yeah.

1:01:12 RTH: So, so let me, let me suggest if you really want to keep, so, so, so this is a good example of how Kerry can be confused about what is a real, what's in reality and what's in, because when you asked your question, Julian, I think you wanted to ask about her experience and she started to tell you about the definition of a yurt. [Kerry and JBK laugh] So she started, she started to tell you about something that wasn't in her experience. [JBK: But I caught that.] So if you can encourage her to say, "tell me what you *see*, Kerry, and if and if necessary, start each sentence with, 'I see'." So "I see the yurt, I see the top, I see the canvas, I see the....," then that makes it clear to you that we're talking about your *experience* and *not* about what a real yurt is. A real yurt is made out of canvas, and a real yurt is circular, or whatever. [Kerry: Yeah, yeah, yeah.] The "I see" is a crutch or gesture.

1:01:12 Russ comments: I would like to draw a distinction between Kerry's "what I'm visualizing..." (1:00:12) and my "I see...." The *what* in *what I'm visualizing* is a reference to a real yurt. That is, *I am visualizing X* is a natural-attitude statement—it invites a characterization of X, a thing, a yurt: its canvas, window, chimney, and so on. By contrast, *I see X* is an experiential statement—it invites a description of the result of my eye-casting, which itself is my own creation.

I don't care a whit about the words—we can call it skron vs spleg or whatever—but I do care about the distinction between what (in normal English) is visualized—a thing—and the seeing of—an experience.

So at 59:56 JBK asked “Can you describe what you’re seeing there?” That is a natural-attitude question, which Kerry answered in a natural-attitude way, by describing what is a yurt. I interrupted (1:00:07), and JBK tried to get Kerry to talk about experience rather than a thing, which was indeed what I was aiming for with my interruption. But then they continued down the natural-attitude (“visualization”) path—that is, JBK was not clear enough in what he intended. (DES is hard!)

Here is why this is important. What Kerry *visualized* is a circular, canvas-sided, window above, slats, chimney. What Kerry *saw* was a I-didn't-know-there-was-a-cabin-in-Eldora-but-I-think-it-would-go-there yurt on a mountainside. The seen yurt had some details, but they were not central to her experience. The seen mountainside had some details, but they also weren't central to her experience.

1:02:01 JBK: [Inaudible] questions. Um and then yeah, some more nitty gritty stuff, although we might be too far in the weeds for that. But one part it seemed like there was a, a trying to place or a wondering part of it and then later when you gave percentages, there wasn't the wondering part [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] So I was kind of wondering about the wondering.

1:02:26 Kerry: [laughs]Yes. I was hoping you wouldn't ask any follow up questions around that because I dunno how to say it. [laughs]. Um, like again, um, the wondering in this instance feels tied to the visual. [JBK: Okay.] Because I, in my visual am placing a yurt where I think it would go in Eldora, but that's likely not where it is. Um, so that, that feels tied. Um, yeah. And the wondering is part of the visual.

1:02:26 Julian comments: Still not quite sure. Does she mean:
-It's clearly experiential. It's tied to the visual thematically.
-It's clearly experiential and inextricably, experientially linked with the visual.
-It's informing the visual and somehow lurking in the background
-The visual arises from some not directly experienced wondering.
Trying to distinguish would've taken a lot of time and would probably be most helpful iteratively.

1:03:07 JBK: Okay, then I'm good. I'm good on that beep, too. Done wondering about the wondering. Alright, so we have time for another one. Is everybody done?

[There is substantial further discussion of sample 9.5 at the end of this transcript. See COMMENTARY ARISING WHILE WRITING THE DESCRIPTION FOR SAMPLE 9.4]

1:03:20 MM: I think I'm gonna have to love you and leave you because I had someone message me half an hour ago about work, so I apologize if I had stopped yapping we would've got more in.

1:03:27 RTH: Well then, then what then we, what we should do is we should decide what to do next here. Do we, so do we wanna sample again or are we into the phase where we want

to have a conversation? Kerry's got some questions that she wanted to ask. Mel has probably some questions she wanted to ask.

1:03:42 MM: I think that's up to Kerry, personally.

1:03:46 Kerry: Um, oh wait, do you mean continue with the beeps today? Or do you mean in general?

1:03:52 RTH: For next time. Next time. I was, should next time be another sampling day? Or next time be the debriefing conversation (or whatever you wanted to call that)?

1:04:01 Kerry: I mean, I'm, I feel ready to debrief, but I wanna make sure that you guys have gotten everything that you need out of this. Um,

1:04:13 RTH: I, I think we're probably moving towards debrief. So the next, the next one would be a debrief conversation. And there's nothing to stop us after that to sample again. [MM: Yeah.] [Kerry: Okay.] But, uh, but I'm, I'm thinking that we've probably accomplished, is everybody on the same page about that? Ready to move on? [JBK: Yeah] [Mel: Mm-hmm]. Alright, so you can go Mel and we'll we will by email. We can figure out when that's gonna be and uh,

1:04:36 MM: Yeah. Great. I can pretty much, I can make anything work. I just then after an hour I need to run, but yeah. Presume I can do anything.

1:04:45 RTH: Okay.

1:04:46 MM: Thank you. Thank you very much. It was very interesting.

1:04:49 Kerry: [laughs].

1:04:52 JBK: So do want do the,

1:04:53 RTH: Lemme look at my calendar actually. See where I'm supposed to be somewhere. I've got five minutes. So do we want to,

1:05:03 JBK: I'd say let's not rush it. I also have a dog for the weekend that I'm supposed to walk right now.

1:05:07 RTH: [laughs]. So maybe we should call it a day here. And uh,

1:05:11 JBK: Yeah.

1:05:12 RTH: Alright. So I would, I would say Kerry, you, you, you've been doing great and, and, and when I've been saying you haven't kept this apart from that or whatever, I didn't, I, I wanna make sure that you didn't understand that as my being critical. That's

1:05:25 Kerry: No, no, no, no, no. Not at all,

1:05:27 RTH: That is the, the challenge.

1:05:32 Kerry: Yeah.

1:05:33 RTH: It's hard work. Alright, so we do, we wanna decide when we're gonna do it again then and, uh,

1:05:41 Kerry: Um, sure.

1:05:43 RTH: And, and *again* would be when we want to have a debrief . And, and the rules of that debrief is that you should be able to ask anything that you want to ask, and we should be able to answer or decline to answer. But if we, if we answer, we should answer fully. Which is to say, we should have the same rules apply to us as we have asked you to do. [Kerry: Mmm.] You, you, you could have said "it's none of your business" and that would be fine. And if you ask a question, I can, I should have the right (and Julian and Mel or whoever should have the right) to say, "it's none your business." But if it *is* your business, then we should try to answer, answer it honestly.

1:06:18 Kerry: Cool. But, um, yeah, I I would love to ask you guys questions. [laughs]. [Russ: Okay.] Um, in, I wouldn't mind, uh, having next week kind of off and then, but then it's like the week before Christmas. I don't know if that's really chaotic, but between the 16th and the 20th is more preferable for me. I'm traveling on the 21st, but

1:06:41 RTH: That's fine with me.

COMMENTARY ARISING WHILE WRITING THE DESCRIPTION FOR SAMPLE 9.3

After the interview, Julian wrote this description of 9.3

[Kerry is doing dishes while listening to a podcast. The hosts were talking about how products we buy don't last as long anymore. Host #1 had joked that Host #2 had used the same refrigerator for 30 years. For context, host #2 lives in the same house that the celebrity Vanessa Hudgens used to live in.]

Kerry is listening to the podcast, with a host #1 saying "Vanessa Hudgens got good use out of that fridge".

Kerry is also innerly seeing her old refrigerator from her childhood. It's white, a bit beat up, long silver handles, some rust, and with a textured pattern on the white panels. (She sees it in front of her. She sees just the fridge, not a whole scene. Although there were no borders around it, she's seeing only the fridge and its shape. It's small, not life-sized. This isn't about it occupying a physically smaller portion of some imagined field of view. It takes less of Kerry's attention than

some of her other mental images and is less immersive. This doesn't mean "small" is only metaphorical. It feels physically smaller and not life-sized.)

Russ commented with **Exercise for the reader 1:**

The description ("Kerry is innerly seeing her old refrigerator from her childhood. It's white, a bit beat up, long silver handles, some rust, and with a textured pattern on the white panels") is correct in the natural-attitude sense. That is, the sentence that starts with "it's" is a correct description of the refrigerator, as if the sentence had begun: "The refrigerator that existed in Kerry's childhood had these characteristics...." But I think that mischaracterizes Kerry's experience: she is not seeing an object with the following characteristics: beat up, handles, rust, texture.

So the exercise is: Rewrite those two sentences in a way that conveys Kerry's experience. Hint: Start the sentence with "I see...." My answer below; no fair peeking until you write your own.

Both answers and continued discussion are on the next page:

...
...
...

Exercise for the reader—Russ's answer

Exercise for the reader 1:

The description ("Kerry is innerly seeing her old refrigerator from her childhood. It's white, a bit beat up, long silver handles, some rust, and with a textured pattern on the white panels") is correct in the natural-attitude sense. That is, the sentence that starts with "it's" is a correct description of the refrigerator, as if the sentence had begun: "The refrigerator that existed in Kerry's childhood had these characteristics...." But I think that mischaracterizes Kerry's experience: she is not seeing an object with the following characteristics: beat up, handles, rust, texture.

So the exercise is: Rewrite those two sentences in a way that conveys Kerry's experience. Hint: Start the sentence with "I see...."

Russ's answer

I would write: "I (innerly) see my own (from my childhood comfortably familiarly worn) refrigerator."

I can see no way of listing the details without making the details more experientially important than they actually were. She did not see the handles; she saw her own comfortably worn refrigerator, which happened to have handles, but the seeing was not of the handles; it was of my own comfortably worn childhood refrigerator. The seen handles were contributors to that, but I can't see a way to mention them without making them more experientially salient than they were. Same for the scratches, etc.

This is, of course, another in the epoché lecture series. Things (in the natural attitude) have handles, and it is fine to give an accounting of the features of things because such an accounting does not in the slightest change the thing—the refrigerator exists and will continue to exist regardless of its description. Experiences present themselves as they present themselves, are apprehended in that presenting. The center of Kerry's apprehending (as I grokked it) was the my-own-lived-with-for-a-long-time refrigerator. The DES object is to convey that without distorting it.

Another way of saying this is to ask: Does Kerry see (a) the my-ownness of the refrigerator, or does she see (b) the handle-ness / scratchiness of the refrigerator? If the answer is (a), then the description has to convey that. I don't suggest that my attempt is the best possible description; I do suggest that it attempts to convey the my-ownness of Kerry's experience.

Julian's answer:

I came up with: I see a beat-up white refrigerator [from my childhood]. I see mostly its shape.

I think this emphasizes the main experienced aspect, being its shape, if I remember the interview correctly. It does leave out some details. I'm grappling with if the descriptions need to include all details. Or just the most experientially relevant ones. I think Kerry's seeing the fridge did have more detail than my description above. But these details (the rust, the handles) weren't the focus.

Also I'm grappling with how much to mention whether a fridge or a yurt is from her childhood or memory. I think that experientially, it being remembered makes it different for Kerry. It is that fridge, or yurt, or flower crown. Just like when innerly seeing her dad, it is that guy, her dad, and not some other middle-aged man. But I do not think there is any additional element of recollecting going on in this experience or the yurt one. So maybe it's a case for brackets [].

After seeing your answer, I see "beat-up" is too harsh. I agree about the childhood aspect being important so the [] brackets are excessive. Seeing its shape is better left to a parenthetical.

Russ's comments: First, the refrigerator is not remembered. It is seen. You can argue that of course it is remembered, and that is what underlies the seeing, and that is true in a natural-attitude way. But that has absolutely nothing to do with Kerry's experience: her experience is that she sees it, not that she remembers it, much less that she remembers it and then she sees it.

Second, it doesn't make it different for Kerry. It is central for Kerry. It is different in Julian's version of the natural attitude. There is no difference that appears in Kerry's experience.

Third, RE "It is that fridge, or yurt, or flower crown." When you say "it is," you throw yourself into the natural attitude. She sees that fridge. It is not that fridge.

Fourth RE "I see 'beat-up' is too harsh." It is not that "beat up" is too harsh. It's that "beat up" is misleading if the aim is high-fidelity characterization of Kerry's experience. Yes, the refrigerator that she

saw was beat up. No, she was not seeing a beat-up refrigerator. She was seeing her childhood refrigerator.

Her experience is not a collection of or derivation from beat-up-ness, handles, scratches, whiteness, and so on. Those are bits of the whole, but you can't describe or collect the bits and expect the whole to be described. In the real world, say if you were an artist painting a picture in the real world, you would have to begin with handles, and beat-up-ness, and scratches, and whiteness, and sooner or later a refrigerator would emerge. But I think that is just simply absolutely not the case in Kerry's experience. She was from the get-go seeing her own-childhood-refrigerator.

So the square brackets are not excessive, they are backwards. What you have put in brackets was the main event, and what is outside of the bracket should've been in brackets or at least parentheses.

I don't care a whit really about brackets. I care about describing Kerry's experience, and that requires knowing and being absolutely clear about the difference between what is essential (and by essential, I mean, absolutely of Kerry's experiential essence) and what is a minor detail.

So I think you need to distinguish between what is essential to experience (seeing-my-old-refrigerator, what is incidental in experience (scratches, handles, whiteness) and what is not experienced at all (speculation about why she might be seeing that, etc.).

The shape is incidental, it seems to me, but in a way that is different from the scratches and the handle. The scratches and the handle are incidental seen detail. The shape is an incidental detail of the seeing itself.

The fact that there is nothing beyond the edges of the refrigerator is indeed interesting in some way, and understanding that might well contribute to a theory of inner seeing. But there is not an essential detail of Kerry's experience as Kerry experiences it. There is nothing about her experience that is at all close to Aha! See the shape of the refrigerator!

Julian Comments: I'm trying to work through the difference between remembering and for Kerry it being her childhood refrigerator. I conflated these things too much, previously and then overcorrected to parenthesize the her-own-childhood part of the description.

I guess the difference is that remembering says something about the process. But Kerry isn't (as far as we can tell) remembering in an experiential way. She's just seeing. However, it being her childhood refrigerator is intrinsic to her seeing it. It is not some other random refrigerator from the Home Depot. It's the one from her childhood.

Visually, it just looks like a refrigerator. So previously I was doing a mental leap to say that to bring in a her-childhood component to it, this must involve memory. But again this is about process or metacognition or whatever. It doesn't necessarily apply to Kerry's experience. [comment continues and is interspersed with Russ's comments]

Russ comments:

RE "...and for Kerry it being her childhood refrigerator."

"It being," like "it is," is a statement about existence in the natural attitude. There is no *it is* in Kerry's experience. She sees her childhood refrigerator—she doesn't see a *thing that is* a refrigerator.

RE "Visually, it just looks like a refrigerator."

That is true in the natural world. Experientially, it does not look like anything. It does not look like a refrigerator. It does not look like her childhood refrigerator. She sees her childhood refrigerator. She does not see something *that looks like* her childhood refrigerator.

Perhaps the mistake here is the natural-attitude delusion that inner seeing involves seeing an image. If it were true that inner seeing involves creating an image that is (then) innerly seen, then it would make sense to inquire about whether that image looks like something else—whether the refrigerator in the image looks like the refrigerator in the world. But inner seeing does not involve creating an image (or at least it has not been shown, other than by presupposition, that there is an image separate from the seeing).

I described a similar situation in my 2007 book with Eric Schwitzgebel. At the moment of the beep, DES participant Melanie was reading a book about a Stuka formation flying over Germany in World War II. She innerly saw a formation of Stukas against a blue sky with a few clouds, seen as if there were a camera located on the wing of the outermost Stuka looking forward across the formation. This was a clear and detailed inner seeing. We wrote this box (p. 112):

Box 5.9. When is an F-18 a Stuka?

Russ: When pressed with detailed questioning, Melanie reveals that her imagined airplanes looked like F-18s, not Stukas. Should we be surprised by that?

I don't think so. All representations are imperfect in some way. Even if Melanie were very familiar with Stukas, her imaginary Stukas would have some incorrect details such as the wrong sort of wheel covers, the wings slightly too low on the body, or the like. The fact that Melanie's imaginary Stukas were rather dramatically imperfect reflects Melanie's very limited familiarity with/interest in Stukas, not any fault or limitation in her inner seeing ability. She did not think, "I'm supposed to be imagining Stukas, but because I don't know what Stukas look like, I'll use F-18s instead." She created a concrete, detailed, inner seeing that reflected her (low) level of knowledge about and concern for Stuka details.

That illustrates one way that inner seeing is markedly different from external seeing. If you're looking at a photograph of F-18s, you can pretend that they're Stukas, or mistakenly assume they are, but the fact will remain that they really are F-18s. In Melanie's experience, there is no pretense or error. She was simply illustrating a scene involving Stukas at precisely the level of her interest in/knowledge of Stukas at this moment. She's not seeing badly represented Stukas. She's simply illustrating Stukas.

I note in passing that Melanie never said that her imaginary planes looked like or were Stukas. She said she was reading about a formation of Stukas and was seeing "a line of military planes against a blue sky background." I take this to be a sign of Melanie's skillful attempts to provide faithful descriptions during the interview. She did not say they were Stukas; she did not say they were not Stukas; she did not say they were badly represented Stukas or that she had substituted F-18s. She said they were military planes against a blue sky, which is exactly the scene she was illustrating.

Thread: Visual imagery: Structure. Previous: Box 5.8. Next: Box 8.1.

Melanie saw Stukas. She did not see Stukas that looked like F-18s. She did not mistake an F-18 for a Stuka. She did not see badly represented Stukas. There was absolutely nothing about F-18's in Melanie's experience. [Probably she didn't know a whit about the difference between an F-19, an F111, an F135, etc.] She saw Stukas at precisely the level of her interest in/knowledge of Stukas at this moment.

Kerry saw a cabin somewhere in a ski area in Colorado. She did not see a yurt that she had seen in Wyoming. She did not see a cabin that looked like a yurt. She did not mistake a Wyoming yurt for a Colorado cabin. She saw the Colorado cabin at precisely the level of her interest in/knowledge of Colorado cabins at this moment.

RE “remember”

Remember has a natural-attitude process meaning (I have the ability to recall some fact from the past). *Remember* also has an experiential meaning (I notice myself as reminiscing). At the moment of the beep, Kerry experienced neither of those things, nor any other experience of remembering. She saw her refrigerator—that’s the end of the experience of the refrigerator. In the natural attitude sense, it is true that she was, in some manner of speaking, remembering—she called forth the refrigerator of the past. But the aim of DES is always to enact the epoché—to bracket the natural attitude.

(Throughout these discussions, whenever I have mentioned the natural attitude, I meant that as something that should not be considered, as distracting to DES, as something that should be bracketed but probably has not been adequately bracketed (that’s why I’m writing about it.)

Julian comments [continued] I have a question, though, comparing this experience to the yurt-on-a-mountain experience. I think part of this experience was that it was a yurt she’d been to and a mountain she’d stood on. But in your description, you relegated this to the brackets. Your description is:

In trying to place where a hut might be, Kerry innerly saw a yurt hut on the Eldora mountainside [this was a mashing up of a yurt she had seen in Wyoming and the Eldora (Colorado) mountainside], looking down on the yurt (seen in detail: tan canvas, wooden slats, window, chimney) from a hilltop.

I agree that to talk about an explicit/definable/isolatable mashing up or remembering as part of experience is too much. There may have only been Kerry seeing. And I could see that the my-childhoodness of the fridge was more central than the I’ve-been-to-ness of the yurt. Is it just a question of degrees to you or is there something fundamentally different about the fridge sample?

I would say that in the yurt sample, trying-to-place-where was more central than the I’ve-been-to-ness of the yurt. So it makes sense that you gave that prominence in experience. I’m wondering does this say something about process of experience beyond what’s warranted? What’s the difference between that and mentioning remembering? Does Kerry’s experience have involve trying beyond just her seeing the yurt and mountain? I’m not disagreeing, I’m trying to work through.

What I like about your description is that “In trying” does add some remove. I agree that trying-to-place was important for Kerry’s experience here. We don’t know too much about how this trying differs from just seeing. It could be entirely through “just seeing”. But I think the point is to go with the energy of Kerry’s experience and letting descriptions emerge from that rather than focusing too hard on separating out process/content/whatever. Let me know if I’m on the right or wrong track (although I’m sure you would anyways).

Russ comments:

RE “I think part of this experience was that it was a yurt she’d been to and a mountain she’d stood on”

It is precisely that way of thinking that I am trying to get you to bracket, which I think is necessary if you want to engage in DES or any other way of describing experience. At the moment of the beep there

was (mostly, or perhaps entirely) absolutely no experience of having been there. (And, for that matter, quite probably no experience of a yurt.) Kerry was imagining, 100%, a cabin that she had not seen in a place that she had not been. She populated that imagining with a yurt she had seen from a place that she had been. She can't see a cabin that she has never seen, so she sees a yurt that she has seen, with the absolute understanding (not separately cognized) that the yurt-ness and the where-it-is-ness and the seen-before-ness do not matter in the present experience. So I think your sentence "I think part of this experience was that it was a yurt she'd been to and a mountain she'd stood on" is entirely backwards. More correct: "I think part of this experience was something did not at all figure in her current experience." Better—put the *yurt*, the *been there*, the *stood on* in brackets to indicate that it is not an essential feature of her experience.

RE "I would say that in the yurt sample, trying-to-place-where was more central than the I've-been-to-ness of the yurt."

I think that is not true. The I've-been-to-ness of the yurt did not at all exist in Kerry's experience at the moment of the beep. The trying may or may not have been present at the moment of the beep—probably not, but maybe in the weeds.

RE "So it makes sense that you gave that prominence in experience."

I did not give either of them prominence in experience. The syntax of "In trying to place where a hut might be" makes it clear that the trying was context, not (or at least not much) part of experience. That sentence has the same structure as: "In trying to explain Melanie's experience to Julian, Russ looked up Stuka in Wikipedia." The trying to explain is cordoned off as context, and what comes after the comma is or may be experience. But I am not trying to give a grammar lesson; I am trying to hammer home the epoché: we have to grasp Kerry's (and Melanie's) experience as Kerry (Melanie) experiences it, not as it might relate to the natural-attitude world.

RE "I'm wondering does this say something about process of experience beyond what's warranted?" ... "But I think the point is to go with the energy of Kerry's experience and letting descriptions emerge from that rather than focusing too hard on separating out process/content/whatever."

I'm pretty sure I don't understand either of these two paragraphs. It could be that this is the heart of the matter. The best I can do is to say that it seems to me that "focusing too hard on separating out process/content/whatever" seems to be on the wrong track. What has to be focused on is the distinction between Kerry's experience and all else, which includes process, content, Julian's favoritisms, Julian's natural attitude, and so on. That is, if one wants to grasp Kerry's experience, one needs to perform what I call the epoché. But that is not at all a "focusing too hard on separating out process/content/whatever," it is more a declining to focus at all on process/content/whatever.

Julian comments: I didn't realize that you meant for "trying to place" to be totally context. That would have changed how I approached this questioning. But I don't disagree that it may very well be context. I still thought it had the possibility of being somewhat experiential. But I'd agree that enough suspicion is warranted to hold back on this.

I did want to explain my last paragraph since you didn't understand it. It's about trying to figure out why the childhood-ness of the refrigerator is an important experiential detail, but the I've-been-to-ness of the yurt is not. My conclusion was that there's no firm rule here but I simply have to cleave to what is experientially relevant to Kerry at each sample. This is what I meant by "go with the energy of Kerry's experience". I was also referring/inspired by your comments during the Day 7 interview (at 54:01): "that what I think made the, the first part of this conversation difficult is that the energy in Kerry's experience at this particular moment was in the seeing, of the dog."

The idea was that similar thinking could apply here. For the refrigerator, there is some energy to the childhood-ness of it. For the yurt, there's not enough energy in the I've-been-to-ness of it to warrant claiming it's experienced. I think I liked the term energy because it's less technical but is a stand-in for what's experienced and what's experientially relevant.

Russ comments: It has nothing to do with energy—it has to do with the essentiality of Kerry's experience. Kerry's experience of the refrigerator is essentially about the childhood-ness of it. The conversation Kerry had been listening to had been about long-term-relationships-with-refrigerators, and Kerry innerly sees her own long-term-relationship-with-refrigerator, namely her own childhood-refrigerator.

By diametric contrast, the essentiality of the cabin seeing is the where-is-this-cabin-in-Eldora of it; the I've-been-to-this-yurt-ness is not at all part of Kerry's directly apprehended experience; her experience is not at all about the I've-been-to, and it is not at all about the yurt. The yurt-that-I've-seen-before is merely Kerry's tool to stand for the Eldora cabin.

So the my-childhood-ness and the been-to-ness, from the standpoint of Kerry's experience, are diametrically opposite: the my-childhood-ness is essential to the refrigerator—Kerry is centrally seeing my-childhood-refrigerator. By contrast, the been-to-ness is experientially non-existent at the moment of the Eldora-cabin beep.

In seeing whether I am on time for my appointment, I look at the clock and see that it is 4:00. It is a fact that if my clock were a compass, the hour hand would be pointing ESE. While true, that is not at all part of my experience of seeing that it is 4:00—there was absolutely no ESE in my experience as I checked the time. The case is similar for Kerry: It is true that she has seen this yurt before, but there was absolutely no I've-seen-this-before in her experience as she was wondering where the Cabin was in Eldora.

For me, the important question is: How could Julian mistake a nothingness for an essentiality? The question is important because it is not a uniquely Julian "mistake": lots of people to whom I've tried to teach DES skills make similar mistakes. For me, it doesn't seem that such mistakes should be possible, no more possible than stepping out in front of a bus by mistaking it for an image. So either I am mistaken (which I happily accept as possible, and would greatly value having that pointed out), or figuring out why Julian is mistaken would be of substantial importance.

My guess is that it has to do with the failure of Julian's epoché, with Julian's natural-attitude belief in the existence and importance of the image. I suspect that he thinks there is an image of the refrigerator, with cracks and scrapes, and there is an image of the yurt, with slats and windows. In Julian's natural-attitude view, Kerry sees the refrigerator image and then has to determine, from the pattern of scratches and scrapes, that it is her childhood refrigerator. And she sees the yurt, and has to figure, from its features, that she has seen this yurt before. In the natural attitude, the images themselves, being images (like photos), are indifferent to the seen-before-ness of each. But that's not how experience works (I think). Kerry is hearing a conversation about old refrigerators, and she creates a seeing of her own old refrigerator. She sees her own refrigerator from the get-go of this experience. Whether the pattern of scratches and scrapes actually mirrors her own actual refrigerator is absolutely irrelevant. She sees her own old refrigerator regardless of whether what she sees does or does not reflect the actual refrigerator that existed in her house 20 years ago. She does not discover that it is her own refrigerator because she has energy about it; she sees that it is her own refrigerator from the get-go.

Kerry, in contemplating a ski trip, discovers that there is a cabin available to rent, and creates a seeing of where that cabin might be. Her experience is of a cabin-in-a-wondered-place from the get-go. The fact that her seeing may (or may not) reflect a yurt that she has seen is absolutely non-essential.

She does not have to figure out that the yurt-that-I-have-seen is not the cabin in the wondered place; it is the cabin in the wondered place from the get-go.

RE energy: There is (or at least may be) a huge difference between energy as I have used it and energy as Julian suggests it. My usage of energy refers to directly observable characteristics in the interview: I would say that Kerry's talk shows more energy when she enunciates clearly, and uses implied exclamation points, and laughs hard, and so on. Julian's usage of energy (at least as I understand his usage) refers to an inner state or process or feature. In my view, my usage is descriptive of in-plain-sight characteristics; Julian's usage is inferential about mentalistic theoretical constructs. DES radically avoids theoretical/mentalistic constructs.

Julian comments: To explain why I was caught up in the been-to-ness of the yurt. It's not as you say that I think Kerry "sees the yurt, and has to figure, from its features, that she has seen this yurt before." It does have something to do with the natural attitude. I thought there was something experiential about "trying to place where it would be" (quote from the original description I wrote). I thought part of this trying-to-place involved the been-to-ness of both the yurt and the ski resort view. As I originally wrote: "She was mashing up a yurt she had previously seen and her memories of Eldora ski resort." We've focused on the yurt but I think originally the been-to-ness of the mountain view spurred this. If I could have put Kerry's non-verbal experience into words it would be something like Yurt? Where was this yurt? Was it in that place we saw the mountain view from?

That's probably the origin of my misunderstanding. It's still not separate enough from the natural attitude. Of course, Kerry wasn't using words. And there's no reason to believe her thought pattern follows that kind of verbal logic. Her "trying to place" the yurt doesn't need to follow any kind of sequential reasoning or reasoning that can be fragmented into different parts. It likely doesn't involve anything outside of Kerry's inner seeing.

It's not that I originally thought Kerry had some kind of strict logical reasoning. But I still think the natural attitude seeped in. I'll keep that in mind when going over the video/transcript.

Russ comments I have gone back to the video, and I agree with Julian that my speculation about his process was off the mark in its explanation (but was correctly on the scent in its aim to critique the natural attitude). The natural attitude includes the urge/tendency to explain and to believe one's own explanations. Here, for example, "I think originally the been-to-ness of the mountain view spurred this" is a reasonable explanation, which, like all reasonable explanations, is truthy. But another truthy explanation focuses not merely on the been-to-ness but on the skied-around-ness—it's not that Kerry has merely visited the yurt, or that she has merely seen the yurt, but that she has skied around and hiked around this yurt, and therefore that it is this yurt that she would put into her Eldora scene, rather than some other yurt that she has encountered. That's also pretty truthy, in an explanatory sense. But neither of those is descriptive of her experience at 8:45pm on December 3. They are speculative about what lies behind her 8:45pm experience.

The been-there-as-causing-the-image speculation is doubtless partially true in an explanatory sense; the skied-there-as-causing-the-image speculation is also doubtless partially true in an explanatory sense. Engaging in either speculation is a natural-attitude pastime that distracts from / interferes with faithfully describing Kerry's directly apprehended experience.

SEPARATE EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION RELATING TO THE SAMPLE 9.3 DESCRIPTION

Russ comments:

Exercise for the reader 2

Would it be just as good to write the answer in the third person? That is, is (2) just as good as (1)?

(1) "I (innerly) see my own (from my childhood comfortably familiarly worn) refrigerator."

(2) "Kerry (innerly) sees her own (from her childhood comfortably familiarly worn) refrigerator."

Both answers are on the next page. Try it out yourself before peeking.

...

...

...

Exercise for the reader 2 (answers)

Would it be just as good to write the answer in the third person? That is, is (2) just as good as (1)?

(1) “I (innerly) see my own (from my childhood comfortably familiarly worn) refrigerator.”

(2) “Kerry (innerly) sees her own (from her childhood comfortably familiarly worn) refrigerator.”

Russ’s answer:

I think #1 is better. #2 seems to objectify Kerry—makes her an object among many other objects in the objective universe, viewed from an omniscient perspective. #1 makes Kerry the center of her experiential universe, which is where she belongs. #1 unambiguously makes “(from my childhood comfortably familiarly worn)” a characteristic of Kerry’s seeing; #2 leaves ambiguous whether “(from her childhood comfortably familiarly worn)” is a characteristic of Kerry’s seeing or of the objective refrigerator.

Julian’s answer: (1) better conveys the experience. It’s easier to put yourself in Kerry’s place seeing the refrigerator. (2) more easily leads to a third-person perspective where you see Kerry looking at her fridge.

It’s possible to read (2) skillfully move past this 3rd person perspective to get to (1). But this is hard to do. So I think (1) is a better way to convey the experience.

You previously wrote or said that first-person descriptions were just another hurdle for objective minded psychologists and researchers to get past. Which is why you often write in the third-person. Since I may try the popular media route (Youtube, podcasts) rather than academia, I think (1) is the better option for scientific communication here.

Russ comments: The primary task is to apprehend Kerry’s experience as Kerry experienced it. The secondary task is to say something about that, to describe it.

The *saying* portion of that depends on the audience, as does all communication. I might use different words with Julian, or with Kerry, or with the scientific community. The same for any phrase or sentence. Words /phrases / sentences are just grunted gestures that (imperfectly, misleadingly, perhaps-as-best-we-can-in-this-context-ly) point at something. The task is first to be clear about the apprehended experience at which we want to point, and then to point at it with all the felicity we can muster.

I have spent my career trying to get aligned with the apprehension of experience. I happily accept that those attempts at alignment may be warped, or wrong, or idiosyncratic, or inadequate, or otherwise on the wrong track. I will say that I have gone to great lengths to keep my alignment on the right track (but I accept that those lengths may themselves be warped...or otherwise on the wrong track. I also happily accept that my past writings about that alignment have been less than perfect— I think my apprehension skill has outpaced my understanding of why I do it. That is a primary reason why the interactions with Julian are important to me — trying to convey to Julian aspects of the skill that (I think) I have acquired forces me to try to describe adequately (and quite often better than or different from what I have previously said) what I think are the important aspects of that skill.

I have learned that skill for myself, and I am acutely aware that some (perhaps many or even most) aspects of that skill are peculiarly Russ-ian and may not transfer at all to Julian or to others. I did not

learn the rules of a skill; I practiced a skill and now, in trying to converse with Julian and Mel and Kerry, I am trying to convey what are the general principles of that skill. That is another skill unto itself.

COMMENTARY ARISING WHILE WRITING THE DESCRIPTION FOR SAMPLE 9.4

After the interview, Julian wrote this description

[Kerry was reading on her phone the website of the Ski resort Eldora, which described a hut called Arestua. That was somewhat surprising to Kerry—she didn't know that Eldora had any huts.] She was experientially-seeing and reading the section title "Jenny Creek / Arestua Hut Access." She innerly spoke those words (without the slash).

She was also seeing a hut/yurt on Eldora, trying to place where it would be. She was mashing up a yurt she had previously seen and her memories of Eldora ski resort. She's looking down on the yurt from a hilltop (that she has previously stood on). The yurt is a tan canvas circular tent held up by wooden slats with a window near the top and a chimney above. (It was immersive in the sense that it's a full scene but less immersive than some of Kerry's other experiences. It's less of her attention than the seeing and inner speaking. It's somewhat lower opacity.

She sees it behind her head on the right size but still as if she's looking at it head on. This isn't a metaphorical description but a physical one. She sees it physically behind her. Even though in physical reality this is impossible.

The trying-to-place-it wasn't separate from her seeing it, it seems.)

Russ comments:

Exercise for the reader 3

RE "She was mashing up a yurt she had previously seen and her memories of Eldora ski resort."

Was this mashing-up a characteristic of Kerry's experience? I think not. It's true that she was mashing up two different scenes, but that is a natural-attitude description.

RE "The yurt is a tan canvas circular tent held up by wooden slats with a window near the top and a chimney above."

I accept that that is a correct natural-attitude description of the yurt. I do not think that the slats, window, and chimney figured as prominently in the Kerry's experience as they do in this description.

Rewrite the "She was also seeing a hut/yurt on Eldora" paragraph reflecting Kerry's experience, avoiding the natural attitude as described in the two REs. My answer and Julian's are below, no fair peeking.

Exercise for the reader 3 (answer)

RE “She was mashing up a yurt she had previously seen and her memories of Eldora ski resort.”

Was this mashing-up a characteristic of Kerry’s experience? I think not. It’s true that she was mashing up two different scenes, but that is a natural-attitude description.

RE “The yurt is a tan canvas circular tent held up by wooden slats with a window near the top and a chimney above.”

I accept that that is a correct natural-attitude description of the yurt. I do not think that the slats, window, and chimney figured as prominently in the Kerry’s experience as they do in this description.

Rewrite the “She was also seeing a hut/yurt on Eldora” paragraph reflecting Kerry’s experience, avoiding the natural attitude as described in the two REs.

Russ’s answer:

I might write:

In trying to place where a hut might be, Kerry innerly saw a yurt hut on the Eldora mountainside [this was a mashing up of a yurt she had seen in Wyoming and the Eldora (Colorado) mountainside], looking down on the yurt (seen in detail: tan canvas, wooden slats, window, chimney) from a hilltop.

Julian’s answer:

I’m (innerly) seeing a yurt on Eldora (a circular tent with a window and chimney on top), looking down on it from a hilltop. (It’s less of my attention than the seeing and inner speaking. I see it as if I’m there with the mountains surrounding me, looking straight on at the yurt. But also as if the me-who-is-doing-the-seeing is behind to the right of my actual-real-life-self. [I’m mashing up a yurt I had previously seen with my memories of Eldora Ski resort. I’m trying to place where the yurt is, though it’s unclear how much of this trying-to-place is experienced here.]

Comments: I took out some yurt details. Still I left a few in. Maybe more than you’d care for. But I think part of the job of a description is to convey to the reader Kerry’s experience. And I think some detail is useful for that. It’s a tent but not just a regular camping tent on a mountain. More of a structural dwelling kind of tent.

-About if mashing it up was experienced. I think this goes along with if trying-to-place-it was experienced. I’d have to watch the interview again. It seemed like it might be. Here I put it in brackets.

-About it being a yurt she’d previously seen and a place she’d previously been. I think this does somehow shape Kerry’s experience. In a similar, though less obvious way, as with the fridge. I put this in brackets.

Exercise for the reader 4

RE “She sees it behind her head...”

What is behind her head in this experience? Hint: Think about what “it” means in “She sees it” and whether that is at all correct. Then rewrite this paragraph reflecting her experience. My answer below, no fair peeking.

Exercise for the reader 4 (Answer)

What is behind her head in this experience? Hint: Think about what “it” means in “She sees it” and whether that is at all correct. Then rewrite this paragraph reflecting her experience.

Russ’s answer

It is not merely the seen yurt that is behind Kerry’s head; it is the *seeing of* the yurt (including the seen yurt) that is behind her head. That is, I think the *it* reflects a natural-attitude focus on the thing (in this case the image of the yurt) and forgets the experience (in this case the seer). But there *is no image!* There is no *it!* The seeing is behind her.



So I might write: This seeing is behind-and-to-the-right of her head, seeing forward into the yurt-scene that is still behind-and-to-the-right of her.

Julian comments: This is the same answer as for Exercise 3, since I read both exercises at the same time:

I’m (innerly) seeing a yurt on Eldora (a circular tent with a window and chimney on top), looking down on it from a hilltop. (It’s less of my attention than the seeing and inner speaking. I see it as if I’m there with the mountains surrounding me, looking straight on at the yurt. But also as if the me-who-is-doing-the-seeing is behind to the right of my actual-real-life-self. [I’m mashing up a yurt I had previously seen with my memories of Eldora Ski resort. I’m trying to place where the yurt is, though it’s unclear how much of this trying-to-place is experienced here.]

At first I thought “it” must be the yurt. She’s mostly seeing the yurt. But then I remembered she also described looking at the yurt head on.

Then I tried to write it as if it’s the full scene. But this takes Kerry’s seeing and nounifies it into a scene. It makes it a separate thing to put behind her. This didn’t feel right.

-So in the description as it is, I think Kerry’s entire locus of experience for this description is behind her. This seems right to me. But it’s a different way to conceptualize this, so I’m curious to read your answer now.