

Michael D.
Michael D. Interview 2
Sampling Day 2

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February 9 interview with Michael that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/CFDDaDP9a1E>. 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.
- 0:00 RTH: Now I can say good afternoon to Michael. Good afternoon. I can hear also. That's good. And, and I don't know that we have anything that I need to talk about before we go forwards here.
- 0:17 AB: Can I ask a question before we go? [RTH: Absolutely.] Um, so question that occurred to me is sort of like, um, the goal of the questions and answers. Um. So is the goal to help Michael better understand his experience or for us to better understand his experience, or both?
- 0:41 RTH: Or neither.
- 0:43 AB: Or neither?
- 0:45 RTH: So my, my answer to that is, in general, it's to help Michael and us *become* better at apprehending his experience, which is a different thing from what I understood you to be saying. What, what I understood you to be asking about is whether we should be trying to understand what happened at, at this, at today, this morning's beep (the beeps that I presume are gonna be from this morning)? That's a backwards looking thing, looking backwards at, at the experience. And, and my understanding of the way these, these, things *have to* work is that we should be *at least* as interested in what will happen at Michael's future beeps as he is, as his past beeps. And so our questioning should be aimed at: How can we get ourselves (which includes Michael but includes you and me as well) in a position to better apprehend

tomorrow (or next week, or whenever we do, whenever we do this again) his experience?

- 1:51 AB: So is the point.... Okay. So in this kind of iterative process, then, is the point of every kind of question/answer session, not necessarily about the experience that Michael had in that moment, either our understanding or Michael's understanding of that experience, but rather through asking and answering the questions, the next time Michael hears the beep, he's better able to apprehend his experience?
- 2:27 RTH: Now that, now that you've refined that, then I, now I would say *both*. It's both to try to understand as best we can, what happened for Michael's *past* beeps (that in, in our case today, it'll, I think it'll be this morning's beeps). We are gonna, we are in fact gonna try to understand that, and we're gonna try to help *Michael* understand that, and we're gonna try to help Michael tell *us* about it so we can understand it, and we are gonna try to improve our understanding of that. But as we *do* that, we're going to *accept* that he's not very good at it, that we're not very good at it, that we're gonna try to get, become better at it. And so it is a, it is a joint forward-looking and backward-looking enterprise.
- 3:11 AB: So ultimately, though, um, we are trying to understand, um, his experience in those moments of the beeper, both like this morning's beeps and future ones. And that's the goal of this entire process.
- 3:31 RTH: That I would say Yes, except I would depend on how we're defining "understand." I would, I prefer "apprehend" to "understand" because understand has a more global/ theoretical [Agnes: (inaudible) Mm-hmm.] whatever gloss to it. [Agnes: Mm-hmm Mm-hmm Mm-hmm. But if, but if, if by *understand* you meant what I would prefer to call *apprehend*, then I would say Yes. That is the, that is the goal. For us to get.
- 3:31 Russ comments: *Understand* has the connotation of trying to glean what lies behind, what causes, and DES is *not* about that. (See, e.g., the comment at 22:53.) I prefer *apprehend* because it has the connotation of grasping what is immediately there. But DES is not about the words—I don't really care whether one uses *understand* or *apprehend*. What I *don't* want is to encourage us to believe that DES is about trying to figure out what lies behind. DES is about grasping what is immediately present.
- 3:59 AB: I think that is what I meant. Um, like by apprehend, do you mean in this context sort of like, I don't know, like *describe as clearly as possible as veridically as possible to the experience itself*? Or, yeah. What do you mean by *apprehend*? Maybe I should just ask the question in this context.
- 4:19 RTH: I, I would agree with what you said, except that I, I think *veridical* is too strong. I don't think we can ever do that. And so I *prefer*, and here again, it's about the words, but I, and I don't think DES is really about the words, but I prefer, uh, to get a high-fidelity glimpse rather than a veridical glimpse, because vertical implies perfectly, perfectly corresponding. And I think that's beyond our, our, our ability. [Agnes: Yeah.] I don't think, [Agnes: Yeah.] I don't, I don't think that is possible. I do

think it is possible for us to get a pretty high-fidelity apprehension in the sense that *maybe* Michael can use some words so that then we can use, so that we can understand those words and we can refine those words and whatever, and, and help, and *he* can help *us* get a faithful glimpse of his experience.

- 5:26 AB: Yeah, that makes sense. That's kind, that's kind of what I meant. I mean, um, yeah, I agree.
- 5:37 RTH: Okay. Anything else we should be talking about before we try to get a high-fidelity glimpse of Michael's experience?
- 5:42 Michael: Uh, well, just two quick things. One is these are not from this morning. I was worried because of my schedule this morning that that was gonna be, that was not gonna go well. So I did them yesterday afternoon.
- 5:52 RTH: Okay. Then that's totally fine with me. I, I was only used saying "this morning" because that's how it was last time.
- 5:58 Michael: Yeah. Yeah. Um, and I guess the other general thing to say, I, so I think I did maybe learn some lessons from last time. We'll see, you can tell me if I did or not.
- 6:14 Um, I, I, um, the one thing that I don't seem to have gotten any better at [laughs] is figuring out where exactly where the beep is relative to experience. I think last time maybe there were several statements along the lines of, "well, the beep might have happened in the middle of this thought, or at the end of it, or what." And, uh, that, that, that general thought of (I won't say it every time), that general thought pervades all of these. Um, I don't think it's going on. I don't think the beep is happening. And then like, you know, two minutes later I notice. That that's not happening. I'm noticing it, I think fairly quickly.
- 6:53 Um, of course, I have no way of really knowing that [laughs]. I guess I could put a tape recorder on or something and then figure out where the onset of the beep was relative to me noticing it. And maybe that would be useful to do. I don't know. But, um, but I think I'm noticing it quickly. It's just figuring out exactly where it fits in the brief stretch of time that I'll describe in each case—that's, that I'm having trouble with. Uh, I, I, that's the bad news.
- 7:21 I guess the good news is: I don't think the beep, I thought the beep was going to like be very disruptive, and it would, it would, it would cause some change in that experience. Um, and I don't think that's really happening. So it, even if it's, even if it's occurring like in the middle of a thought, the, the thought, *I don't think* (of course, again, this is a counterfactual, who knows?) but I don't feel like the thought, I feel like the thought would've continued as it was whether the beep happened in the middle of it or not. Um, so I don't think it's, I mean, it's affecting my thinking, of course in this, in the moment when I say, okay, now what was I, what was happening in my experience just a second ago? Obviously that wouldn't have happened without the beep. But I don't think the beep is really disruptive of that experience otherwise. That's what it feels like anyway, for what it's worth.
- 8:11 RTH: So, so I'm glad to hear about both of those things. And what I would say about the *first* one of those, which is about the precise timing of the beep, I, I don't want us to

gloss over timing issues, because I think timing issues *might* be important. I think they are important for some people. I don't know that they are important *for you*. I'm not trying to say that they are, but what, what I'm trying to say is I, I don't wanna just sweep them under the rug. What I *would* say is that everyone has a little bit of timing issues, I think, whether they know it or not. So, for example, I have over, over the long haul a lot of samples of people who were talking to themselves speaking in, innerly speaking, what I call inner, innerly speaking. And most times the beep comes at the end of the sentence, somebody, or at the end of the utterance, people are saying something and *then* they hear the beep.

9:05 That happens more frequently than could possibly be by chance. [Michael: I see.] And so what I think happens is that the beep is a, as a physical entity occurs, and then there's some processing that, whatever that is, I'm, I'm not, I don't, I don't know and don't claim to know what that is, but it takes some processing for you to recognize, *well, that's the beep*. And that processing is going on in parallel with whatever else was going on. And my example in with the inner speaking [Michael: Mm-hmm.] And so I finished this one before I get to that one. [Michael: Okay.] So I'm, I am 100% on board with the fact that the beep is not perfectly objectively in that external environment, I guess I would say, aimed, aimed at your experience. We we're gonna get, we're gonna get close, but we're not gonna, and, and not even necessarily close. I your impression is that it's gonna be close, and that I think that's reasonable. But I, I, I would, I would like us to be honest about that, cuz I have sample, I have sampled with some people for whom I think the beep is actually quite a long, quite a long time later on the order of minutes rather than microseconds. And, uh,

10:15 Michael: Okay. Well, I think I, I don't, I don't think it's minutes. Uh, I've never gotten to the point where it was chirping, for example. Um, I don't know how long that is, but I remember you saying that at some point it starts chirping. Um, I, I don't think it's microseconds, but I think it is seconds. So it's somewhere between the minutes and microseconds. [laughs]

10:36 RTH: And I was, I was being a little bit of an exaggeration when I said "minutes," but what I really mean is seconds and, and, and it, and it could very well be that, that those seconds, those seconds are important. So I would, what I, what I, this is a fairly long conversation, but what, what I would like us to be is alert to the possibility that the beep is not happening exactly when you think it's happening. That...

10:36 Russ comments: In my first (1990) book, which presented samples from some individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia, I wrote that issues around the timing of the beep seemed to be important. But I don't wish to make more of that that it deserves. I was still at that time trying to figure out how to do this sampling thing that later I called DES.

11:01 Michael: Okay. Yeah. I, that, that's a, that's definitely fair. I I wouldn't claim, uh, otherwise.

11:08 RTH: Okay. And then the second thing was about the beep. The beep didn't seem to be disruptive, and I think that's good. And, and that's pretty typical for what people say.

11:18 Michael: Okay. Alright. Well, I'm ready. Those are just some general things.

11:22 RTH: Okay, good. I'm happy with both of 'em. Well, ready?

Sample 2.1 discussion starts here

11:24 Michael: Okay. Well, so beep number 1. I have to learn this terminology. I was calling them "episodes" in my mind, but they're called "beeps." Okay. [Agnes laughs] Beep number 1. Um, I, I was playing disc golf. Um, I play disc golf most Sundays with a similar group of people, but not exactly this. It's a kind of, you know, whoever shows up, shows up. But, um, and, uh, I had just arrived. I turned it on for the drive there. It didn't go off during the drive it, but I had just arrived. And, um, so there were like three things, I think, going on.

12:00 One is I was holding the disc. These discs are like a, like a salad plate size or so, and they're plastic, like a Frisbee, but they're smaller than a Frisbee. And I was taking it, I was standing on the teepad of hole number 1, which is where we sort of warm up. And I was doing this with the disc between my fingers, [demonstrates using the DES notebook] but I was doing a specific rhythm. I don't think that matters. But I wrote the rhythm down. [laughs] Um, after I wasn't paying, I don't, I wasn't in the moment paying attention to what the rhythm was, but once the B went off, I realized, I, I, I thought back to what I was doing and, and kind of reconstructed what the actual rhythm was. It doesn't matter what it was. Well, I don't think it matters. I can tell you if you want. Um, and so that was happening, and I was definitely aware of the, my beating the disc between my fingers, uh, as I was getting ready to throw it.

12:52 And then I also was aware of two voices from individuals who were playing. They were, they were, they, they were probably 200 feet away, but I heard [RTH: 200, 200 feet?] About 200 feet away, yes. Um, I, this was on a disc golf course where I know the distances very well. So I, I'm pretty accurate in that assessment. [RTH: Okay.] Um, and I heard both of their voices. Um, I wasn't really registering the words, and I'm not even sure whether I could have, if I wanted to, but I definitely picked up on whose voices they were. That's how I tend to identify people, is by their voice. And I, and I, I heard these two fellows talking and I register, I was, in the moment, I was registering the fact, okay, Dylan's here and Todd's here. Um, so I was sort of making a catalog of who was here based on hearing those voices, or partial catalog.

13:46 And then the third, so there was the rhythm, there was the hearing and kind of registering who those people were. Those were not, those were, no, there were no words in those thoughts. It was only afterwards that I realized that I was recognizing them as Dylan's voice and Todd's voice. Um, but it was the first time I heard them speak. So I was definitely noticing, oh, they're, those two individuals are here.

14:11 Um, and then the third thing was I was thinking to myself, throw the disc on hyzer. Hyzer refers to the angle of release of the disc. Um, and that one was a, (so going back to an earlier distinction that I was asked to pay attention to, I tried, um, and my best guess here is) that those were, that was a thought with words. So I, so the words "throw it on hyzer" were present, but they were not produced in any

speech-like way. I wasn't sort of one-by-one producing them. It was more like seeing them. I now, I *wasn't* having a *visual* experience here of any note, but I, but I'm just, so this is just a, an analogy. It was *like* seeing them on a page all at once, but I wasn't seeing anything. I was only, the words were just present to me, "throw it on hyzer." And that's what the beep went off right before I threw. So it did interrupt that I stopped and wrote this down instead of throwing the disc, but I don't think it interrupted the thought, "throw it on hyzer.'

15:16 RTH: Okay. So I'm gathering that there are sort of three things happening here. One is the tapping of the disc, another is hearing Dylan and Todd, and the other is "throw it on hyzer."

15:28 Michael: Yes.

15:29 RTH: Is any, any of those more salient?

15:35 Michael: I, I think throw it on hyzer was kind of the, the primary thing going through my mind, but I was definitely aware of the other two happening at the same time.

15:43 RTH: And by "the more primary," do you mean 40—30—30? Or 80—10—10? Or 50—25—25?

15:48 Michael: Nuuhhh, 50—25—25. [RTH: Okay.] I mean, I could say 40—30—30 too. I don't know what these numbers mean. [RTH: I don't either.] But not 80, but not 80—10—10. I was definitely, especially the voices, because I, I don't, I, I, I have, um, prosopagnosia or (I don't like the word *have* here, but whatever). I'm bad at recognizing faces. And so I do, like in, when I'm going into a situation like that, I'm sort of, uh, semi-conscious, paying attention to what voices I hear. Cuz I can, so I can register, okay, Todd's here, Dylan's here, whatever. Um, so I was definitely paying attention to that. But it wasn't, but, but still, I would say the primary thought was throw it on hyzer. It was the first throw of the day. And my, my, my most common mistake is a bad release angle. So I was telling myself to throw it with the correct angle.

16:42 RTH: Okay. So as an, as an aside, what I, when I say 80—10—10 or 40, 40—30—30, or something, I don't care about the numbers *at all*. What I care about is what you, what, what apparently is, is clear to you because you said, well, it *certainly wasn't* 80—10—10. So, so there, but I, but I, what I, what I'm trying to say is I don't really want to distinguish between 50—25—25 and 40—30—30.

17:07 Michael: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So I probably shouldn't have made that distinction, but anyway, that was, if you ask me for numbers, those are the ones that came to mind. [laughs].

17:13 RTH: Yeah. So, so I might, I, I do ask for numbers because, and here's why I ask for numbers: Be, because it, it allows me to, to ask you to focus on your experience and tell me which one is more prominent and about how much more prominent. And what I got out of this number conversation is, well, the "throw it on hyzer" is more prominent and, and sort of *substantially* more prominent, but not *entirely* more

prominent. And we can do that pretty quickly with, by saying, well it's 50., [Michael: Yeah, makes sense. Yeah, that makes sense.] But I'm, but there's gonna be no statistical analysis of the numbers or whatever.

17:45 Michael: Well, that's, that's very wise of you! [they laugh]

17:48 RTH: I don't care anything about that other than the, the, the general communication about prominence, I guess.

17:54 Michael: Right. Okay.

17:55 RTH: So "throw it on hyzer," those are words that are present.

17:59 Michael: Yes.

18:00 RTH: And are those words present in a voice?

18:03 Michael: No.

18:05 RTH: And they're not present visually.

18:08 Michael: Definitely not.

18:10 RTH: And yet they are present all at once, as if this worded thought was,

18:21 Michael: It was almost as if it was speech that was way too fast to be speech [laughs]. So they came in the order, "throw it on, throw it on hyzer." But if I were to say, and sometimes I do say those words to myself, if I were to say them to myself, innerly, like without saying it out loud, I would, the inner cadence of that would be the same as if I were to say it out loud. [RTH: Right.] But this was much faster than that. It was just like a flash of a thought right before I was gonna throw the disc, which I didn't do because of the beep, but it was just a quick flash of a "throw it on hyzer." But I can't even say it as fast as the thought seems to have occurred.

19:02 RTH: So

19:02 AB: Were the...

19:04 RTH: Go ahead, Agnes.

19:04 AB: Was just a quick question. Like, were the words still sequential then? [Michael: Yes.] Like it wasn't,

19:09 Michael: Yes. The words were sequential.

19:10 AB: They're on through. Okay. Mm-hmm. Go ahead.

- 19:15 Michael: I *think* they were sequential. Maybe they weren't, maybe they were all present. It's, it's not very many words. So maybe that, maybe I shouldn't say that so confidently. In my retrospective thinking about it, they were sequential, but of course, words are sequential. [laughs] I mean, that's how words come out. Maybe they weren't sequential. I, I, I'm not gonna swear to an answer to that question. I shouldn't have answered so quickly.
- 19:37 RTH: So what I would say about that is that I think it is, I think it is absolutely possible to experience words that are not sequential. And, and the words that, that are a complete sentence. This is a complete imperative sentence: "Throw it on hyzer" or whatever. And I think it's entirely possible to, for those to *be* sequential or *not to be* sequential.
- 19:37 Russ comments: Referring to AB's (0:17) earlier question, RTH is *not* asking about Michael's yesterday sample—RTH thinks, and Michael explicitly says (19:15), that Michael doesn't know the answer to the question about yesterday's sample. However, we can use yesterday's sample to adumbrate important distinctions that might be useful in *tomorrow's* sampling, and that is what RTH is doing here.
- 19:58 Michael: Okay. I'm not, I'm not swearing to one or the other. I'm swearing to, to the fact that there were words and that they weren't spoken at the cadence of normal speech.
- 20:10 RTH: So then that, that's, that was gonna be the second line of my questioning. So the, the second thing is, I think it's possible for words to be present that *somehow* have speech *quality*—I feel like I am speaking these words—and sometimes words can be present *without* having speech quality—they can, the words can be present, bereft of speech.
- 20:32 Michael: Yeah. I don't think they were speech quality. It was almost like they weren't coming from me. They *were* coming from me. But it's almost like some external observer was like, Hey, Michael, don't forget this, ciz you always forget this. Throw it on hyzer." Those other words weren't present at all. I would, I'm making that up right now, but it was li it was almost as if it was coming from outside, but it wa I didn't experience it as coming from outside, but it wasn't speech-like. I, I didn't have the sense of me producing this thought. [RTH: Okay.] It just happened.
- 21:03 RTH: And, and did it have an outsideness to it? As if this was coming from the outside? [Michael: No.] Or did it just,
- 21:09 Michael: So it's, it just didn't, it's just that it didn't have the sense of being produced by me, either.
- 21:16 RTH: Okay. So it's, it, it is in a, some, somewhere in the nether region, in the *neither* region [laughs] of not being produced by me and not being received by me either, but somehow [Michael: Correct.] somehow present.
- 21:29 Michael: It was just *there*.

- 21:30 RTH: [laughs]. Okay. Fair enough. And, and I, and, and I guess I could ask: Did, did these words seem to have some kind of a location? Did they, do you experience this as being in my head or outside me, or doesn't matter? It doesn't,
- 21:49 Michael: If it, I don't think it matters. If you force me to specify location, [RTH: I, I'm not, I'm not!] I would say well, I'm not, then [RTH: I'm not forcing.] Okay. Okay. I'm not answering that question then. [laughs]
- 21:57 RTH: That's right. Good! And, and, um, so I can, I'm, I'm totally capable of asking questions that, that don't have answers. And, uh, uh, and if that, if I do that, then you should say, well, there's no answer to that question, [Michael: Okay.] or that question doesn't make sense to me. Or, or whatever.
- 22:13 Michael: It makes sense. I just don't have an answer.
- 22:16 RTH: Okay. So I'm happy with the worded portion. Agnes, you have more about that.
- 22:22 AB: Um, I have a kind of procedural question about like what questions should and shouldn't be asked. Um, should, should or shouldn't we ever ask questions relative to previous experiences, for instance, from last time?
- 22:37 RTH: I think it's fine to ask a question from last, if, if, if you want to compare. If, if, if that question means: Can, I can ask Michael to compare or contrast this experience to some previous experience? [Agnes: Yeah.] The answer to that is Yes.
- 22:53 AB: That's what I was gonna ask, because I believe, I can't remember the details anymore, but I believe last time, um, that Michael had had an experience where he described it somewhat similarly, where that like words, just a sentence just appeared. Um, I can't remember the details anymore. But I was gonna ask about whether, um, the appearance of these words in this instance, in this way was similar or different from that previous experience.
- 22:53 Russ comments: The statement of this question causes me to revise the *Yes* answer that RTH gave at 22:37. As I said, I'm happy to compare or contrast *this specific sampled experience* to a *previous specific sampled experience*. But AB's question is risky because it compares *this specific sampled experience* to a *nonspecific said-to-be previous experience*. I'm *not* confident that Michael's understanding of "had an experience where he described it somewhat similarly" corresponds with the experience that AB has in mind.
- The general principle is simple: The object of DES is to talk about only those things that we know what we're talking about. For example, we *don't* talk about theory, because AB's understanding (see the comment about "understanding" at 3:31) of some theory might be different from Michael's understanding or my understanding. Similarly, I don't want AB to be asking Michael to compare some specific experience to some nonspecific feature of AB's imagination.
- The good news is that Michael helps AB out, and in the next (23:24) turn specifies the sample that he thinks AB is referring to, and AB agrees, so my concern vanishes.

To restate this: I'm happy to compare *this specific sampled experience* to a *previous specific sampled experience* to the extent that all parties know precisely what are the two experiences being compared.

23:24 Michael: So the answer is, I don't know. I think the experience you were talking about was when I was considering whether I need gloves and whether they're wet before I was gonna chop the wood. [Agnes: Yeah, yeah, yeah.] And when I, so at the beginning of this, when I said, well, I think I may have learned a little bit of a lesson last time, [Agnes: Right. Mm-hmm.] That it was in the discussion of that. And I, so I don't think I, I should or *could* really reasonably answer that answer the question of similarity, 'cuz I hadn't yet, we hadn't had that conversation about [Agnes: Mm-hmm.] the, the, the 15,000 different ways that words can appear. [laughs] We only talked about six of them or whatever. But, um, and so at that experience, I was kind of floundering a little bit without those, without the benefit of those distinctions, which I think I have absorbed at least some of that now. And so I was a little bit able, better, better able to attend to that set of issues. So that was a long way of saying, I don't know.

23:24 Russ comments: That is a beautiful characterization of the necessity of the iterative method.

24:26 RTH: And, and I would like to say, uh, "I don't know" is a *great* answer *almost always*. If, if, if, I don't know, is a, an important part of the issue. The, the best answer is, I don't know.

24:40 Michael: I'm very good at that [laughs], so I can [laughs] I can say, "I don't know."

24:40 Russ comments: There are a lot of people who are *not* good at saying "I don't know." It apparently seems to them to be weakness, when actually it is the foundation of strength.

24:47 RTH: Did that answer your question, Agnes? [Agnes: Yes. Yes.] Alright. Then part two, there's Dylan here, and Todd's here. I'm somehow recognizing that [Michael: Mm-hmm.] And... [Michael: Go ahead.] And there, there were two questions that appeared to me, appealed to me about that. One was, is this, *I recognize Dylan and I recognize Todd's voice*, or is this, *I am...* is the, is the here, I guess what I wanna know is whether the *here* portion of that, H·E·R·E here, portion of that is an important deal that Todd's *here* and Dylan is *here*. Is that...?

25:30 Michael: Yes, that's, that's the crucial point. That's what I was noticing, was their presence. But I was noticing it by, in virtue of hearing their voices. [RTH: Right.] But it was like I heard the voice and the, and, and registered their presence. That was the, that was the crucial point. Yeah.

25:47 RTH: So my experience is of the more of the *here-ness* of Dylan and Todd than of the quality of their voice or the

- 25:55 Michael: Yes. Okay. I mean, the truth is I was, I must have been doing that by noticing the quality of their voice. But I wasn't focused on that at all. I was just focused on, *oh, Dylan's here. Oh, Todd's here.* Mm-hmm I didn't say those words, but, and when I, when I, when the beep went off and I thought, well, what was going on in my consciousness, it seemed to me that I was somehow registering their presence.
- 26:19 RTH: So this is another little lecture here: And then, and, and that is that there's a lot going on in the real world, and there's a lot going on in the neuronal world or whatever, however you want to conceptualize that. But that's not what I'm interested in. What I'm interested in is what's in the *experiential* world. And the experiential world is apparently substantially more about the *here* portion of this, [Michael: Yes.] Todd is *here*. Dylan is *here*, [Michael: Yes.] rather than any other characteristic. And, and, and when you say it must have, I must have heard their voice. I'm, I'm accepting that, but I don't care about that.
- 26:19 Russ comments: This is in partial response to AB's 0:17 question. This turn (like most of RTH's turns) is both about what happened yesterday on the disc-golf course and what might happen tomorrow (or whenever) at some future beep.
- 26:53 Michael: Right. No, I said I understand that. And, and, um, I, I mean, I think I was aware of their voice, but it wasn't the focus of attention at all. Um, it was, it was the, it was the presence. [RTH: Okay.] That's right.
- 27:06 RTH: And then somewhere along the line you said, well, as Prosopagnosia or whatever. And did, was that at all present at the, in the moment or was....? [Michael: No.] So this *may have been*, this is one of those, it may have been part of my strategy to keep track of who's, who's where or whatever. But that, but that strategic implication was not present at the moment.
- 27:29 Michael: That was not going on. No, I, I mean that's what that, that that was, as you say, that was going on maybe in the, in the real world or in the neuronal world. But in my conscious experience, I wasn't thinking, *oh, I gotta keep track of these guys* or whatever. I was just noticing their presence.
- 27:44 RTH: So that's, that is exactly the, the point that I'm trying to make. And, and Agnes, in response to your earlier question, that line of questioning for me is as much about tomorrow as it is about yesterday, as it is about yesterday. It's *both*. I'm interested in what his experience was yesterday when, when Todd and Dylan were a hundred yards away or whatever, a couple hundred feet away. But I'm also interested in making the point between, well, there's a lot of stuff going on. Let's not pay attention to that. That's, so it's all, I would say all of, *almost* all of my questions are, are both yesterday and tomorrow questions. I, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not sure about that. I've never really tried to count them, but the, but, uh, but there's a, there's a big part of me that is thinking about tomorrow shaping this process so that tomorrow we can be more efficient in getting at his experience and set aside the neuronal or procedural or whatever and get at the, at the experience. And I'm doing, I'm doing both of those things all the time.

28:56 Michael: I'm trying to be a good student.

28:59 AB: Me too! [laughs]

29:01 RTH: And so, uh, Agnes, do you have more questions about the Todd and Dylan portion?

29:07 AB: I, I have one more question about the Todd and Dylan. Um, I guess the nature of the *here*, um, you mentioned that they were like 200 feet away. When you say the experience was of Dylan and Todd being *here*, do you mean they are in my vicinity? Or is it more precise than that? They are over there.

29:28 Michael: Oh, it's not a, sorry. Yeah, that's a good question. Maybe Russell will tell me it's not a good question, but, um, but I didn't clarify. *Here, here* was not a spatial thing. It was a, we're it was (now this, these words were definitely not present) but, but remember, this is something I do every, almost every Sunday afternoon. And so it's a question of who is gonna be playing today? Like, who's gonna be in the group today. So *here* meant, like in the group, it wasn't a spatial thing at all. I mean, I, I, I, I, I could tell that they were far away, but that wasn't, but *here* meant *I'm about to start playing with these guys*.

30:05 AB: Gotcha

30:07 RTH: So I, I did think that was a good question, and I thought it was a fair question given what he has, what he has said. And it also illustrates the imprecision of language, or the ambiguity of language or something like that. And, and I do think that we need to be alert to those kinds of things because I think that the explanation that had, had been given so far was ambiguous as to fire as far as whether *here* meant 200 feet over there *or* present in today's this-golf-party.

30:42 Michael: Right. It was the latter.

30:45 RTH: And I would notice that Michael is quite confident about that. Michael, Michael *knows* what he means (at least about this). He knows what he means.

30:55 Michael: About this. Many of the things. No, but yes, I'm sure this is what, yeah. [they laugh]

31:00 RTH: And, and so a large part of our task is to align our, and I'm now talking to Agnes now, a large part of Agnes's and my task is to align our understanding with what Michael clearly is trying to transmit *until* we get to the place where he's not transmitting because he doesn't know and we're not receiving because he doesn't know. And, and then, then, then we will have to deal with that then. But, but to get there, we need to practice about the easy stuff.

31:29 Which is this, which is also about, about tomorrow. I want us to practice the easy stuff. I want us to, I want, I want us to accept that all language is (I think of it as) gestural. Michael. Michael is using words to say, I'm trying to, I'm, I'm trying to get you guys to think, to understand something about my experiences. So this is, this is what I'm, I'm after and I'm gonna use words to do that. And these words are not perfect, and you guys aren't very skilled at hearing what I'm saying anyway. And

all that stuff is, is part of the art, of, of trying to communicate with fidelity about Michael's experience, both yesterday and tomorrow.

32:22 RTH: Then there was the tapping of the disc. And I wasn't sure that I understood, should have understood that as a, just an action that was taking place, or a motion that I'm, I'm in the process of trying to do that, or a feel of the disc or whatever.

32:40 Michael: It was more a feel. Uh, so, um, I was, I wasn't tapping with my fingers, I was taking the disc. (Let's see if I can show you this.) [holds up his hands to the camera with the notebook simulating the disc] And doing that between my [RTH: Uhhuh.] So my fingers were stationary and I was doing this with the disc. [RTH: Okay.] But I was doing it to a rhythm, um, that I was repeating. The rhythm was ta taka ta ta, takatakata ta, about that speed. Um, yeah, I was definitely aware of it. Um.

32:40 Russ comments: RTH noticed that sometimes when Michael demonstrated this action, the right hand was stationary, but sometimes it moved back and forth as if anticipating the contact. However, RTH decided it was better not to inquire about that.

33:13 RTH: So are you more aware (and if this question makes sense), more aware of the motion of the disc? [Michael: No, it's the feeling.] More aware of the feel of the disc, the feel of the disc as it hits my fingers? More aware of the rhythm of the whole thing.

33:31 Michael: I would say the rhythm as I, I, as I feel it, I wasn't really listening to it and I wasn't, I obviously I was producing it, but I wasn't thinking about that. It was really, it was the feeling of it on my fingers. But it was a rhythmic feel. It wasn't just the, it was important part of the experience, I would say, that it was that rhythm repeated. Um,

33:51 RTH: So this is, this is a felt in these fingers, these fingers, not so much in this hand, which is doing the [Michael: Correct.] So this is a, a receptive, receptive, rhythmic...

34:05 Michael: Yes, that's a good way to put it. Yep.

34:07 RTH: Okay.

34:10 Michael: Obviously I was producing it, but that's, that wasn't part of what I was even really thinking about or aware of or whatever.

34:18 RTH: That's, that's right. The experience and the experience seems quite clearly a felt rhythm, a felt-in-my-fingertip rhythm.

34:27 Michael: Yes.

34:27 RTH: And is it, is that, are you, are you just describing that rhythm or is there something that my fingertips are feeling that particular rhythm as opposed to,

34:41 Michael: Well, what I would, the only thing I would say about the, so the downbeat, so to say, um, that was, that was four-beat, that rhythm was a four-beat rhythm that I was just repeating. I did, well, I, I hadn't conceptualized it in those terms at all. It was only after the fact that I, I was definitely aware of the rhythm and I thought, what was that rhythm? And I wrote it down. But I wasn't, I hadn't conceptualized the rhythm. I was just kind of mindlessly doing it. But the downbeat was on my *thumb* every time. And so I was definitely aware of the BA dabada BA... It was, I was hitting it. I think I was probably even hitting it a little harder on my thumb, that was the kind of the downbeat of the measure, if you like. I don't know if I answered your question. I was *feeling the rhythm*, I guess is what I would say, not listening to it, not producing it, *feeling* it.

35:35 RTH: So the rhythms that you conveyed, the, the first time and the rhythm that you conveyed the second time were not the same rhythm for my perspective.

35:42 Michael: So I'll do it slower. It was, Ta takata Ta katakata Ta takata Ta katakata Ta, but it was fast. I was doing it faster than that. But I slowed it down so that you could hear what the rhythm was.

35:42 Russ comments: Michael's rendition of the rhythm is an expertly delivered stream of syllables that a skilled trumpet player would call double-tongue-ing. It would be interesting to RTH to know whether Michael has a history of trumpet playing, or whether he has developed that skill on his own, but RTH elected *not* to inquire about that. The general principle here is: if the interest is likely part of the interviewer's history (RTH is a classically trained trumpet player), then it is likely better *not* to inquire about it. That is part of the DES discipline: the interview is *not* about RTH's interest, it is about Michael's experience.

35:54 RTH: Okay. So there, so what I've got, what I'm, what I'm hearing from that is it was clearly that rhythm, and the downbeat of it was on my thumb. I'm, is is a thumb, a thumb reception. And I'm hearing this, I'm hearing this going back and forth, but I'm not particularly, I'm not particularly interested in the particular rhythm pattern that this is a quad quadr, quad quatrain rhythm rather than a triplet rhythm or whatever. But I'm not doing any of that.

35:54 RTH misspeaks, saying "hearing" when the experience is not auditory, but Michael apparently understands it as a misspeaking and does not feel the need to correct it.

36:25 Michael: No, I mean, it wasn't four rather than it was fours rather than threes. But I wasn't thinking that at all. I, the, the, the details of the rhythm were not part of the experience. Uh, I, I only reconstructed the rhythm after I, after the beep went off. And I thought, well, what was that rhythm? But that, I was not aware that that was the rhythm at the time. I was just aware I was, I mean, I was feeling it in my fingers, but I wasn't, it wasn't conceptualized as, oh, this isn't four-four time and it goes eighth, 16th, 16th, eighth, you know, whatever.

36:57 RTH: Right. Got it. And that, that's a, that's a very fast rhythm by comparison to what was almost physically possible for a disc. Is that, is that a true statement?

37:07 Michael: Yeah. So it's like [demonstrates]. That's how, that's how fast it was. [RTH: Okay.] I don't know if you could hear that or not, but

37:16 RTH: I could see it, but I can't really hear it.

37:19 Michael: Oh, see, I'll do it on my desk. It's next to the microphone. [leans over and apparently taps the desk next to his microphone]

37:26 RTH: I can't hear that at all.

37:27 Michael: Alright, nevermind. Sorry.

37:28 RTH: Zoom. Zoom is totally effective at filtering that kind of stuff out.

37:32 Michael: Oh, sorry. Okay.

37:33 RTH: Pretty, pretty remarkably so, actually, but okay. You can't, can't hear it at all. So when you, when you just demonstrated that you, you were, I don't actually know whether you're right, is it the righthand that is doing the motion and the left-hand is the receiver?

37:59 Michael: No, I'm a left-handed thrower. The disc was in my left hand and I was, I was whacking it back and forth between my, like this, between my, these fingers.

38:06 RTH: Okay.

38:10 Michael: I was getting ready to throw, it's just a nerve. It was just a nervous habit or something, I don't know, you know, just kind of doing something with the disc while I'm thinking, throw it on heyzer.

38:24 RTH: So I think I'm good about that actually. I think I'm happy with that.

38:27 AB: Can I ask one more question about that? Um, was there any, um, connection between the rhythm of the disc and throw it on heyzer?

38:38 Michael: No, not that I could specify. No. May, maybe there's something deep in my soul about the nervous energy that was being expended and being at first throw of the day or whatever. But none of that was in my thoughts at all.

38:58 AB: I guess I meant more so not like kind of conceptually or anything like that, but just with respect to the experience of the words "throw it on heyzer" with the rhythm. Like you, I mean, when you were describing the rhythm you talked about like it hitting your thumb on the downbeat and I was just wondering whether there was some kind of thing like that or in that ballpark going on with throw it on hyzer.

39:26 Michael: I don't think so. [Agnes: Okay.]

- 39:28 RTH: So as I understood it, throw it on hyzer does not have a rhythm. [Michael: No.] Spoken but...
- 39:38 Michael: That was, so the rhythm had been going on for a while, cuz I was standing on the teepad, I was kind of contemplating the shot and whatever, and I, and I'm sure that was going on for a while and it continued through the thought, "throw it on heyzer," and I was literally about to stop the rhythm and throw when the beep went off.
- 39:58 RTH: Okay. And I'm good number 2? [Michael: Okay.] And Agne, do you wanna be the primary question? [Agnes: Sure.]
- 40:09 Michael: So, uh, let me ask a question because, um, that took 40 minutes. Um, so obviously we're not doing all six of these. And so do you want me to just go in? Some of them are probably, I, I, I, I, I don't say more interesting because I don't know what's interesting and what's not, but maybe a little bit different from things you've heard versus things that might be a little bit more of the same. I don't know which of the, I can see merit to both of those. Um, so I don't know what the right choice should be here. Or I could give you a very quick rundown of the other five and then you could tell me which ones you wanna talk about. Or I could just take 'em in order, whatever you want.
- 40:51 RTH: So I can see, I can see Marin in all of those *except*, except the latter. I don't, I don't wanna run down of them because [Michael: Okay. Okay. Alright.] But I'm, I'm happy to either take them in order or to have you pick, because you're right, we're not gonna get to them. [Michael: Right.] And, and there's merit in both of those strategies, but I don't know what the beeps are, so I think you're in a better position to make...
- 40:51 Russ comments: If we were discussing most of the samples (say, 4 or 5 of the 6), I would generally prefer to take them in order. I am a believer in randomness, and I like to let the beeper decide what we should talk about. But here, we are only going to talk about two samples, and randomness is too small a process to be useful.
The reason for the "except the latter" is threefold: (a) I don't want to give the impression that I think Michael would adequately characterize the samples. Maybe he would, but I think that is a skill that requires some practice. (b) Michael may have some preference about which sample to discuss, and I would rather that he tell me that directly rather than my having to divine that from the way he crafts the rundowns. And mostly (c) The general principle is that DES is about knowing what you're talking about, and I don't know which would be better. Therefore I prefer not to give an opinion.
- 41:10 Michael: To make. Okay. I'll, I'll, I'll do, I'll skip the second one, which is in the middle of disc golf. I don't know that it's that interesting. Um, um, we can come back to it if there's time.

Sample 2.2 discussion starts here

- 41:20 [Michael continues] But the last one was at the end. We had finished playing. Um, and um, two things were happening. Two of the people present, the aforementioned Todd and, um, a guy called David. Both, I was standing by my car, they both said, "bye Mic...." Well, Todd said, "Bye Michael." And David said, "Bye Mikey," which would normally grate on me in a bad way, cuz I don't wanna be people calling me Mikey [laughs]. Um, I'm sensitive to that because when I was a kid, there was a, there was an advertisement on television for some kind of cereal and it was, "Hey Mikey, he likes it," or something like that. And people would say this to me all the time, and I'm like, "I don't care about your stupid cereal and your stupid commercial! My name's not Mikey!" Um, sorry, did I get too animated about that? Sorry. [laughs]
- 42:16 RTH: I remember, I remember the commercial.
- 42:16 Russ comments: The commercial was for Life cereal. It was very popular, and versions of it ran from 1972 to 1984 (Wikipedia).
- 42:18 Michael: Okay. Uh, I, I didn't grow up watching television, so I don't know that I ever even saw this commercial, but whatever. Um, but I like David and he's sort of, I don't know, his personality lets him get away with that with me. And so I, I remember ha when he said "bye Mikey," I had the thought, "that's okay," because it's him. But, um, so, so I was hearing those words and I had the thought "That's okay." Which was what, what was a thought in words. I said that to myself almost like reassuring myself. Like, it's okay, he can say that.
- 42:54 And then the other thing that was happening was, uh, so I wear a, a, like a elbow protection, like a compression sleeve on my elbow when I play, otherwise it in my elbow gets injured. And I was removing that. And so these guys that I play with, most of them are sort of conservative Protestants and, and I'm not that. And um, they, I have, I have tattoos on my back, quite, quite a large one actually. And I had to take my shirt off to take off this sleeve. And I didn't want them to see that, cuz I didn't know how they would react. Um, and so I turned, I was in, if I had, if I had just done it as I was standing, I would, my back would've been facing them. So I actually, I turned so that they wouldn't see my back as I was pulling off my shirt and pulling off this thing. Um, and so I was aware, I, I, I don't think, I don't think there were any words involved there. I just, it was more of an instinctual, let's not, let's let's turn this way. But there were no words involved. The words I was saying at the time were, "it's okay."
- 44:05 And so that didn't turn into a, that, sorry, that didn't turn into a description of experience. I just told you what I was doing. So: I, I was hearing the words "bye Michael, bye Mikey." I was having the thought, "it's okay." And I was physically aware of having turned, like that was a conscious thing. It wasn't a random thing, but there were no words involved with the turning. But I, I somehow was aware of the reason for turning. It wasn't just a random turn. But I do, I wouldn't put any words to that. The words in my head at the time were, "it's okay."
- 44:42 AB: So what was, um, so the sequence of the experiences was "Bye Michael, bye Mikey."

- 44:49 Michael: They were all, those were, they said those almost simultaneously. [AB: Okay.] It wasn't like one then the other. They were both just saying "bye." And they kind of said it at the same time.
- 44:56 AB: Okay. Okay. So then, so the experience was hearing "Bye Michael, bye Mikey," roughly, simultaneously. *Then* roughly simultaneously the words "It's okay" and the turning with the kind of conscious but wordless feeling that of, of *why* you're turning.
- 45:21 Michael: Yes. That's accurate. Obviously the "It's okay" came after the "bye, Mikey." But it was, it was like this, it was like, I don't think there was very much time at all between those, cuz I, I, the, the Mikey got my attention. Um, and, and sort of, you know, I don't know, ancient, ancient [laughs], um, complaints rose for a moment and I said "it's okay." [laughs].
- 45:45 AB: So when you say, um, so it sounds like the way you just described it now, it sounds like there was that timeframe between hearing "bye Mikey" and the "it's okay," like in between, there was some timeframe where you, you were like for a, some period reactive, but then you [inaudible].
- 46:08 Michael: Yeah. I, if it was, if, it's almost like it was all happening at once. I mean, I don't think I could say *there was this wellspring of, remember when your childhood, when people said* nothing like that mm-hmm It was much more sort of just gut reaction. There was this like just split second of ugh. And then I'm like, "it's okay." [laughs]
- 46:33 RTH: So let me comment on that question. Be because that, that question I think presumes the re the real world. In the real world, one person says something, one person says something, and then I respond to that, and then I say something or something like that, that it presumes a sequence. And I would, I would like us to put that in, in the epoché, put, put in, put that in the brackets that the, in real worlds, that happens like that. In the experiential world, it is quite possible for there to be no sequence whatsoever; that Todd can once say something and Dylan can say something and he can respond at the, at the same time experientially; that there...
- 47:11 So if I were gonna ask, if I were to ask that question, I would have wanted to start with, "I don't really know about the sequence, and I don't think there has to be a sequence. If there was a sequence, I would like to know about it, but I don't want us to presume that there's a sequence from the physical world."
- 47:11 Russ comments: Husserl's epoché (to the extent that he was consistent about this, and to the extent that I understand him) is the "bracketing" (the setting aside) of the "natural attitude" (normal assumptions about the real world), so that the "eidetic" (essential) structure can appear. I accept the importance of that up to but not including the eidetic reference—I don't know anything at all about *eidōs*. But as far as I can tell, most people, including most philosophers, don't really understand (that word again) or put into practice the bracketing of the natural attitude. That includes (it appears to me) AB in this series of exchanges.
- AB has had three turns in inquiring about sample 2.2, and in all of those turns it sounds to me like she is expecting a natural sequence of events:

44:42 So the sequence of the experiences was “Bye Michael, bye Mikey.”

44:56 So the experience was hearing ... *and then* the kind of conscious but wordless feeling.

45:45 There was that timeframe between hearing “bye Mikey” and the “it’s okay,” like *in between*

That expectation of a natural sequence is an instance of what I (and I think Husserl) would call the natural attitude—in the natural world, things have a sequence, and it is reasonable to try to sort out exactly what that sequence is. But I think (as did, I think, Husserl) that if one wants to apprehend phenomena with fidelity, one has to bracket the natural attitude—that is, one has to apprehend phenomena while being uninfluenced by the way things are in the real world. That is, when exploring experience, one has to be equally open to experiences that mirror the natural world and those that violate the assumptions of the natural world. Here, one has to be equally accepting that experiences are sequential or that experiences are in some way not sequential.

To my ear, all of AB’s questions seem to reflect an *of course things are sequential* viewpoint. I’m no mind reader, so I may be entirely mistaken about this (in which case I apologize). I have tried to say what leads me (as an ignorant mortal) to think that, not that I have some infallible access to the Truth.

47:27 AB: Okay. So is it about, like the way... Is part of the issue with the way I asked the question? Because I didn’t say (well, maybe I did say I don’t, I don’t know what I said exactly), but I didn’t say “This was it.” I said, “Was this it?” But is the problem that, um, I took for granted that this could be it, and instead I should have asked it in like a more open-ended way, was there a sequence? Rather than *was this particular thing* the sequence?

47:27 Russ comments: It is *not* about the way you asked the question. (This is part of the *DES is not about the words* series.) It is about whether the questions you asked arose from a genuine epoché, a genuine, to the bottom of your socks recognition / acceptance / appreciation that the experiential world does not (or at least does not necessarily) follow the rules of the real world. To my ear (rightly or wrongly), your questions reflected the natural attitude, and as long as the natural attitude holds sway within you, there is no amount of crafting of questions that will be adequate.

That is, the epoché is not about what you say, it is about the wellspring from which the saying arises.

So: Yes, it would have been better if you had “asked it in like a more open-ended way, was there a sequence? Rather than *was this particular thing* the sequence?” But it wouldn’t have been good enough, because no matter how you *phrase* it, your natural attitude would be the driver.

The good news is that to the extent that you *do* try to deliver more even-handed questions, it is more likely that Michael (or whoever) will give descriptions that surprise you. And to the extent that you are surprised, then you may appreciate somewhat more that the natural attitude may not really apply to experience. And the more you appreciate that, the more your questions will naturally reflect the weakened thrall of the natural attitude. And the weaker the thrall of the natural attitude, the easier it is to ask even handed questions. And so on. It is (or at least can be) a virtuous cycle.

Or, one may say, it is iterative all the way down.

At the risk of repetition, let me say: I may be entirely mistaken about AB's natural attitude (in which case I apologize)—I am not a mind reader. I have tried to say what leads me (as an ignorant mortal) to think these things, not that I have some infallible access to the Truth.

One more thing: I have said in previous comments that Russ is not the judge of whether questions are good or bad—it is better practice to observe what Michael says, and to the extent that Michael is (or at least seems to be) directly describing experience, that was the extent to which the previous question was good.

Here, at 45:21, in response to AB's 44:56 question, Michael says "Yes. That's accurate. Obviously the 'It's okay' came after the 'bye, Mikey'." The word *obviously* is often (probably usually) a sign that the natural attitude is operating, because the rules of the *experiential* world are *not* obvious. So, in my view, AB's 44:56 question *encourages* Michael's natural attitude, which is *not* a good thing. Ergo, her 44:56 question is not a good question.

47:59 RTH: The, the issue is, this is a it's a tomorrow issue. The what I want us to do is to, is to none of us, not Agnes, not Russ, not Michael, to presume that just because something in the physical world happens has to happen in a particular way, that that has to happen in the experiential way. [AB: Gotcha.] So almost everything that, that we're gonna be doing today is about, is about learning how to, what I call *bracket* that, uh, the bracket the physical world. I want, I want us to focus on what the experiential was. And in, and in this particular one, I would've wanted to take this occasion to say, "you know, what happens in the experiential world does not have to mirror what was in the physical world. In the physical world. It was over there and then first that and this one, and then I had to think about it." And all that happens that that's all physical stuff, but that is not necessarily experiential.

48:51 And I would've wanted to be as a little bit, a little bit explicit about that as part of the bracketing practice, as part of the *I'm interested in experience and I don't care about the, the real world*. Later on after, after we get good at this, then it *might be* worthwhile to try to figure out, well, how does something experientially match up temporally with what happened in the real world? That might be of interest *sometime*, but *not* until we're good at recognizing what the, what's the, the difference between what's experiential and what is in the real world, so to speak.

49:34 AB: Gotcha.

49:35 RTH: So it's, it's practice not only for Michael, but it's practice for Agnes. I want Agnes (and Russ, for that matter), but I want Agnes to be thinking, "well, I gotta keep track, I gotta keep *separate* the experiential world from the... [AB: Um hmm.] And I, and I have to do that until I'm confident (I'm speaking for Agnes now), I have to do that until I'm confident that *I* am not going to project *my* take on the ex on the real world onto his experience. And I'm confident that Michael understands that, and Russ too for that matter. But the, but the, and and, and when I'm, when I'm confident about that, then I don't have to say it anymore. Because now, now, now we both know. We all, we all know. And once we all know, then we don't have to worry about it anymore. But until, until I'm confident that we are, that we're talking about the

experiential world and not letting the real world seep into it, then we gotta work at it. [Michael: Okay.]

50:37 AB: Makes sense.

50:43 RTH: [pause] So we're are, are you done with your line of questioning? Is it my turn about this?

50:52 AB: Hold on, let me now think about it. Um, I wanted to ask about the, the like turning around to take off your shirt part

51:02 RTH: That's the next, that's the next portion. Let's, let's finish up [AB: Okay.] let's finish up [AB: Okay. Okay.] the "that's okay." So you wanna ask you go ahead.

51:11 AB: You go ahead.

51:12 RTH: So "that's okay": that I understand to have been Michael saying that to himself.

51:21 Michael: Yes.

51:22 RTH: And

51:23 Michael: I said, I said "*it's* okay," but yes.

51:27 RTH: Thanks. And, and can you tell me more about the, the experience of that? What... Is this ust like you said it out loud, "*it's* okay"?

51:43 Michael: This was, this was definitely spoken internally only, but it was spoken at the cadence of regular speech. It was, so there was a, it was more of a, it was moreso (going back to earlier distinction), it was more on the production side than on the hearing side. I was *saying* "*it's* okay," I was saying it to myself and it was kind of, I was kind of catching myself before—I didn't get upset. I, I think it was more like I was catching myself before I would get upset saying "*it's* okay."

52:14 RTH: Mm-hmm. And is there any experiential difference between this innerly saying "*it's* okay" and you're saying as if you had said that out loud?

52:29 Michael: [pause] Yes. The reason for that, in this case, I know you don't like reasons, but I think this will actually in be informative about the experience itself. I would, and maybe I should have, maybe this is part of the experience that I should have mentioned. I was consciously saying it to myself and not out loud. Um, there wasn't a huge thought pro, I don't want to give the wrong impression. It wasn't like there was some thought process like, *oh, you need to say this to yourself, don't say it out loud* sort of thing. But I was, I was aware that I was saying something to myself that shouldn't be said out loud. And so I became, I, I, I was very intentional about saying it internally. Now I'm, I'm putting more, I mean, I'm, it takes me much longer to say all this than I think the actual, the actual thought process happened. But there was definitely a conscious aspect of this, of this is to yourself. Don't say this out loud.

53:28 RTH: I'm giving a private instruction to me.

53:30 Michael: Yes.

53:32 RTH: Okay. [AB: Can I ask...]

53:34 Michael: So I think, I think I mentioned last time, Russ, maybe this was after Agnes left, that this is a struggle for me, and when I'm not being careful, I sometimes say things out loud that I meant to say to myself, or vice versa. Um, and I was sufficiently careful. Again, I don't wanna give the wrong impression, like I didn't like pause and think about this, but I was definitely sufficiently careful in the moment to, to make sure I was saying it internally, not externally.

54:03 RTH: So this was said in the manner of *private Michael to Michael*, not *Michael out into the world*.

54:10 Michael: That's correct. That's correct.

54:14 RTH: Okay. Agnes, you were starting to say...

54:15 AB: Yeah, I wanted to ask about the quality of that instruction or whatever, meta instruction, whatever you wanna call it, of um, *don't say this out loud*. Uh, it sounds like you weren't using *wor*, you weren't saying, *don't say this out loud*, but there was some kind of, um, imperative not to say it out loud. And I'm wondering what the experience of that was like, what,

54:47 Michael: What did, so that's, yeah, I, that's, that's, so

54:49 RTH: Before, before you answer that question, let me, let me, let me polish the question a little bit.

54:55 Michael: Okay.

54:56 RTH: Because, because the question implied that there was going to be an answer to that question. And I think that's a mistake because I think it's really, well

55:05 Michael: There's only half an answer [laughs].

55:07 RTH: I think it's very, and and Michael might be better at answering this question than I'm, but, but I, I think it's quite likely that the process that he's describing is totally outside of his awareness. It's totally outside of his experiential realm at this particular moment. And I think,

55:24 Michael: I think that's mostly correct. Um,

55:26 RTH: So your ques, your question Agnes, every, every question that you ask *has to have* that as a possibility to it.

55:33 AB: Okay.

55:36 RTH: The, the philosopher in you, if I may speculate or, or whatever is gonna is, is, is gonna say, well this is this process going on. You, it has to have some kind of a aspect to it. But that, I don't think that's, I don't think that's true. And, and so there has to be, there has to be explicit space and implicit space and totally recognized space. That's what explicit, implicit all that stuff that that, that what Michael has described about this process is so ingrained or so habitual or so whatever, that it doesn't have any experiential ramification at all.

55:36 Russ comments: This turn is RTH's way of saying that the epoché has to be genuine (see Russ's comments at 47:11 and 47:27). For the question to be fair, AB must be just as ready to hear that there was no experiential privacy instruction as that there was an experienced privacy instruction. The good news is that Michael is pretty strong; he can at least to some extent resist (but not completely; see the *obviously* discussion at the end of Russ's comment at 47:27) the unfairness of AB's question—see the beginning of his next turn.

56:15 Michael: It's pretty close to that. That's what I was gonna say. Actually, the only thing I would add to that is that... You know how, you know how it feels different when you're around other people and when you're not around other people? [laughs] There was definitely like that. So the, the experience was definitely of *being with people* and it was that *being with people* that was somehow guiding me, saying it internally. But I, but I wasn't thinking expl explicitly about like, *oh, there are people here. I better be careful and say this to myself only*. None of that, none of that was going on. It was much more habitual in the way that Russ was just describing.

56:15 Russ comments: While we're on the topic of the natural attitude, Michael's statement "You know how it feels ... when..." is (I think) a statement from the natural attitude, the assumption that everyone's experience is pretty much the same. Sooner or later we will have to practice bracketing that.

56:53 AB: So I guess, I mean, just to a like, follow up on Russ's refinement of my question. Um, I'm not meaning to presume anything about his experience. I'm like, what's, I guess, okay... What's the difference between asking a question that presumes something about Michael's experience and asking a question that asks him to say more about whatever the experience is? I mean, what I was trying to do (and maybe failing, I mean, um) was just to like, like he said, he said, I knew, like he, he mentioned that there was this quality, um, that of him instructing himself not to say the thing out loud, to say it in his head. And my question was trying to get at like, *what is that?* Like, like I, what I was trying to ask was tell me more about how you knew that. Um, so I guess what's the difference between that and like asking which of these events was more salient? Um, do, do you see what I'm getting at?

58:11 RTH: So the, so I think your characterization of what he said was correct, but only half correct. The other half of his char, characterization was that there was no experience of this.

58:24 AB: Okay.

58:24 RTH: And your and your question honored only the first half and not the second half.

58:24 Russ comments: The “second half” is Michael’s statement (in 52:29) “Um, there wasn’t a huge thought pro, I don’t want to give the wrong impression. It wasn’t like there was some thought process like, *oh, you need to say this to yourself, don’t say it out loud* sort of thing.”

58:29 AB: Okay. I’m then, yeah.

58:32 RTH: So this, this is the, this is the kind of thing where, where actually going back and watching videotape is, is really the only way to, the only way to, to do it. And we could watch it together or whatever that, that. But the, I, I thi, I think his presentation of the, I’m saying this to myself, was very much shrouded in *this I know about myself because I’m, you know, 50 years old or however old I’m, and I’ve been doing this for 49 years or whatever. And, and, and, and there’s no direct experience in it.* [AB: Gotcha.] That’s the, that was, that was the [pause], the envelope in which the message was, *well, I’m, I’m saying this to myself*, but you only talked about what were the *contents* of the envelope rather than the *envelope* itself, I thought. And that was what I was worried about.

58:32 Russ comments: The epoché, as understood by Russ (and pirated from, but not necessarily the same as, Husserl), is to be genuinely absolutely (down to the cockles of your soul) as happy to hear that Michael’s *say it to yourself* had no particular experience as that it involved some particular experience. Only then can you genuinely help Michael to describe the nuances of his experience. To the extent that you have a preference / belief / suspicion / theory about consciousness that leads to one side or the other of this possibility, it *will* screw you up.

St. Augustine wrote

Therefore once for all this short command is given to you: ‘Love and do what you will.’ If you keep silent, keep silent by love; if you speak, speak by love; if you correct, correct by love; if you pardon, pardon by love; let love be rooted in you, and from the root nothing but good can grow.

I’m no religious scholar, but I think the sentiment applies if you substitute “be genuinely concerned with Michael’s inner experience” for “love.” Augustine’s exegesis of his command is a more eloquent version of what I have written as “Words don’t matter.”

59:30 AB: Gotcha.

59:31 Michael: I see.

59:32 RTH: *And* I would say, I’m not a, I’m, I don’t consider myself a perfect observer of these things. I’m telling you what I thought, and I might very well be mistaken about that. And, and, uh, that’s one of the reasons why I do transcripts and comments and transcripts and whatever: keep myself honest and open to criticism.

1:00:01 Michael: Uh, my main takeaway from this whole thing is that I'm now 50, which is great! [they laugh]. I'm gonna go home and tell my wife! Um, so are we moving, uh, to,

1:00:19 RTH: So there's still, let's go, let's go to the back of it. Let's go to the back.

1:00:22 Michael: Oh. Oh, okay.

1:00:24 RTH: So Agnes was about to ask about the turning away.

1:00:24 Russ comments: RTH mischaracterizes Agnes. She had said (50:52) "turning around."

1:00:28 Michael: Oh, it was actually turning towards, but...

1:00:30 AB: Right. Sorry. Turning towards. Um, [pause] I forget what I was gonna ask about.

1:00:39 RTH: So let me, let me ask, let me comment right there. So was it a turning *towards* or a turning *away* experientially?

1:00:47 Michael: Oh, well, experientially, it was turning my back away.

1:00:51 RTH: That's right. [Michael: Yeah.] So this is the, the, so this is a, this is how the, why these words are words are important or whatever. [Michael: Yeah.] but not, but not at all important! In the real world...

1:01:02 Michael: So it was definitely, I was definitely, yeah, go ahead. In

1:01:04 RTH: In the real world, he was turning towards. In the experiential world, he's turning away. [Michael: Yep.] And...

1:01:04 Russ comments: This is an epoché calisthenic. We have to learn to relentlessly discriminate between the real world (the natural attitude) and the experiential world (the world of experience).

1:01:12 Michael: Specifically I was, I was making sure my back was not visible to them. That's right.

1:01:20 RTH: Right. And this conversation, of course, is an aimed-at-tomorrow kind of conversation as well. And, and also a returning to Agnes's question of, of, of earlier that that, that we don't want to accept the correct physicality—correct from the physical point of view of turning towards—when the experiential was of aiming his back away. And, uh...

1:01:51 Michael: Right. Yeah. But it's very clearly, I, I said turning towards because I was thinking of the fact that I was turning to face them, but, but you're right. The, the, the, the whatever thought was guiding that experience, and there was not an explicit thought, but whatever thought was guiding it was *turn your back away*.

- 1:02:12 AB: I don't remember what I was gonna ask. Like, I'm, I'm too [inaudible] [waves her hands around her head].
- 1:02:17 RTH: Yeah, I, my my guess is that we've come to the end of the end of our hour, and, and it's not only a clock hour, but it's an experiential hour that we've... That, an hour is a long time. And, uh, so we probably ought to de, determine whether we wanna do this again and if so, when.
- 1:02:35 Michael: Okay.
- 1:02:38 RTH: And I would say, I, I, I would say part of my process is *always* to ask "whether we're gonna do it again." And I *don't* want that to imply that I *don't* wanna do that again. What I want us, what I *mean* by that is I would like us to consider our, each of us as free agents, and we just, because we have said some time in the past that we might do this for a while, that doesn't mean that we're still wanna do it for a while. So we we're always, we're free agents at each, at each step of the way.
- 1:03:07 Michael: Um, I'm, I'm happy to do it again. Uh, while we're thinking about that, I guess I have another question. Um, and that is, um, so you said earlier, but, but on day, the first time we talked, I think you called that day zero, that you do 10, or sorry, you do six [sampled experiences] in an hour. And we've done three and then two [laughs] in an hour. [laughs]. And I don't know if there's something that I could do. I, I don't know if that's a good thing, a bad thing, a neutral thing, if there's something I should be doing differently to get us up to more than two. Um, or what,
- 1:03:49 RTH: So what what I, what I think about that is that when I say we can do six in an hour, that is: if the, if the goal is primarily to find out about Michael's experience, then we could probably do some number of approaching six. But our, our, what has turned out to be the case here is that we've spent a fair amount of time talking about Agnes's questions and [Michael: Mm-hmm] and DES philosophy in general and, and whatever. And that stuff takes time. [Michael: Right.] And so it is, if Michael should *not* think of this, the fact that we've only gotten to two, as a failure of *Michael*. What he should think of it, I think, is more as a, he has provided the occasion for some interesting conversations between not only about Michael's experience, but about Agnes's questions and DES and what I, what Russ thinks and [Michael: Okay.] And that, and all that stuff takes time.
- 1:04:43 Michael: I don't mind, cuz the one, the one that was coming next was the one that made me upset and now I don't have to talk about it! [Michael and Agnes laugh]
- 1:04:50 RTH: Well, I'm sorry to have missed that! [smiles wryly] And, and, and I would say it could it, so about this conversation, it could be that we should spend more time talking about Michael's experience.
- 1:05:08 Michael: I, I, I'm, I'm happy to do whatever people feel is the right thing to do. I just didn't, I just didn't know if, if there was something I was doing that was like causing this to go slower than you're used to.

1:05:21 RTH: I don't think, I don't think *at all*. I don't think that's true *at all*.

1:05:24 Michael: Okay.

1:05:25 RTH: If the, if, yeah. Well, I think your, your comment here, this, this conversation highlights the complexity of the interactions that we're having here.

1:05:37 Michael: Okay.

1:05:38 RTH: And y'know, it's Michael talking to Russ and Agnes, and Russ talking to Agnes and Agnes talking to Russ, and Agnes talking to the world of philosophy, and Russ talking to the world of philosophy, and all that, all those things are [Michael: Okay.] woven into this tapestry. And, uh, and, and they take time to,

1:06:00 Michael: To be honest, I'm, I'm actually not paying so much attention to many of those things right now, even though I am also a professional philosopher. I'm actually, I'm finding it the task of just doing *the thing* sufficiently taxing that that's where all my headspace is.

1:06:18 RTH: So maybe, maybe the moral to this story is that the next time around we should focus more on what Michael says, and not the, if I feel the need to correct the one of Agnes's questions, I, we should correct it, but not talk about why. I, I'll just correct it and then we can leave the discussion about that till later, the comments in the, in the transcripts or whatever. But try to keep the questions aimed at Michael.

1:06:46 Michael: S what I'll do, I'm happy to do whatever. I just, um,

1:06:48 AB: I mean, that might be hard for me personally because if, like, I, like if you tell me my question is wrong and I don't understand why, then that makes it difficult. Like, I wanna understand why it's wrong.

1:07:01 RTH: Well, what I would, what I would say is that in, in the comment, the, the commentary in the transcripts, which you have said so far, you're not gonna look at my commentary is much about that. It's about, this is... My comments in the commentary are much of the same kinds of things that we've been talking about here today that were not directly about Michael's experience. So you might want to, change your mind about whether you wanna see those, or *not* change your mind about whether you wanna see those comments. They're all there ...you have, you have said, "I don't wanna see them," but you can change your mind about that at any moment.

1:07:37 AB: Okay. I mean, yeah, I guess maybe I should see them! [laughs]

1:07:41 RTH: So I would say, think about that and then get back to me. [AB: Okay.] Tell me what, what you wanna see.

1:07:48 The, the deal about the com, the comments is: there is a possibility (and I'm not, and I *don't* want us by the fact that I am doing it, I don't want us to put my thumb on the scale of whether we should or not). But there is the *possibility* that we will

make this conversations available to a wider audience than just the three of us. And, and I am putting in some comments that I think might be useful to somebody who would be interested in this conversation. And I find it...

1:08:20 Michael: I, I would like to see the comments. I just don't wanna see them right now.

1:08:22 RTH: Yeah. And I, and I find it most, poss po, possible, I guess, to, to write those comments when they're happening, rather, I can't, I just can't, you know, 10 months from now or 2 months from now or whatever, go back and, and, and try to reconstruct what I thought was important then. So if I'm, if I'm ever gonna write the comments, I gotta do it now. [Michael: That makes sense.][AB: Yeah.] But that doesn't mean you have to look at them now. And, uh,

1:08:47 AB: Well then send, send me the comments as well. Um, I have to get going though, so if we're gonna make a plan, we should do it ASAP or over email.

They compare calendars

1:09:53 RTH: Okay. All right. Thank you all very much. I think these conversations are totally interesting. Michael, I think you're doing a great job. I think you're, you're providing the opportunity for us to have interesting conversations in a variety of ways.

1:10:04 Michael: Okay. Appreciate it. Thank you.

1:10:09 RTH: See you all Thursday. Thursday at 12. And I will send Agnes the materials and she can look at them to the extent that she wants to and decide, well, now that I've seen that one, I don't wanna see the rest of 'em or whatever. She's free agent in that regard too.

1:09:35 Michael: Sounds good.

1:09:36 AB: See you then.