

Michael D.
Michael D. Interview 1
Sampling day 1

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February 6 interview with Michael that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/Xk6yWh60Axo>. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

AB = Agnes Bolinska

Michael = Michael D.

- 0:00 Russ comments: The comments that I have inserted in the transcript below are intended as commentary about what I think at the time I write the comment, which is generally within a day or so of the interview. They are not to be confused with the Truth with a capital T; there is no guarantee that I will agree with them if I review them at some later time, at which time I might revise or extend them; they are invitations to Michal and/or Agnes to disagree, or to amplify, or to say they don't understand, and so on. If they wish to insert their own comments, they should pick a color other than this green, and then do so. They should also feel free to correct the transcript.
- 0:01 RTH: So now I'm recording.
- 0:03 Michael: Okay.
- 0:04 AB: No more gossip.
- 0:05 Michael: Right. Only serious business. Now
- 0:08 RTH: [laughs] We've got Agnes's house warm again, and uh,
- 0:11 AB: It's hot, even [laughs]
- 0:15 RTH: I guess. I guess that's better than cold.
- 0:18 AB: It is better than cold for, for winter. Yes.
- 0:23 RTH: So this is going to be Michael's first day actually at wearing the beeper and talking about it. And is there anything that we should be talking in a preparatory, preparatory?
- 0:35 Michael: Um, I'll mention one thing. I hope this doesn't make you upset. So last night I was, I was getting everything ready, hoping to kind of, cuz I knew I was gonna do it early this morning, so I didn't wanna run into any problems this morning. So I was getting

it all set. I could not get the ear thing to work properly. I mean, it, it plays the sound just fine. I couldn't get it to stay in my ear. It kept falling out and whatever. So I grabbed an old pair of earbuds and I modified it to be just like yours. So I put a Ts plug on it and I chopped off one of the earbuds and I listened to both, like, so I shoved yours in my ear so I could hear what it was sounding like. And I listened to mine and I couldn't detect any difference. So hopefully that's okay. But I used mine instead of yours.

- 1:20 RTH: So that's to, that's totally okay. I'm sorry about that. The hook, the hook that I sent,
- 1:24 Michael: It's probably my ear, I don't know [laughs]
- 1:26 RTH: The hook that I sent...
- 1:27 AB: <inaudible> that would modify the earphones. [laughs]
- 1:30 RTH: So I guess I got a couple things to say about that. One. One is, there's a very unpleasant story about the, the, the hook on those earphones. You can't buy earphones anymore that's got a hook on 'em. So I actually print those on, on a, on a 3D printer.
- 1:45 Michael: Oh, okay. [laughs]
- 1:46 RTH: But, uh, and, and they're, they work for most people, but that don't necessarily work for everybody. But they, they are somewhat flexible, so you should be able to bend that thing and,
- 1:59 Michael: Okay. Well if it's, I mean, this one works fine. So I like, as I said, I could not detect any, like when I listen to them, I can't hear any difference.
- 2:07 RTH: Yeah. And, and so I'm, I I'm, I'm delighted that you, you take the responsibility to do that. So I, and, and so what I would, what I would say is that as a general rule, the descriptive experience sampling process is a, is a joint effort. And so I'm happy that you're, you're, you're solving
- 2:27 Michael: Okay.
- 2:28 RTH: You're on the problem-solving team.
- 2:30 Michael: I'm on the problem-solving team. I just did May, I didn't know if that needed to be known as part of this process, but I I don't, I think it was the same either way.
- 2:37 RTH: That's totally fine. As, as long. The, the only thing that I really care about is that there's a, a rapid rise time beep. And I don't really much care about the fidelity of the beep. Your be your ear bud is probably a higher fidelity than mine. So your square wave is probably actually squarer than the one that my cheap ear bud.
- 2:54 Michael: Maybe so. Yeah.

- 2:56 RTH: But I, but I don't really care about that. What I care about is the rise of the, what we call the slow square wave so that there's, so that it's pretty clear that this is [snaps fingers]
- 3:05 Michael: Yeah.
- 3:05 RTH: And even, even that we're,
- 3:07 Michael: That, that was not a problem.
- 3:09 RTH: Okay. And even, even that, we're never gonna be absolutely sure that this is
- 3:12 Michael: Right. Well, I think that we've, for that part of it, we've definitely pressed up against, at least for the moment, the limits of my ability to discern exactly when that moment is. [RTH: Okay.] Relative to experience at least. [RTH: Okay.] I think there's at least one, one of these episodes where that's gonna be an issue.
- 3:30 RTH: Well, I, I would say, I would say just as sort of an aside, that the, it, it is not the case that people respond to the actual beep. Anybody. Nobody actually responds to the beep. They only respond to what they hear. And it takes a while to hear. So [Michael: Right.] The, the, the beep starts and it, it at 700 hertz, it takes two or three cycles before you have a, a possibility of, [Michael: right.] A chance of recognizing this as a beep. So you got 10 milliseconds already that af after the beep has been going on. And then you gotta process it and say, oh yeah, that's the beep. And then you gotta figure out, well, I'm, this is what I'm supposed to do. [Michael: Right.] So there's, there's quite a bit of processing that goes on before.
- 4:08 Michael: So the processing part could be the part that, anyway, we, we can talk about it more when it gets to the one that might, where it might be relevant.
- 4:15 RTH: Good. So I say, let's go to beep number 1.

[Sample 1.1 discussions starts here](#)

- 4:18 Michael: Beep number 1. Okay. Um, so this was all this morning. Um, and, uh, so my plan was that you'll, as you'll see later, the plan got kind of derailed a little bit, but not in a way that I think affects, you'll tell me differently perhaps, but in a way that affects anything. Um, I was planning to wear it during my morning chores and then on through the morning as long as necessary. Um, and, uh, so my first morning chore I had put it on and turned it on, was chopping wood. And I had walked outside. This is just, I, none of this is, this is all two minutes before the beep, just giving you the scene here. [RTH: Okay.] Um, I walked outside and, uh, kind of, you know, did my usual things to get all the wood chopping ready to go. And the last thing I was gonna do was to lift a big, um, kind of stump basically, a piece of a tree that I use as the chopping block itself. I, I, I put that away so it doesn't get rained on, so it lasts longer.

- 5:22 And I was pulling that, I was, I was about to lift that up and that's when the beep went off. So there was some awareness of my arms sort of being tensing up, getting ready to, to lift this thing, cuz it's heavy. Um, so I definitely felt my arms being tense, like preparing to lift it. And I guess my mind, to whatever extent my mind was active, which isn't very much, I was just focused on that particular task. I wasn't really, there weren't really a lot of other thoughts going on, but there were, there were some other thoughts going on.
- 5:52 One was, maybe this isn't a thought exactly, but I was aware of the cold air on the back of my neck. cuz it was cold this morning.
- 6:01 I was, I had already noticed a kind of small gasoline engine running in the background as I was walking to the woodshed. And I, I was initially, this is not, not during the beep, um, but I was initially kind of annoyed by that, partly cuz I just don't like them. And partly cuz it was, it felt like it was too early in the morning for someone to be doing that. And I had already gotten over it, but I was still sort of, there was still some residual awareness of that sound in the background. So I guess I hadn't completely gotten over it. [laughs] Um, and then there was a thought though. So that was all more like experiences. There were no, there were, there was no sort of discursive thinking going on in any of that.
- 6:42 But then I had a thought and the thought was, *I need the gloves. Are they wet?* But the thought, this is gonna be difficult. They were, those were not spoken words that, and I didn't even think them internally, like as you would if you were thinking through the words, like producing them internally somehow. None of that was going on. But I, but those words were definitely present, but it was more like they were present all at once. It wasn't like I was working through those words, but it was definitely the words were present to my consciousness. "I need the gloves. Are they wet?" And the, the beep happened kind of right in the middle of having that thought. But I, it's hard for me to say what the timing of the beep is relative to the thought. It feels like the thought was just happening quite rapidly, like faster than you could say the words. Those words were present to me. And somewhere in there the beep happened. So there you go.
- 7:44 RTH: So are all those things happening in your experience simultaneously? [Michael: Yes.] And by simultaneously. [holds up the beep schematic] This is what I drew yesterday or like it anyway. [Michael: Yeah.] So this particular moment right here, one microsecond just before the beep, those are all happening at the same...?
- 7:56 Michael: Yes. So, so all, so, so maybe I should be careful to distinguish things that were happening before that I was saying about setting context and things that were happening at, at that time, at least as I thought about it in the moment after the beep happened. Tension in the arms preparing to lift. Awareness (but this is a small part of my awareness, but it wasn't absent) of the motor, the small gasoline engine in the background. Cold air on the back of my neck. And the thought "I need gloves. Are they wet?"
- 8:27 RTH: So there are something like four simultaneous tracks of your experience going on [Michael: I think so.] at the same time. [Michael: Yes.] As best you can say, [snaps fingers] caught in flight by the beep.

- 8:38 Michael: Yes, that's correct.
- 8:39 RTH: Okay. And, and is, is one or another of those more salient to you than the others? Or are they all...?
- 8:47 Michael: Yes. The, the motor, the motor thing had already was already fading. The cold air was very transient. It was definitely there, but I wasn't paying attention to it. I just like, for a moment was noticing that the air on the back of my neck was cold. But the two others were very present. So the preparing to lift, and these are, and they're probably connected because I was paying attention, not just to my arms, but to my hands. cuz I was about to grab this heavy log. So probably these two things are closely connected. The preparing to lift, tension in the arms and the thought "I need gloves, are they wet?" Those two were very present. The other two were somewhat backgrounded. But I, at least in the moment, I convinced myself that they were still somehow part of my awareness.
- 9:28 RTH: Okay. And, and so the two that were the most present, the arm, the arm tension and the, the glove thought [Michael: Mm-hmm.] Those seem equally present?
- 9:40 Michael: Yes.
- 9:41 RTH: Okay. Well let's start with the glove, the glove thought I guess, cuz that's the more recent one. So, so you said that there were, those *words* were present [Michael: Yes.] But other times I got the impression that the, the whole thought was there all at once, which,
- 10:00 Michael: Yes, but that's what I mean, the words were all present at once. So it wasn't the same as it was, it was almost as if (now this isn't what happened. Okay.) But it was almost as if you saw it on a page. Like he saw the whole sentence on a, on the page at once. [RTH: Okay.] Now I didn't, I didn't actually see anything. I, but it was that kind of like all of it hitting you at once. [RTH: Okay.] It wasn't like I was walking through the, "I need the gloves, comma, are they wet?" [RTH: Right.] It was more like a whole thing at once.
- 10:30 RTH: And, and I would like us to be careful about what we mean by words, because I think words are complicated deals for us. [Michael: Okay.] So it could be that, that the *idea* of *I need the gloves* and the *idea* of *are they wet*, could be somehow conveyed without words. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] And that, and so if I'm gonna put it into words, I'm gonna put it in "I need the gloves. Are they wet?" I would put them into words, but I wasn't experiencing the words at, at, at the time. I'm not, I'm not trying to suggest that you weren't experiencing the words. I'm trying to say it is possible to think a thought like that without words.
- 10:30 Russ comments: Michael has clearly said that the thought was in words. What warrant does RTH have to suggest the possibility of the thought's *not* being in words? First, Michael has himself communicated some doubt about the phenomenon—he has wondered how it is possible that the words came all at once, which would of course be impossible in spoken or heard words. And second, RTH

has substantial DES experience, and knows that for at least some people, thoughts that are initially described as being in words often really do not have words as part of the phenomenon.

So the art of DES is to suggest the *possibility* of thoughts occurring without words while *not* suggesting the *desirability* or *likelihood* of that phenomenon's occurring for Michael. You may judge for yourself the adequacy of RTH's implementation of that art.

11:08 Michael: So,

11:08 RTH: So I'm asking what you think, [Michael: Right.] whether it's possible or what, what...

11:12 Michael: That's a good question. And I actually did think about that a little bit in the moment. Although I was also getting back to chopping wood. [laughs] Um, I, so what I convinced myself of, but very fallibly in the moment, was that yes, those words were all present at once. [RTH: Okay.] But I did have, I did think to myself, *Hmm, I wonder if you're now just reconstructing a thought that was present to you and those are the right words to use.* But so, so I'm, I'm not sure about the answer to your question is what I'm saying. I was thinking about it, but I didn't, I guess I was thinking about it too late for it to, to it to be really very effective in sorting that out.

11:53 RTH: Right. So what I, what I would, what I would say is that no matter what you say about this today, I'm not gonna believe you what you said, because you don't believe yourself what you said. [Michael: That's fair!] And that's *good* as far as That's, [Michael: That's fair.] that's *good* as far as I'm concerned. And that's why this, the process that we are engaged in has to unfold over time. [Michael: Okay.] So now what's happened is, as the result of this sample, we have raised the question, and I presume Michael is gonna be interested in this question, which is, *well, was I thinking about that in words or not?* And next time, if such, if, *if* such a thing happens, then he'll be more ready, more able, [Michael: Hopefully.] maybe not perfectly able, maybe *never* perfectly able, but, but he will have some experience. Well, it, I, I gotta think, I gotta be ready to make that kind of a discrimination.

12:39 Michael: Yeah. That's, that's all fair.

12:41 RTH: And, and, and, and I'm not suggesting that you lay in wait for that kind of a discrimination. [Michael laughs] What I'm suggesting is that every conversation that we have, assuming that you're motivated to find out about your experiences, we're we're, we're gonna get to some places where we're gonna say, *well, I don't really know. I, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not really sure.* [Michael: Right. Right.] And that, and that will potentiate you to become more sensitive to that distinction later on. And, and maybe it will be possible to make it clearer and maybe it won't.

13:13 Michael: So I'll, I... That's helpful. Um, I'll admit that when I turned the thing on, I immediately went into the mode of lying in wait for the beep. But frankly, I'm so distractible that that lasted about two minutes, and about two minutes later I was chopping wood and I wasn't paying any attention to that. Um, so, so I don't think I'm gonna run the risk of lying in wait, cuz I just can't focus that long. [laughs]

13:40 RTH: Yeah. Well, I don't, I don't, I don't think hardly anybody can. And so, so I, I think what you described is very, very typical vanilla [Michael: Okay.] descriptive experience sampling. People, people worry about the beeper for a minute and then they're,

13:55 Michael: That's pretty exactly what ha what happens.

13:57 RTH: It's not that interesting until it beeps and then it becomes interesting again. [Michael: Right.] So what we have established so far is that there was some kind of a thought going on, which may or may not have been in words, and, and we are being, um, ambivalent or unsure or whatever about the, about whether there were words. But what we were *pretty sure* is that they weren't words that unfolded one after another across time. So either the words were somehow present all at once, which is possible. Or somehow the idea was present without words all at once. But then when it comes time to put it in, to transmit it, then it's, then it gets translated into words or

14:33 Michael: Something. I think those are equally possible, frankly.

14:36 RTH: Good! That that's the objective today is for those to be equally possible. Okay.

14:40 Michael: Well, [laughs] mission accomplished!

14:42 RTH: And, uh, and, and so when I, when I say I think that the DES process has to be iterative, this is an example of that. [Michael: Okay.] We, there was *no possible way* that you and I could have had a discussion about this before you have a sample of your own to wonder about. [Michael: Agreed.] It has to be on the, this conversation has to be *on your turf*. It's not a, it's not a abstraction that we're trying to sort through here. It is a characteristic of Michael's experience that we're trying to figure out how to put into words. And it *has to be* about Michael's experience, not some theory about whether you could, whether you could have this kind of thinking or not, or whatever.

14:42 Russ comments: This strikes me as being a fundamentally important but under-appreciated fact. I think (rightly or wrongly) that philosophy rests on the premise that concepts can be carefully characterized and then applied in a particular case. I think that is backwards. I think we have to start with particular cases and then work towards concepts. [I'd be happy to discuss this.]

15:23 Michael: Right. Okay. Well, okay. Understood.

15:27 RTH: Second, and still prominent more-or-less equally prominent as the word, as the gloves deal, is about tension in my arms.

15:39 Michael: Yes.

15:40 RTH: And tell me more about that.

- 15:42 Michael: Well, I would say that it wasn't just tension in my arms because there was a, I guess you would say a goal-directedness to it. Like, I, I was about to lift this thing. I wasn't really thinking about it. It's something I've done a thousand times, but I was aware that I was.... So it wasn't just tension. I would, I would describe it as tension, sort of in preparation for the lift. [RTH: Okay.] Um, and I was aware, there was definitely no words here, but I was certainly aware of the, I, I was certainly thinking about, I'm a again, but there were definitely no words in this case. But I have to say it in words, I was definitely thinking like, I have to lift this and my arms were tensing up for the sake of about to grab it. And the beep saved me. [laughs]
- 16:28 RTH: So the question is, I guess, is this an arm thing? I, my arms are preparing to lift this thing? Or is this like a mental thing, where I am...?
- 16:39 Michael: No, it's more an arm thing. The mental part is me describing for you as best I can, what the arms felt like.
- 16:46 RTH: So my arm, I, I experience my arms as preparing to lift.
- 16:51 Michael: Yes.
- 16:52 RTH: Something like that.
- 16:53 Michael: Something like that. Yes. [RTH: Okay.] There was definitely the, like, I, the muscular tension was definitely present to me.
- 17:01 RTH: Okay. And, and, I gather, present to me in a preparing to lift kind of way. [Michael: Yes. Yes.] It's not just that I feel abstract tension in my arms, I feel...
- 17:12 Michael: No! If I were, if I were to do that right now, I would feel in some sense, like muscular-skeletally the same thing. But there was definitely this element of, there's a purpose, there's, there's a goal driven aspect to it. It wasn't just tension.
- 17:26 RTH: Okay. And, and upper arms, lower arms, wrists, whatever.
- 17:31 Michael: Um, upper arm and the upper part of the lower arm.
- 17:36 RTH: Both arms?
- 17:37 Michael: Not wrists. Both arms. cuz I was equally gra, I was equally coming in with both hands. Okay.
- 17:43 RTH: And what I would say about that word "because" there is, I, I don't want us to confuse what the facts of the universe are, which were your hand, both of your arms were heading towards the thing. [Michael: Got it.] The question is what's in your experience? And it could be that you're experiencing both of 'em, and it could be that you were experiencing one of them. That either way would be fine with me.

I just don't want us to, I don't want us, what, what I want us to do is to focus on the experience *as it was*, not as we think it *seems reasonable*.

- 17:43 Russ comments: Much of the DES interview (e.g., from 10:30 to 15:27 and this entire paragraph) is more about preparation for future sampling than about trying to discover the details of past samples.
- 18:12 Michael: Right. I, I think this one I feel more confident in saying it was definitely both arms. I was feeling it in both arms.
- 18:18 RTH: Okay. Okay. And then there is cold on the back of my neck and [Michael: Yes.] gasoline engine hearing.
- 18:30 Michael: Yes. Those were very minor, but they, but I, what, as best I could tell, when the beep went off and I asked myself *what was I just experiencing?* those two things were, those two things came to mind as things that were still in my experience at that time. But they, those experiences had started like, so the arm tension and the thought were very close to the beep. Like the onset of those experiences was extremely close to the beep. The onset of these experiences was earlier, and I think, I don't know how to say this, but it, they, it was fading from like, so five seconds earlier I was really paying attention to those things. But they were fading from my attention as I was turning to this other task.
- 19:15 RTH: Okay. And, and about the gasoline engine is are we, is this the *sound* of the engine? I hear...?
- 19:22 Michael: The sounds. It it's just the sound.
- 19:23 RTH: Or I'm irritated by it.
- 19:25 Michael: Well, I was initially irritated by it and then as I was walking back there, I was telling myself, *Get over it. You can't do anything about it.* And I, I think I was kind of over it at that point, but maybe not completely. cuz I was still hearing it [laughs] So it was, I wasn't so over it that it had been backgrounded to the point of not being conscious of it anymore.
- 19:45 RTH: So I'm...
- 19:45 Michael: I wasn't focused on my irritation at all at that point.
- 19:48 RTH: So at the, at the moment, at the, what I'm understanding (and the, the, and everything that I ever say is always a question what I'm asking, I'm asking for clarification)...
- 19:55 Michael: Okay.
- 19:56 RTH: ...but what, what I'm understanding is at the moment of this beep, I am hearing the gasoline engine not very saliently to me, but I'm hearing it. And the, there *had been*

irritation, and so there might have been some irritation in the way that was hearing it, but, but that was not prominent mostly at, at the moment of this beep. This is an *auditory* experience rather than a *emotionally reactive* experience. [inaudible]

20:20 Michael: I mean, this is, that, that's exactly correct. I I think that's a salient, "minorly salient" is a good way of putting it. The thing is, this is a sound that, alas, is very common in my neighborhood. Um, and so I'm used to sort of noticing it when it starts up and then trying to like, just let it fade into the background. And I was kind of in the process of letting it fade into the background. But it had not completely faded into the background at this point.

20:50 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm pretty good. Agnes, you got questions, comments?

20:56 AB: Um, uh, no, I'm, I think I'm good for now. Okay. I don't know if I have any, like, that was a lot, that was a lot of experience.

21:06 RTH: Okay. So let's move on to beep number 2. And, and Agnes, you *could* ask about it if you want it, or you could just watch me do it and, and whatever. And then sometime down the road you can say, "well, I'm ready to, I'm ready to ask...? but

21:21 AB: Okay. Well, let's hear what Michael has to say and I'll tell you if I wanna ask about it or if I want you to ask about it. [laughs]

21:26 RTH: Okay. Fair enough.

Sample 1.2 discussion starts here

21:26 Michael: Okay. So, um, these, these first three beeps, by the way, happened in pretty rapid succession, with, within 15 minutes. I would say maybe 20. I wasn't timing it, so I couldn't say for sure, but it, I know they all happened while I was chopping wood. And I know that lasted for less than half an hour. Um, anyway, that's not, that's not here or there. I'm just mentioning it for context.

21:50 RTH: Nature of random, nature of randomness.

21:52 Michael: It's a nature of randomness. Yes. [laughs] Um, I, I was, I was in the middle or in the midst anyway of chopping wood and I was singing the fourth movement, sorry, the, the, the third, the third movement Rondo of Mozart's fourth horn concerto goes, [sings] "ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba."

22:14 I, and I, I was singing at, at that moment, that's what I was singing, but I was singing other things like around it. But in, but right before the beep, that's what I was singing. And I was, whatever I was singing at any time, I was timing, like selected moments in the music with the, with events in the chopping. Like in like, uh, the, the main events would be the axehead hitting the wood or the wood crashing into the wheelbarrow. So I chop it and then I throw it into the wheelbarrow and it goes clunk into the wheelbarrow. So I was kind of timing those things with the singing, not by changing the timing of those things, but by changing the singing. So it would go, it went like something like this. So here's my ax [mimes preparation]

- went [sings] "ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba BA! ba ba ba." [mimes swing on the powerful BA]
- 23:00 AB: And I hit the wood on the BA b aba ba, on that note, and the, the beep went off almost immediately after that. And that's all that was going on. I wasn't, uh, I couldn't, I couldn't remember anything else, [laughs] except the coordin, the, the kind of mental activity of coordinating the music with the axe hit. And then I definitely was aware of the actual cooor, of the actual coincidence of that note, which happens to be a Bb. And the hitting of the axe head on the wood. That the, that I was aware of that coordination. And there was a kind of, okay, this is a little pathetic, but there was a kind of feeling of, I did it [laughs] [AB laughs] like I was success [laughs] but I didn't say those words or anything. There was just like a, a sense of satisfaction that I made it line up perfectly. That's it. That's not much, but that's what, that's what was going on.
- 24:01 AB: So it sounds like compared to your last experience, there was like, there were fewer things in your awareness this time round. Like it was the simul, the si of the chop with the music plus like that feeling of like Yes.
- 24:20 Michael: Yeah, that's, that's right. And I was aware of the sound I was making, the sound I was singing out loud. I'm, I'm pretty sure of that. Um, and of course the axe head makes a sound when it crashes into the wood and the wood makes a bit of a sound when it cracks when you hit it. So I heard all that. But the thing that was most salient to me, I like that word that Russ used earlier. The word that was most salient to me was the, the coincidence of those two sounds rather than the sounds themselves. Although I was certainly aware of the sounds. They weren't absent from experience, but I was really focused on the coincidence.
- 24:55 AB: And the coincidence took place like right in the moment before the beep.
- 25:00 Michael: Yeah. I, I went ba up, ba ba and like, I think that last note, I hadn't even finished singing that last note and the beep went off. So maybe it went off in the middle of that note, or I'm probably not good enough to discriminate where relative to that note, it went off. But it was very, very soon after the axe hit, the beep went off.
- 25:18 AB: And so in this moment, like in the previous moment that you described, you described like the tension in your arms as you were about to lift the block [Michael: Mm. Mm-hmm.] In this moment, was there also like an awareness of your body? It was just the simul...?
- 25:36 Michael: No. Okay. No, there was no awareness of that at all. I don't, I mean, I, I almost made the mistake that Russ warned me about and gave you an explanation of why there wouldn't have been. But that's irrelevant as I already learned. But I, I'm sure that there was no awareness of like my, you know, like the, the ax raising and all that. There was just the ba ba ba ba.
- 25:58 AB: Mm-hmm. And did this, the feeling of like, the Yes! feeling.

- 26:03 Michael: Yeah. So that was a slightly emotional feeling, I guess nothing major, but it was like, it was a more, it was more like just a satisfaction, like a taking satisfaction in the, in the lining up of these two things. Because I was trying to line them up. But sometimes it doesn't work out. Sometimes think, you know, your, the physical activity doesn't quite line up with the music. Usually it does, cuz I'm changing the music to make it line up, but sometimes I don't quite get it. Right. And then it's, I don't have that feeling of satisfaction. But this particular time I nailed it.
- 26:33 AB: Can you describe the feeling more precisely of satisfaction? For instance, is it like a feeling in your body, like a feeling of lightness? Or is it, um, more cognitive?
- 26:50 Michael: I think more, it's not a feeling in my body. And that's, maybe that's why I said that it wasn't exactly an emotion. Because usually when I feel emotions, they are either in or near. Actually more often they're just near my body rather than in it. But, but this was not like that. So maybe, maybe more cognitive?? But it wasn't a thought. [AB: Mm-hmm.] Like, oh, I did it or something like that. It was just this feeling. It was just this, like, it almost like, Agnes, you do sports almost. Like if you're, if you're doing a sport and you, and, and something just clicks and it happens correctly, there's that just sense that everything's clicking correctly. But there's no, there's no words that you speak to yourself. I mean, you could of course, but, but you don't *have to* speak words in that moment. It can just be the sense that everything happened as it's supposed to. [AB: Mm-hmm.]
- 27:45 But I don't, so maybe not, so maybe not emotional, exactly. But maybe it's, I don't know, maybe there's different kinds of emotion. Probably there are, but, but the kinds of emotion that I think of is like classic emotions. This is not, this didn't seem like that.
- 28:00 AB: Yeah. Part of why I'm asking am I allowed to ask, say why I'm asking, or is that not allowed either?
- 28:05 RTH: We'll see!
- 28:07 AB: Okay. Well, let me just say, I mean, part of why I'm asking is because, you know, when you drew the analogy to sports, I know *exactly* what you mean, but I've not done the pee beeper. And so I'm kind of curious to hear more about what that is, precisely, right. Because if you were to, like, when you said that, I said, yes, I know what you mean, but if you asked me the question that I just asked you, I would not be able to specify that any further. And so I'm kind of curious whether, so
- 28:35 Michael: The thing, so the thing that I can specify is that there, there, there was no, at least in my, in my recollection right, a right after the beep went off and I was thinking, *okay, what was just happening?* there was, there was no thought at that moment that the feeling of satisfaction was a bodily feeling. Mm-hmm.
- 28:55 AB: Gotcha.

- 28:56 Michael: Um, that's, that's the thing I could say with some confidence. If you were to say, was it an emotion or not, I don't know what's an emotion you tell me, and then maybe I can tell you, but it, it was not a bodily feeling.
- 29:09 RTH: So, so let me ask, ask, answer your question about whether that was a good question and, and I would say it probably wasn't a very good question. And, and here's why. So the, what I think, especially the first sampling day and, and probably many sampling days after that, is the, the object is to help us learn how to talk to each other without importing any extraneous things, so that we can, so that we can learn how to focus on this stuff without focusing on any, on any of this stuff. [AB: Mm-hmm.] So one of the things that we don't want to talk about is whether Michael and Agnes are similar. So he, he talked about Agnes has having sports and being a sports player and whatever, and, and having that kind of, that kind of experience. There's *no* reason in that, that Agnes's experience of satisfaction is the same as Michael's.
- 29:59 RTH: And so I would, I would've wanted to sort of let that slide away without, without aiming for it. So what I, what, what I would've wanted to say and, and will now say about the emotion is what I, I would, I would say is that the, the, the scientific world doesn't really know very much about emotions, from *Russ's* point of view, because I think they haven't asked carefully enough about them. And I have tried for a long time to ask carefully about them. And what I would say is that over the long haul, I would say, sometimes emotions are in the body and sometimes they're in what I call mental. (I prefer mental to cognitive, because cognitive is more analytical and mental, by mental, I just mean not in the body. I, I experience it, but it's not in the body.) And sometimes they're outside of the body as, and, and, and there is no reason I would, I would want to counsel us looking forwards to tomorrow rather than this morning or whatever, that there's no reason to think that one of those is better than the other. It's not that *real* emotion is bodily and, and mental emotion is fake or something like that. That is *not* true, I don't think. I think that different people experience emotions different ways and we, and we, we, we would want to learn how to describe it. And so there's some kind of a satisfaction and we're, we're, we're discovering that the satisfaction is not particularly bodily, but beyond that, we haven't gotten too far. And
- 31:31 Michael: Got it. So I probably shouldn't have, I probably didn't do a great job of, of trying to appeal to Agnes's experience to explain mine then.
- 31:37 RTH: Well, part of my job is to is to teach you not to do that, basically.
- 31:41 Michael: Right. Well, I'm okay. I'm learning!
- 31:42 RTH: [laughs] and, uh, and, and everybody does that. So I'm not being at all critical. That it's, that's, this is what for sampling these are, are like for me. [Michael: Okay.] But I did have, I did have some, some questions about the da da da da. [Michael: Okay.] And you have, you have mimicked that, sung that, in several different ways. One, one time, pretty much like Mozart would've written it or whatever. And one time where it was really quite at the moment of the beep was DA DA DA DA [said with

emphasis]. And another time was sort of halfway in between. So I would like to know about the, the singing at the moment of the beep.

32:17 Michael: Okay. So it was more, it was more emphasized, because now I'm, I'm gonna give you a because but I, but I was, but maybe it makes more, you can tell me not to, but I think I'm gonna try it and see. The reason is that the effort of the axe hitting when it hits, you, you, you naturally Oooh!, you kind of do that. And so it was like I was singing on da da da da da da Ooh! da da da. So it was like that.

32:42 RTH: Okay. So the, so I don't really care about the causation deal unless you, as you probably imagined, but there, but there is something that is bodily emphasized about that, [Michael: Yes.] about that note.

32:57 Michael: Mm-hmm.

33:00 RTH: And that is coordinated with the swing.

33:03 Michael: Yes. With the, well, with the, with the strike.

33:04 RTH: The contact. With the strike. With the strike.

33:06 Michael: Yes. With the

33:06 RTH: Strike. Okay.

33:12 Michael: That's pretty much all that was going on in my mind at that point. There was nothing else that I could ascertain.

33:18 RTH: Well, I guess I, I guess I wanna, I want to ask you this a little bit more about the, so, so is, do you experience this as singing, I'm singing, da, da da da, or, or as I'm hearing the horns playing, playing this,

33:35 Michael: Uh, no, this was more experienced as singing it. I, I could hear it, I could hear myself singing, but it wasn't, it was more *productive* than it was *receptive*

33:45 RTH: And productive in your voice as opposed to

33:47 Michael: In the It wasn't my voice. I was, I I am fairly certain I was singing out loud.

33:52 RTH: Okay. And, and I think it's, I think it's quite possible for people to sing in somebody else's voice or, and to sing in in a horn, in a horn. I think that's possible.

34:01 Michael: Yes. Yes.

34:02 RTH: And, and, and, and that could be a singing thing rather than a hearing thing. I mean, I can, I don't think I can, but I, but I have a sample with people who, who can, who who can sing in other people's voices.

34:15 Michael: And uh, I can do that, but that's not what I was doing.

34:19 RTH: Okay. So this is, I am, I am singing this portion of the horn concerto, synced up with the, with the windup and the pitch here. And at the moment of the beep, I am or have just in made, made coordinated contact and feel some satisfaction in having done it.

34:39 Michael: That's, that sounds like a good description to me.

34:45 RTH: Okay. I'm ready to go on to number 3 if [inaudible].

Sample 1.3 discussion starts here

34:48 Michael: Okay, so number 3 is still chopping. Actually, I just finished chopping. Uh, I had just put the gloves away, uh, and I raised my arms above my head. This is all right before the beep, or. well, this is right before, right before the beep. And then the right before the beep was, two things happened at once. I was, I put, I had put my arms down and I had felt, while my arms were up, I had felt a kind of pleasant tiredness in my arms. Not the kind of tiredness to feel like at the end of a marathon where you wanna die, but just kind of the pleasant tiredness of having done some work. And what I, that, that was before the moment before the beep. And then the moment before the beep, I had just put my arms down and the pleasant feeling was still, (you're not gonna like this) but the pleasant feeling was up still up here. But it was, but it was *about* my arms. But the, the, the, so the, it was up here, but it, it was almost as if this is, this is not, I didn't think this thought, but I'm struggling to convey to you what the feeling was like. That it's almost as if the pleasantness was here. And when I put my arms down, it stayed here. It didn't follow my arms down. So that was one thing that was happening. I know you're gonna ask me about that.

36:12 But, um, the other thing that was happening was I had just heard, uh, a wheelie bin, one of the trash cans, rolling, and it makes a kind of very characteristic, low rumbling sound. So I knew that's what it was. And I also had detected that it was the new neighbor across the street. It's a graduate student, but I hadn't actually seen this person. So I peeked over the top of my fence, not surreptitiously, it's just my fence is right about here [holds hand just below eye level], so I can only see just over it. And what I, what I noticed about my experience at that moment, cuz the beep happened almost immediately after I peeked over the fence, was that this person, I didn't register very much about them, but I did see they had a giant head of red hair, so that it's the giant head of red (well, the head wasn't giant, but the hair was giant). So I noticed that. So I, so I was feeling the pleasantness and I was seeing red hair.

37:08 RTH: Okay. So about the pleasantness. Well, I guess first off, are these more or less equally as far as your experience is concerned? Two equal threads?

37:15 Michael: Yeah, I think, I think, yeah, I think so. Yeah.

37:17 RTH: Then let's do the, let's do the pleasantness. So the, I'm gathering that the pleasantness is up there, even though your arms are down here. [Michael: Mm-

hmm.] And is it, is it the pleasantness that's up there? Or is it the feeling, does it still feel like my arms are up there? My arms...

37:35 Michael: No, I know. No, my arms don't feel like they're up there. But there's something up there that's, I, I know this sounds bizarre, but there's something up there that's about my arms, about the pleasantness of my arms. And they're now no longer. Go ahead.

37:50 RTH: So the, or, originally the pleasantness was a muscular achy...

37:56 Michael: Yes.

37:57 RTH: mild, mild ache or something. [Michael: Yeah, something like that.] Tiredness. Muscular tiredness. [Michael: Yes.] Is the muscular tiredness still up there? Or is the muscular tiredness [inaudible]

38:06 Michael: No, the muscular tire, the muscular tiredness has faded from my awareness. But the, but the feeling of it is up here, and the feeling of it is still like about the muscular tiredness. But I'm now thinking about the feeling of muscular tiredness instead of the muscular tiredness itself. [RTH: Okay.] I don't know if that distinction makes any sense.

38:28 AB: And can I ask a question to clarify? And I don't know, this may be a bad question, I don't know. Um, but I'm gonna try, um, previous to the moment, right before the beep was the feeling of muscular tiredness and the pleasantness, were they in the same place in your arms? [Michael: Yes.] And then...

38:46 Michael: It was all, it was all up here. My arms went down and the pleasantness was still up here, but the pleasantness was about, it wasn't about what was happening up here. It was about my arms.

38:46 Russ comments: AB wondered whether her 38:28 questions was bad. It is not Russ that judges whether a question is good or bad; a question is good to the extent that it helps Michael described experience directly. Here, Michael's 38:46 turn is indeed aimed directly at his experience. Ergo, AB's 38:28 was a good question.

39:04 RTH: That's, so we have established that the, the muscular tiredness and the pleasantness are two separate things. [Michael: Yes.] That they both existed a second before the beep, but at the beep, the only thing that exists experientially is the pleasantness. [Michael: Yes.] That's, and that pleasantness is up here,

39:23 Michael: Is up there.

39:24 RTH: It's not like my pleasantness is in mentally or whatever aimed it up there. It's...

39:29 Michael: No, it, it was up, it was up, it was up here almost in the same way that if you hear a sound in the environment, you, you kind of, I guess echo-locate to where it is

39:41 RTH: Sound. The sound is over there.

39:42 Michael: The sound is over there. That's exactly the, that's exactly what I would say about the pleasantness. It was right... (Uh, now I'm looking at myself. You can't see where my hand is), but above my head.

39:55 RTH: Okay. Okay, then I think I'm good about that portion of it. You happy with that, Agnes?

40:02 AB: Yeah.

40:03 RTH: Okay. And then I, I *have* looked over the fence, or am I *still* looking over the fence?

40:12 Michael: I was, when the beep went off, I was still looking over. I had just looked over and I was still looking.

40:17 RTH: So, and, and what I see is a shock of red hair. [Michael: Correct.] Big, big red hair.

40:22 Michael: Yes. And there was some other vague stuff. I mean, I was aware that it was, that hair was attached to a body. There was an automobile, sort of somehow there. But that was very much in the background. What I was totally focused on visually was the red hair.

40:37 RTH: And, and the red hair is big. And is my experience of *big red hair*, or is my experience of *red hair* or is my experience of *red*?

40:50 Michael: I think big red hair is the right description. It was the, the, the hair-ness mattered. It wasn't just the redness.

40:57 RTH: Okay.

40:59 AB: And were you seeing also, like, was your experience big red hair plus fuzzy stuff around it? Was it like big red hair, nothing else? I mean, like, what was, um, what was...

41:17 Michael: More like the more like the first I was, I was definitely aware of the fact that this person was kind of facing a car, maybe their car, but I don't really know, really know. Um, so I had some very minor awareness of like the, their position of their body and space and its orientation, its directedness towards the car. I didn't look long enough to know whether they were getting in it or whatever, but they were definitely, it definitely looked like they were directed towards it. But that was all very much in the background. I, I, it was there. I, I, I knew, I knew that I was seeing it and I recalled seeing it, but it was the *hair* that was really grabbing like 98% of my visual attention. But it wasn't, it wasn't an experience of like hair with nothing around it. It wasn't *that*. It was, the stuff was there, but it was very much kind of, you know, um, uh, you know, figure background kind of a thing, right. So the everything else was background. It wasn't absent, but it was backgrounded and the hair was very much the thing that I was noticing.

- 42:29 RTH: Okay. So I would say about that question, Agnes, I, that's a worrisome question for me because it encourages people to talk about things which are minor. Michael is pretty good about that by saying, you know, it's pretty, pretty minor. 2% maybe, but, but not everybody is. And so it's the philosopher's question about rich experience or whatever. And then.... [Michael: Right.]
- 42:56 AB: So you don't, we're not supposed to ask. So what was wrong with the question was asking about like, okay, my memory of, um, what Michael had said about the big red hair, um, was like, I looked over the fence and I saw the big red hair. And so my question was trying to get at what that meant precisely. But is the problem that I was emphasizing, um, stuff that he didn't say in his experience and, and we should only pick out what he said?
- 43:36 RTH: That's a little bit of an oversimplification. What, what I think you wanna do is to not encourage him to say anything about what was outside of his experience. I thought your question pushed a little bit in the direction of, *well, there's gotta be some other details there. Tell me about those other details.* When it would've the art of the question, it would've been to ask. *So you're seeing hair, is there, is there anything, is there anything else? Or is this just about the hair?* To, to make it an even an even handed and then if he wants to say, well, yeah, what, what your
- 44:16 AB: Too much,
- 44:17 RTH: Your, well your question, and Michael, Michael's a good, a good participant in this because your question caused him to talk about some details and then to work back, work *against* those details and say, well, you know, it wasn't really that it was only 90%, 98% or whatever the art is to not make him have to work against himself. [AB: Gotcha.] That's the,
- 44:39 Michael: Yeah, Agnes! Don't make me work against myself! [they laugh]
- 44:42 RTH: Sorry Michael, I'm, I won't make you work against yourself.
- 44:48 Michael: I'm learning as well. I'm joking, obviously.
- 44:53 RTH: Well, shall we go into number 3? 4. Number 4?

Michael skipped a sample

- 44:55 Michael: Number 4. Okay. So chopping is done. I came into the department. Um, I thought I was gonna wear it. So this is the other thing that maybe I should have said at the beginning, but I, I waited to say it now. I was gonna wear it during a meeting, and I started to wear it during the meeting. And then the meeting got tense and hairy, and it actually went off. I had forgotten that it was wearing it, it went off during the meeting. And I, I was in the middle of, I, I couldn't be, I couldn't deal with it at that moment. [RTH: Fair enough.] So I shut it off and set it aside, and I just ignored that particular episode. I couldn't tell you what I was thinking anyway. I was too wrapped

up in doing the thinking to be aware of what I was thinking. [RTH: Fair enough.] And, um, and then I turned it back on after the meeting. So the, the last three beeps are an hour separated. There's an hour of nothing between the first three beeps and the last three beeps while I was trying to deal with this difficult situation. Um, so that's the context.

45:57 RTH: So that's a, that's a perfectly legitimate thing to do. I'm happy that you did that. I would, I would say it could be that after you get more skilled at the process, that then you could, you could split off enough of yourself to notice what it was like to be dealing with that difficult situation and come back to it later.

46:11 Michael: Maybe so, maybe so I was, was too wrapped up in it in the moment.

46:14 RTH: And, and maybe not. But what I, I just want to keep that as an open [Michael: Okay.] open question. If this, if, if it, if it feels like you can't deal with it, then don't deal with it. I, that's the,

46:25 Michael: Okay, that's noted.

46:29 RTH: So we're gonna call, we'll call this beep number 4. Even though there was a beep number 4 that we skipped.

Sample 1.4 discussion starts here

46:33 Michael: There was a beep number 4 that I have no information except what I've already told you. Okay. Um, and I didn't write anything down. I'm just telling you now from my memory. [RTH: Fair enough.] Um, so after the meeting, I actually almost forgot to start it up, but I saw it on my desk and put it all back on and, and started wearing it. And I was just doing some random email and whatever. It was a little while before the beep went off, and I was still sort of trying to come down from this tense meeting. And I turned and looked out my window. (It's, it's shut right now because it's so bright that the camera, it messes the camera up, but it was open at the time that the blinds were up.)

47:18 And I was looking across the way at, um, uh, at a, a house that's directly across from my window. Um, and so now if you thought the last one was weird, okay, so what happened was something that I call, don't, don't, don't run with this thought, I'll explain it. But what I call "magic mind" are you, do you know the magic eye things? Like, it's like an image and you look at it and you have to let your eyes kind of relax. And then I think what's happening actually is that they're refocusing at a different focal length somehow, and then some image just kind of pops out. It's usually three dimensional in nature and it kind of just appears [RTH: Right.] there for you. I love those things, by the way. But anyway, um, so, so I, I have an experience that's like that quite often, like at least once a month, sometimes more, that I call a magic mind. It's so, obviously it's not your eyes relaxing at this point. It's your mind relaxing.

48:20 And what's happening is, as I, as I explain it to myself, all this of course is prefatory to me telling you what the actual experience was, is I, I think of it as your mind stops trying to categorize the world or like take the perceptual information

and turn it into concepts or something like that and just like, lets it come in. Um, and I was doing that because, not on purpose, but I was trying to calm down from this meeting. So I was just staring out the window and trying to relax and calm down and the magic mind thing happened. So here's what, so that's all prefatory.

48:59 Here's the actual experience. I was looking at this building. It's a, not a building really, it's a house. It's an old house, but it's part, it's like some campus office. I have no idea what it is. And I, I know I'm a hundred feet from it, but I still don't know what it is. Um, and so I'm looking at that. And then, magic eye-like an, like a copy of that house appears in front of it. Um, so you can still, you can see both at this point. You can see the, the copy of the house that somehow has popped out in front of it, but you can also see the house in the background. And then what happened just before the beep, the house, oh, I'm making a sign with my hands, but you can't see my hands. So, so here's the house and here's the copy of the house. I'm doing it for you as if you're me now. And the copy of the house kind of comes out like this kind of comes out like this, and then it turns upwards towards the sky and it, I didn't have this thought, but, but, uh, it, well, no, I'll just say, I'll just say what I said to myself and I can explain it later if you want. As it was turning up towards the sky, I said, "the house is doing yoga." And then the beeper went off

50:20 Again, this is one where I'm not sure if it went off in the middle of that. This was definitely words like it, it was not like the thing we were talking about earlier where maybe it was all present at once or maybe there words, maybe there weren't words. There were words that were being produced speech-like in that order, "the house is doing yoga." And somewhere in the middle of that, maybe at the very end, maybe in the middle, definitely not before it, the beeper went off. But I def, I finished that sentence. It's possible that I finished it. It's possible that the last word or the last syllable or something happened after the beep. I'm not really sure where the exact moment of the beep was, but it was somehow roughly coincident with "the house is doing yoga."

51:07 The yoga part was, cuz it looked like the sun salutation, [laughs] there's a part of that, that's a yoga exercise where you lay on the ground and you push, you push the top of your body kind of up and look towards the sky as much as you can. And it was like the house was doing that, but then the beeper went off and I, and I looked at the beeper and the whole, the whole scene fell apart.

51:27 AB: Can I ask about the magic mind? If you're done, explain it.

51:32 Michael: I'm, that's as much as I know to say for now. So yes.

51:35 AB: Um, so you, when you, in your preamble to what the magic mind phenomenon is, you said something like, it's *like* the magic eye, but with your mind. But

51:46 Michael: Then the relaxing part, I, I mean the relaxing part is like your mind. It's visual. It's a visual experience.

51:52 AB: Okay. That's what I...

51:52 Michael: But I mean instead of your eyes relaxing, [AB: Okay.] I think of it, this is my total post-hoc way of thinking about it. Who knows if this is right? I could be totally

making stuff up here. I'm not making up the visual aspect of it. That's, that was, that happened. But my whole account of like what's going on could be complete nonsense. But the way I think of it is your mind stops trying to categorize things and then stuff starts to appear in the same way that it starts to appear in the magic eye ex the magic eye experience.

52:24 AB: Okay. I mean,

52:25 Michael: Whether that, whether that explanation has anything to do with anything, who knows. But what definitely happens is the second house appears much in the way that the magic-eye image appears. Um, but then I guess this is different cuz the magic eye images, at least in my experiences, don't move around. But this one moved around, it sort of did that tilting thing.

52:46 RTH: So Ag, Agnes, let me encourage, let me encourage you to ask what his experience was at the moment of the beep and not to care about his preamble.

52:54 AB: Well, well actually what I was gonna ask,

52:56 Michael: I probably shouldn't have said the preamble. Sorry,

52:57 AB: Michael cut me off. I think because what I, I mean I was gonna a, I mean the pr what I was gonna ask was whether the experience was a visual one. [Michael: Okay. Yes.] Um, and so the reason <inaudible>, the preamble is because in the preamble it sounded as though Michael was describing (at least the way I interpreted) was about to describe this imit, this experience as not a visual one. [Michael: I see.] So I was trying to clarification clarifi about whether the, the house doing that thing was a visual experience. That's what I was gonna ask.

52:27 Russ comments: RE RTH (52:46) "let me encourage you to ask what his experience was at the moment of the beep and not to care about his preamble"

AB's real interest, as she explains in 52:57, was "whether the ... house doing that thing was a visual experience." That is an interest in the phenomenon of Michael's experience, and AB has every right to explore that. A directly center-of-the-target way of inquiring about that phenomenon would have been to ask "Was the house doing that thing a visual experience?"

But the question AB asked (51:35) was "in your preamble to what the magic mind phenomenon is, you said something like, it's *like* the magic eye, but with your mind." That question is about Michael's *metaphor*, or about his *explanation*, or about his *theory*, and is *not* about (or at least not *directly* about) Michael's experiential phenomena, and as a result, Michael wandered off to refine his magic-eye metaphor (e.g. 52:55 "the magic eye images, at least in my experiences, don't move around").

So in my view, AB's 51:35 question was a mix of requests for theory / explanation / description, and I think that is risky, because theory and explanation are (I think) Siren's calls. But mostly I think it is a bad question because (as discussed in the comment at 38:46) Michael's subsequent talk is *not* about his directly apprehended experience.

DES interviewing is to a large extent differentiating between description and all else, and sticking to the description of the experienced phenomena. Once the phenomena are securely understood, *then* (and only then) might it be of value to theorize.

To recap: **About the apprehended experience**—Is this house thing something that you see? Yes. Tell me what you see? It comes toward me and then goes up and tilts backward, and when it tilts backward I can see that it is thin.

About the metaphor / theory—How does the magic eye apply to this experience? The magic eye is not in motion.

53:31 Michael: Okay. And I'm sorry, I shouldn't have given the preamble. I just felt, I don't know if some, something deep in my soul said, you have to say this first, but I probably shouldn't have listened to that. But it was definitely a visual experience. There's no question about that. I was looking out the window and there it was.

53:31 Russ comments: RE "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have given the preamble. I just felt, I don't know if some, something deep in my soul said, you have to say this first, but I probably shouldn't have listened to that."

Notice that (I think) I have *not* criticized Michael for what he has said or not said, here or elsewhere. I have criticized *AB* for *asking about* the preamble (e.g., 52:46), but I did *not* criticize *Michael* for *giving* the preamble in the first place. Why the difference?

I think I don't have the skill or the ability to instruct Michael in the best way to go about describing his experience. If he feels (deep in his soul, as here, or superficially) that he needs to give a preamble (or some other explanation), I think it would be highly presumptuous of me to think that it would be better for Michael to decline to honor that. I can tell Michael what I am interested in (e.g., that I am more interested in a straightforward description than in an explanation) but I don't think I can tell him how to do it.

I think of it as a chasm: Michael operates on his side of the chasm and I operate on my side, and I fundamentally, absolutely can't fathom the details of his side. So I have *not* told Michael what to do: He asked if he should tell me the time of the beep; I replied to do so if that seems natural. What should he write in the notebook? Whatever seems to help him. Should he wear the beeper while he's meditating? If he thinks it is a good idea. And so on. I don't know what is best for Michael, and I decline to tell him what is best for him.

What I *can* do is to operate cleanly on my side. I am genuinely, legitimately, devotedly interested in Michael's experience, and I convey that to Michael with all the skill I can muster. Metaphorically speaking, I can come right up to my edge of the chasm and say "Michael, *over here* I am sincerely interested in your experience."

Then, it is up to Michael to choose, to figure out, to test, to consider what he should do: should he try to satisfy (what he takes to be) Russ's interest? Should he try to shape Russ's interest? Should he decline to participate? All that is on Michael's side of the chasm.

Russ has *not* told Michael how to operate, because (a) Russ doesn't know, but also (b) because even if he did know, he doesn't want Michael to be considering Russ's rules for proceeding—that would be Michael attending to Russ's rules rather than to Michael's experience. What Russ has done is to be genuinely interested in

Michael's experience and genuinely to try to convey that interest. That is Russ operating on Russ's side of the chasm. It might appeal to Michael to assist Russ as best he can, but that is Michael's operation on Michael's side of the chasm.

Russ can tell Michael how he understands what Michael is saying—that is Russ describing what is happening on his side of the chasm. And if Michael doesn't like how Russ characterizes what Michael said, then Michael can try something else.

Sooner or later, Michael's talk may consist of less context, less metaphor, less explanation. But that will *not* be because Russ has asked him to speak less about those things. That asking would be counterproductive, because it would focus Michael on Russ-wants-less-context, on Russ-wants-less-metaphor, on Russ-wants-less explanation; that is, it would focus Michael on Russ's rules rather than on Michael's experience. To the extent that there is such a focus, we will be distracted from what Russ really wants, which is a faithful glimpse of Michael's experience. So Russ has said, consistently (I think), that he is genuinely interested in Michael's inner experience. And it may come to pass that Michael will become more interested in, more skilled at apprehending and describing his inner experience.

AB, on the other hand, operates (from the standpoint of Michael's experience) on *Russ's* side of the chasm. Russ wants to keep his side of the chasm cleanly conveying a genuine interest in Michael's directly apprehended experience, and not to dilute or pollute that conveyance with anything that might appear to be an interest in Michael's metaphors or theories. So Russ feels the need to "encourage [AB] to ask what [Michael's] experience was at the moment of the beep and not to care about" anything else.

When it is Agnes's turn to wear the beeper, Russ will not be telling her how to do it, because he won't know what to tell her. He will convey to her that he is genuinely interested in her experience, and he knows some things about how to convey that genuine interest, and all that is on his side of the chasm.

53:50 RTH: So do you wanna ask further about this, Agnes, or, or you want me to ask about

53:54 AB: This? Um,

53:55 RTH: This is sort of "your beep" if we go ultimately back and forth.

53:58 AB: On that [laughs] Well, yeah, yeah. I, I kind of do wanna ask further about this, so [: Mm-hmm.] Um, in the experience of like the house doing that, like was, um, the house that was moving,

54:12 Michael: It wasn't the whole house, by the way. [AB: Okay.] It was just the facade of the house.

54:17 AB: Okay.

54:18 Michael: So I'm looking out the window, I'm turning here as if I could see it, but my blinds are closed, but I'm looking out the window and there's, and there's a house. It's a white house. But of course I can't see the whole house. I just see the facade of the house. And then what appears in front of it is another facade, but it's a copy of the original.

54:36 AB: And so when...

54:37 Michael: The, but then the facade sort of does this, it's almost like there's, it's when the facade turns up like this, you, it doesn't reveal like the backside of the house or something like that. It's *only* the facade that does that

54:51 AB: Reminds me of the fake barns. [laughs]

54:54 Michael: Oh yeah. I never thought about that, but yes.

54:57 AB: Um, but, um, so when the facade does that, is your experience, like there's like perspective there? Like it's the same, the facade of the house that's doing that.

55:14 Michael: It's, it's almost exactly as if, except there's a kind of translucency to it. Because you can see through, you can see the other, you can see the house behind it. [AB: Mm-hmm.] So it's not like it's occluding the stuff behind it. [AB: Okay.] Um, but it's, it's almost as if, maybe *exactly* as if actually, it were like a facade painted onto a canvas or something, and then you just took the canvas and went like that. [gestures rising and leaning back]

55:42 AB: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

55:45 Michael: It's not, yeah. And there's nothing more to it. It's not like there's a backside when you go like this, you can see [AB: Mm-hmm.] like the back wall or something like that. It's just the, it's just the front turning like this.

55:56 AB: Mm-hmm. And when, um, so you have this visual thing going on [Michael: Mm-hmm.] And then you have the words, "the house is doing yoga."

56:10 Michael: Yeah. That was just like my joke to myself. But

56:13 AB: Yeah. Is that, um, what's the timing of that relative to like, is it like "the house is doing yoga" or is it... [mimes movement synchronized to the words]

56:23 Michael: No, it was, it was, it was pretty slow. The, the, the tilting, it wasn't like it just went like that it, it, it does this. And so it was pretty well on the way when I said, "oh, the house is doing yoga." I didn't say, oh, I didn't, I only said "the house is doing yoga." [AB: Mm-hmm.] And then the beep went off, like either in the middle of that or right after it or something like that. And that, that broke the whole experience up, cuz I looked down at the beeper to shut it off.

56:50 AB: Hmm.

56:51 Michael: Um, I don't have enough experience with yet to be able to just find it and press the button. I still have to look for the button and press it. So I stopped looking at the house and looked at the beeper to shut it off. And then of course I pulled out the notebook, et cetera, and the whole house experience was gone.

57:10 AB: I don't know if, okay. Russ, I'm sorry if this is a bad question, but I'm gonna ask it and you can tell me. Um, was there like a feeling, I mean, in again, in the preamble, you mentioned that the magic eye, um, analogy was about your mind relaxing. Was there also in like, were you meaning to describe in addition to the visual experience and then the sentence, was there also like a quality of relaxed mind or something that you were experiencing?

57:10 Russ comments: I think this is a risky question because by asking about the details of the metaphor (which this question does), it invites Michael to believe or extend or reify those details. Suppose Michael says "Yes, my mind relaxed just like in the metaphor." I think you have not learned anything, because you will not know whether you have led him to focus on the metaphor and thereby reify it (regardless of his experience), or whether at the moment of the beep he actually experienced a relaxing mind.

If AB had asked a directly-about-experience question such as "Were there any other characteristics of your experience at the moment of the beep? Maybe bodily experience, or mental sensations, or whatever—I'm not saying there should be, but if there were, I'd like to hear about them." and *then* Michael had said "Yes, my mind felt relaxed," *then* AB would have learned something potentially important, and she could have followed up on it.

That is, I'm fine with AB's filing away the details of metaphorical or theoretical talk, and later trying to explore the experiential ramifications. But I'm not going to believe anything she or Michael says if she/they are focused on the metaphor / theory rather than on the experience. I think reifying metaphor and theory is far too seductive an endeavor, and any hint of it is problematic to him.

57:44 Michael: I think that the joke that I made to myself either was the result of having relaxed a bit or, or helped the relaxation. I'm not sure which. I wasn't really thinking about that at the time. So this is me reconstructing, but I was definitely trying to relax. Like, the whole point of this whole thing was I was looking out the window trying to calm myself down. And I, I don't think I was actually thinking about that in the moment though. I was just looking at the house. I wasn't thinking, *oh, you need to calm down.* [AB: Mm-hmm.] I, I had, I had engaged in that because I wanted to calm down. [AB: Mm-hmm.] But I wasn't in the moment thinking, *oh, you need to calm down. Oh, you're calming down. Oh, good thing you're calming down.* Or anything like that. I was just looking at the house and that I had this experience and maybe the fact that I was able to joke about it indicates that I had calmed down. I don't know. But, but I, but none of that was in my mind, it was just the house is doing yoga and, but it was, it was funny to me. So I was saying it as a kind of joke. I mean, I knew the house wasn't doing yoga, of course, it was just kind of funny. [AB: Mm-hmm.] But although I didn't laugh out loud, but it was kind of a, just a, felt like a kind of a funny thing to say to yourself.

59:00 RTH: So let me, let me make a comment about good questions and bad questions because the, it's not that Russ is the arbiter of what is a good question. The way you tell whether a question is a good question is by looking at the answer. And if the answer helps Michael describe experience at the moment of the beep, *directly at his experience at the moment of the beep*, it was a good question. If it causes him to

talk about anything, anything else other than that. And then it wasn't a good question. That's a, it's a it's really that simple. And so if you wanna find out whether, whether your questions are good, ask good questions or, or what, don't ask Russ. Look and look and see what Michael does afterwards. And if, and if he tells you, if he's telling you about his experience, then it was a good question.

59:42 RTH: In this particular case, I think he wasn't telling you much about his experience. He was telling you more about, well, it could have been that it could have been this and maybe this or whatever. So I would say it probably wasn't a good question. But it isn't because Russ thinks it's a bad question. It's because Michael didn't tell, tell me more, much more about his experience.

1:00:00 So let me ask a different kind of question and we'll see what, we'll, we'll, we'll, we'll see what the, what this does. So I've got an understanding that I'm seeing the real house and I'm seeing an imaginary version of the facade of the house that maybe we could call an image of the house? Is that, is that,

1:00:20 Michael: Yeah, that can be an image, but it's not a mental, it's not an interior image. It's out there in the world.

1:00:25 RTH: Okay. So I see, I see. So maybe image isn't a good... I see a flat-ish?

1:00:38 Michael: It's flat. It's like, it's just like the, it's just like the facade. So the facade is flat, more or less. And the, it's like, it's like it starts, this happened before the beep, so this is not part of the experience, but it's like it starts coincident with the actual facade and then it pops out a little bit.

1:01:00 RTH: And by pops out, do you mean it, it feels like this imagined facade comes towards me?

1:01:06 Michael: Yes.

1:01:08 RTH: And then rotates upwards. [Michael: Correct.] And as it rotates upwards, it is just the flatty, [Michael: Yes.] there's, there's nothing. When it rotates, then there's nothing left to it.

1:01:19 Michael: Well, it never rotated that far. But I, I imagine if it did rotate that far, then I guess there'd be nothing left. But that's okay. But it didn't get that far.

1:01:19 Russ comments: Exercise for the reader: Compare Michael's talk in response to AB's question (57:44) to his talk in response to RTH's question (1:00:20 – 1:01:19). To what degree does each reveal Michael's experience? To what degree is each concerned with metaphor or theory? Jot down your notes about this exercise before you look at my answer, which I will give at the end of this interview.

1:01:27 RTH: And

Agnes has to leave

1:01:28 AB: I'm sorry, I, I, I have to like, I have to go now. I just looked at the time to make it to the next thing. So, um, sorry to be so abrupt, but you can keep going obviously. I'm just gonna,

1:01:39 RTH: So I'll finish this beep. You're gonna, you're gonna leave then we're at, we're at, at an hour, and then we will by email, figure out when we're gonna do it next time.

1:01:47 AB: Sounds good. Sounds good. Okay. Sorry to have to leave so soon. Bye.

1:01:50 RTH: Okay. See you. So I think we're close to, we're close to the end of this experience anyway, so, okay. So I, I did want to comment about, you said it was "translucent" or

1:02:06 Michael: Yeah, it was some somewhat trans, that's a hard one actually.

1:02:09 RTH: What I, what I, I would like to say, I would like to say or ask about that is: Just because you can see through something doesn't mean that the see that the thing that you can see through is transparent [inaudible]

1:02:19 Michael: Okay, that's a helpful statement. Because what the thing is, I, I, okay, I, all right. You just clarified something for me. So I was wanting to call it translucent because I could also see the house behind it.

1:02:31 RTH: That's what I understood you to be saying.

1:02:32 Michael: But I don't, I, it wasn't translucent in the sense I didn't ha it didn't, it wasn't like, it wasn't see-through. [laughs] [RTH: Okay.] It wasn't like if someone had painted this on a piece of acetate film or something like that. It was solid, but somehow I could also see through it.

1:02:32 Russ comments: I think Michael and RTH are doing a very good job of zeroing in on Michael's experience. They have discovered that Michael's use of "translucent" is not entirely correct, and they have refined what Michael was trying to convey by using that word. DES is *not* about the words; DES accepts that people's use of words is often (usually or maybe always) an approximation. Michael used the word "translucent" as a gesture that conveys *I'm trying to tell you something about my experience that is in the ballpark of "translucent."* DES is about trying to grok the experience that is (imperfectly) conveyed by words. Michael and Russ have discovered that when Michael gestured "translucent" here, he really intended to gesture "It was solid, but somehow I could also see through it." Good!

1:02:48 RTH: Okay. And, and that I think is a quite common thing in the sense that there's two, what you, what you, what I, what I understand you to be saying is I've got two visual organizations here that are going out in the same... And I can see the real house and I can see the imagined facade house. And they're both in the same place. They're both in the same orientation for me. They're both right out there. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] And one does not interfere with the other, which it would have to be in the real world, one would've to be translucent or something. [RTH: Right. Right.] But in

the imagined world, in the world of imagination, that all I have to have is two organ organized, two organized ways of seeing.

1:02:48 Russ comments: It will turn out that RTH's use of *imagined* is not faithful to Michael's experience. Michael and RTH will refine this usage below. This is another example of the general principle that DES is not about the words; it is an acceptance that in DES, words are gestures that exist in the realm the attempt to discover something with fidelity about experience.

1:03:26 Michael: Right. The only, the only thing I would Yeah. That, that's super helpful. The only thing I would say is (and maybe this is just a terminological thing), I, I wouldn't use the word *imagination* to describe what was happening in part, [RTH: Okay.] cuz I, I wasn't controlling it. Um, so if you said, imagine this, I wouldn't be able to necessarily. I'm, but also I, I've, I think maybe we're gonna learn something different about this as we go, but I think that my internal visual, imaginative experience is next to nothing. Like, so, so when people say things like, "imagine a beach," I'll say, okay, I'm imagining a beach. And then they'll say something like, "was the wind blowing?" or "was it wavy?" I have no idea. Like, I wasn't actually imagining a beach. I just said, "I'm imagining a beach." And when they asked that question, then I had to make up some answer to it, but it wasn't *there* when they said it. And I, and if I just close my eyes and say, like, imagine something, imagine a cat. I, I have no picture. It's just all I'm seeing is the inside of my eyelids.

1:04:32 RTH: So,

1:04:33 Michael: But, but yeah. So go ahead.

1:04:35 RTH: So I'm *seeing* a house and I'm *seeing* the facade of a house. Do I know that one of them is the real house and one of them is a creation of mine?

1:04:48 Michael: If you had asked me that question in the moment, I would've been able to answer it correctly. That was not a thought that was in my mind. I was not making that distinction in the moment. So I wasn't thinking, oh, one of these is real and one of these is somehow made up. But if you, if you were next to me and I said to you, "oh, there's a facade that's doing yoga," you, and, and you asked me, well, is that real? I, I would've known that the answer to that question is no. But the, but the, there's no sense in which... They, they present themselves as equally real.

1:05:26 RTH: Okay. That, that's really what my question is about. I, I certainly was not asking whether there was a meta thought that some cognitive theorist would say, there has to be one or whatever. I don't, I don't believe that. I don't believe that stuff. Were they, did, do they both appear to you at that moment, *in the moment*, do they seem equally real?

1:05:52 Michael: Yes. That there's nothing phenomenologically different about them with respect to their degree of reality. It, but I mean, I, I hesitate when I, after, right after I say that, because I am very confident that if you were standing next to me and I were to report to you my experience, and you said, "well, is one of those real and one of

those not real?" I would've said, "correct. One of those is real one's not real." But there's no, no sense in which that thought was in my head. And there's no sense in which like, the phenomenology of it would've, would present...it didn't present itself as less real or unreal or anything like that. But I *know* that's not, I'd be like, I know the world isn't populated with two dimensional facades that move around like that. So in some sense I knew it wasn't real, but it certainly, yeah, the best I can say is it does not present itself as unreal.

1:06:48 RTH: Okay. And that, and that's the, that's the question that I am, that I was asking. [Michael: Okay.] And, and I think we're gonna have to learn how to talk to each other about that, because that's, it's an important, important kind of a deal.

1:07:04 Michael: I'm learning. Yeah. I mean, I, I can see the, the difficulty of it, but I, I feel like I'm *starting* to learn at least.

1:07:11 RTH: The, the que the question is at the moment of the beep, do these things both seem equally real? As, as it's presented in the moment? And, and, and we have, we have established that there's a whole lot of stuff that's out there, that's going on. We had a conversation about this last time, and now we've had some conversations about that this time, this time as well. [Michael: Hmm.] So there, there are ways that you can infer that this is not real or whatever, [Michael: Right.] but that's different from the experience in the moment.

1:07:41 Michael: Yeah. No, in the experience in the moment, they're just as real as each other. It's just all I'm, yeah. I'm just saying that I, I would've been able to make the correct inference if I had been, if I had posed the question to myself or if someone had posed it to me. But neither of those things happened.

1:07:41 Russ comments: That is a beautifully stated characterization of a fundamentally important distinction. The façade is not *imagined*. It is *seen* as real, even though if some *analysis* were applied (which was *not* being applied in the moment) it could be correctly identified as being not real.

1:07:57 RTH: Okay. Then I think that's good. Then the other part of the, the, the other part of this experience is the, uh, "the house is doing yoga." [Michael: Right.] And we've established, these are words in order. But we haven't established whether they're in, in a voice. Are is, are you,

1:08:14 Michael: They're in my voice, for sure.

1:08:16 RTH: Are... So are you saying this?

1:08:18 Michael: So this is a difficult thing and I, I don't know if I'm gonna get any better at this part, cuz it's been a struggle for years. The answer is I don't know. But it was so, so I, I have difficulty telling the difference between those two things. Between speaking out loud and speaking internally in my own voice. They both sound out loud to me. It, they're very difficult for me to distinguish those things unless I am, unless I'm preemptively paying attention. If I pay attention, I can tell the difference. And when

it's important, like right now, like I'm paying attention to the fact I, I'm paying attention and like I'm, I'm literally paying attention to this part of my body [strokes his lower face and jaw] to *know* that I'm speaking out loud. And once I get on a roll, I don't have to keep paying attention. Like, I, once I get in the mode of *this is out loud speaking*, I don't, I won't accidentally slip into talking to myself, but thinking I'm out loud.

1:09:16 But at the beginning of the process, I have to consciously say, "this is out loud," or "this is not out loud." And I, I certainly wasn't paying attention to that in the moment. I was by myself, which is a, which is a time when I *don't* pay attention to that. I just let myself do whatever happens. And if I talk out loud and people think I'm weird, whatever. Um, and so it could have been out loud. It, it could have been *literally* out loud like I'm speaking right now, or it could have just been all internal. But the experience of it is out loud either way.

1:09:16 Russ comments: Michael here is not answering the question that RTH intended. (This is very common in DES, and ubiquitous in everyday conversation as well.) RTH's question (1:08:16) was "Are you saying this?" by which he was trying to draw the distinction between *saying* and *hearing*. That is, a fuller rendition of his question would be "Are you saying this or are you hearing this?" However, Michael understood RTH's question as if the fuller rendition was "Are you saying this aloud or silently?"

This is another example of DES is not about the words, that words are gestures that have imperfect or ambiguous significations. This is by no means a criticism of either Michael or RTH; it is merely an explicit acceptance of the imperfection of human communication.

RTH will refine his question in the upcoming turns.

1:09:50 RTH: Okay. And is the experience of speaking it rather than hearing it?

1:09:54 Michael: Yes, I was, I was making it, whatever, however you would describe, making a joke to yourself. That's what I was doing. So it wasn't like I was hearing somebody else make the joke. I was very, I, I knew I was the one making the joke, and it felt (maybe knowledge isn't important) it, it had the feel of I'm making a joke to myself.

1:10:16 RTH: And I am *uttering* this joke rather than *hearing* myself utter the joke.

1:10:22 Michael: Yes. The

1:10:23 RTH: Different, the difference there is sort of the same thing is I'm speaking into a tape recorder is one thing. Hearing my voice come back out of a tape recorder is another thing. One of those things I would call *speaking* and the other I would call *hearing*.

1:10:33 Michael: Right. But of course, the first one can also go along with hearing.

1:10:37 RTH: Could. Um, but it, but the experience,

1:10:41 Michael: I would say the primary experience was one of *speaking*. [RTH: Okay.] Um, but I definitely heard the words as well. It wasn't like I was speaking, but there was no

sound. Um, but the primary experience was one of speaking. I also don't wanna give the wrong impression. It was totally spontaneous. It wasn't like I, I, I was thinking about a joke and then I made the joke. It just came out. So the, the moment that I thought of the joke was also the moment that I said the joke. [laughs]

1:11:12 RTH: Got it. So I think I'm, I think I'm good about that. I think we've done a good job of, of taking a first step down the DES thing. So should we do it again?

1:11:12 Russ comments: Notice that RTH does not presume that we will continue. DES does *not* rely on any prior consent—any prior consent would have been undertaken in ignorance of what would actually occur during sampling. So consent in the view of DES is a living agreement that has to be renewed at each step.

1:11:28 Michael: Uh, sure, sure. If you think it's worth doing, I'm happy to do it.

1:11:34 RTH: Good! I'm, I'm delighted to do it.

They compare calendars

1:14:00 RTH: Sounds good to me.

1:14:03 Michael: All right. Thank you.

1:14:05 RTH: I'm ha happy as a clam. So I will see you whenever you say that's the time to do it.

1:14:11 Michael: Okay. Okay.

1:14:13 RTH: All righty.

1:14:14 Michael: Thank you. Bye.

1:14:15 RTH: See you.

Russ's answer to the 1:01:10 exercise for the reader:

I think the response to RTH's question (1:00:20 – 1:01:19) is almost 100% aimed at Michael's experience—nearly every word reveals what Michael saw at the moment of the beep.

By contrast, the response to AB's question reveals almost nothing about Michael's experience—it is more about what he did *not* experience than what he *did* experience. As a result, I think RTH's question is better than AB's.

I'd be happy to discuss if you disagree with my characterization.