

Michael D.
Michael D. Interview 4
Sampling Day 4

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February 17 interview with Michael that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/scEIyCNyVfs>. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

AB = Agnes Bolinska

Michael = Michael D.

0:02 RTH: Okay, so now we're recording and we've got the sound issues ironed out, I think.

0:08 Michael: I think so.

0:11 RTH: And this is going to be Michael's fourth day, I think. Fourth day

0:18 Michael: I've been labeling them. So I, yes, unless I missed a day, it's fourth. Yep.

0:23 RTH: The first day is the zeroth day when we talked about the

0:26 Michael: Right, I picked up on that. So I, I also start counting at zero, so that's fine.

0:30 RTH: Okay. And so, so do you think this is the fourth day?

0:34 Michael: I do.

0:34 RTH: I do too.

0:36 Michael: I also do, for whatever it's worth! [they laughs]

0:38 RTH: Alright! We at least can all count to four. Give us [laughs]

0:43 Michael: Starting at zero!

0:44 RTH: [laughs] Give us, give us credit for that. So anything else that we should be talking about and, uh, before we look at beeps? [Michael: Nope.] Then I would say, let's go for beep number 1. [Michael: Okay.] And I thought, I thought basically our, our, our logic last time worked pretty well. We got through five beeps, and we should, we should try that again, which is basically to keep the questions about process off to the side and try to focus on Michael's experience.

1:11 Michael: Okay.

1:13 RTH: Number 1.

Sample 4.1 discussion starts here

1:14 Michael: Number one, these are all from this morning. Um, I was standing in front of the coffee maker in my kitchen. Um, and I was, uh, vaguely, y'know, I don't know, maybe this is a 20—80 kind of a thing, vaguely aware of the green light that was on as it was brewing the coffee. Um, and I was listening to, and, and singing (if you can call it singing) along with, so the coffee maker makes an F# followed by a B, is goes BA DA [sings low interval] not, it's not a musical thing. Like I'm not talking, it doesn't like have that programmed in. It's just that the vibration of the thing, that's what it sounds like when it first starts up. It's Ba and then when it starts brewing the coffee, it goes Ba it's, it's a little rougher than that. It's not quite as musical as that. But if you're like me and you listen to everything for musical pitch, those are the pitches you hear. And, um, I was actually, I'm very familiar with this coffee maker of course. And so I was singing along with it, Ba Ba.

2:24 And the beep went off somewhere in there. I said it was 20—80 kind of a thing, but it was more like, it's more like a 10—40—50 kind of a thing where the other 50 was, I was just brain dead. I wasn't really very aware of anything. But to the extent that I was aware of anything, it was seeing the green light and the Ba Da singing along to the coffee maker. So I would say that the singing was both productive and, and auditory. I was both listening to it and myself and producing those same tones.

3:00 RTH: So is the, is your, so is the, the 40 is the, is the coffee-maker sound I gather, or the singing? Well,

3:08 Michael: The, the, the, the combination of the coffee maker sound and me singing. I don't know if I can distinguish the, like, the levels of awareness of those two, because they were com they were all one thing.

3:20 RTH: So I'm singing that... The 40 is, I'm singing along with the coffeemaker.

3:26 Michael: Yes. [RTH: Okay.] And the 10 was the green light.

3:27 RTH: And the 10 is, and the 10 is, I see the green light.

3:29 Michael: Yeah.

3:30 RTH: Okay. And then there's another 50 there, which, which is nothing-ish.

3:34 Michael: Yeah. I mean, if, if, yeah. I mean, I don't know, I mean, maybe this is a weird way of breaking it down because it sounds like there's some like constant level of mental awareness and, and 50% of it was like just not operative or something like that. I maybe that's a, an incorrect way of characterizing these things. But I, but what I, what the point I'm trying to make is: the level of consciousness was pretty low [laughs].

4:01 RTH: That's what I, that's what I understood. I, I didn't understand you to be saying *I was aware that I was 50%*.

4:08 Michael: Oh, no, I certainly wasn't that.

4:09 RTH: Yeah, it was, I understood you to be saying, I am, to the degree that I'm doing anything, this is what's happening, but it's not, doesn't seem as powerful as some other, some of my other experiences.

4:18 Michael: That's correct.

4:21 RTH: And, uh, the 40-ish is both a hearing of the actual coffee maker and a singing and a production, singing and a hearing singing of my, myself.

4:34 Michael: All, all those three things are involved. And I actually did, I mean, on the basis of previous, of these sessions, when the beeper went off, I really tried to think, okay. *Was one of these things like...* Well, first thing I did was I just tried to identify, okay, what was in my consciousness in the first place. And then I asked myself the question, *was one of these things sort of more prevalent than the others?* Like, was I really attending to the production of the sound or to the, or to my own sound, or to the coffee maker sound? And I just couldn't, I couldn't see, I couldn't justify saying anything to myself other than they were all equally present.

5:13 RTH: Okay. And so I'm happy with that portion. Agnes, you wanna say anything more about that?

5:19 AB: I'm happy with that portion.

5:21 Okay. Then there's the green light, which I understand is something like, I'm seeing the green light. [Michael: Yeah.] And is it, I'm seeing this light that happens to be green? Or am I particularly interested in the green-ness of it?

5:35 Michael: I think, um, I mean, first of all, I, I should say that there was no, there was no explicit *thought* along the lines of *I'm seeing a green light*. It was just that I was aware of, of its presence. And I, I would say that it's the greenness more than anything that was present to me.

5:55 RTH: So for some reason, the greenness of that light is entering my explicitized consciousness, or whatever you wanna call it.

6:03 Michael: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, [RTH: But not much.] Not much. But I was definitely looking at the green light, and I was aware that, of its greenness.

6:11 RTH: Okay. And I'm good about that. Agnes? Agnes?

6:16 AB: Yeah, I think I'm good too.

6:17 RTH: Then. I'm good about it, sample number 1.

6:21 Michael: Okay. Um,

6:24 RTH: And sample number 2 is yours, if you want in Agnes.

6:27 AB: Okay. Let me try my best to ask the not-wrong questions.

Sample 4.2 discussion starts here

6:32 Michael: Okay. Well, this one's not too dissimilar to the previous one in the sense that I was kind of just staring blankly when it went off. But there I was, I was vaguely aware of the following. Um, I was in the middle of typing a word. [I was, I was grading a paper, but that's, I wasn't thinking about the fact that I was grading a paper, but that's what I was doing.] I, I was in middle of typing, the word "doesn't," and I had gotten through "*d·o·e·s*" (and this, this is a rare case where I'm pretty sure I know exactly when the beep happened.) I think it happened right after I typed the letter *s* and before I finished typing the word. Um, most of the time, I, I, I don't wanna swear to when it happened relative to the experience I'm describing, but in this case, maybe because my mind was so empty at the moment [laughs] that I, I, it was easy for me to, at least, it felt easy to say "yes, the beep happened between *s* and *n* of '*doesn't*'."

7:33 Other than that I was kind of just staring at those letters. Um. And maybe there was some vague sense that those were the, those were the letters of an unfinished word, cuz I was in the middle of typing that word. Um, so I, I wasn't really looking at the letters as... So I, I definitely had the sense that it's an incomplete word. I mean, I, I realize that the word *does* is in some sense not incomplete, but it was incomplete relative to, to where I was going in the typing. And I had some sense of it not being finished yet. And that was it. I wasn't saying anything to myself. I wasn't, visually, I was just seeing those letters. I wasn't (for one time in my life) hearing anything. It was just that.

8:33 AB: So, um, you're in the middle of typing the word *doesn't*. Um, you are seeing the letters on the screen, the *d·o·e·s*.

8:49 Michael: And those are the only letters I'm seeing too. I, I made a note of that actually. [AB: Mm-hmm.] So, I mean, obviously it's surrounded by, by other words. [AB: Mm-hmm.] And I, I shouldn't say "obviously" because you don't know what I was typing. But it *was* surrounded by other words and not just in front of it, but below it as well, because I was going back in that moment and editing something. So, so the, the screen was full of words, but for whatever reason, when I thought about *what were you actually seeing?* only those four Ie only those four letters really struck me as the things I was aware of in the moment.

9:24 AB: Okay. So there's this visual aspect. Um, and then you mentioned that, um, there's this vague sense that, um, that this word is unfinished. Um... [pause]

- 9:47 Michael: Yeah. I mean, the way I put it to myself in the, at the moment, (and this is why I wrote my little notes here), was I'm seeing them as letters leading to the final word, not as a completed word.
- 10:00 AB: So was that, when you say "I'm seeing them as letters that are part of a word, not as a completed word," you just said, "I'm seeing them as," so is the vague sense a visual sense then?
- 10:19 Michael: Yes. It's vi this thing is visually incomplete.
- 10:23 AB: Okay. So would you say the whole experience is visual?
- 10:31 Michael: Yes.
- 10:34 AB: Okay.
- 10:35 Michael: When the beep went off, I couldn't think of anything that I was aware of that wasn't visual.
- 10:40 AB: Okay. I think those are all my questions.
- 10:46 RTH: So I thought those were good questions, but I have one, uh, one other question. And that is: Are you saying when you, when there wasn't anything else, that there's, that the semantics is not present? It was, I didn't have in mind that the sentence was saying, well, this doesn't make sense, or whatever the sentence was.
- 11:02 Michael: It was something like that. But I, but I was *not* thinking of the semantics of the sentence at the time.
- 11:09 RTH: So the semantics were obviously in play—you're typing semantically, reasonable, relevant words. [Michael: I hope so.] But as far as your experience is concerned, it's just the visual.
- 11:21 Michael: Yeah, that's right.
- 11:22 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good. And I guess I, well, I guess I should say, do you the, I should ask in later some previous are: do these, do you see the letters as they are?
- 11:38 Michael: Yes. Okay.
- 11:42 RTH: Then I think I'm good. On to number 3.

[Sample 4.3 discussion starts here](#)

- 11:46 Michael: On to number 3. Okay. I, um, I was driving, um, and I was noticing, so not just, I would say I, I was noticing, but not with words, but I was noticing the darkness. It was early morning. Um, and I was also noticing the lack of cars and the lack of people. It was like 5:15 or 5:20 in the morning. So not exactly surprising that there

were no cars or people out, but I was taking in the fact that there were no cars or people around. And I was singing. So I'm trying to learn a new song, and I was singing it to myself. And it's a style that I'm not used to.

12:36 This is all background, but it'll, I think it'll help explain the situation. Um, the, the, the original song is a little bit shouty in how the guy sings it, which I usually sing a little bit more lyrically. So I was really trying to pay attention to the, the words I was singing at the time were, "we're all," uh, the phrase is (I didn't finish it cuz the beep happened) but "we're all taking the same steps" is the entire phrase. I only got through "we're all" before I stopped because of the beep. But in particular, I was paying a special attention to the feeling of the *re* of "we're," and specifically the feeling of where my tongue in my mouth is, because I was trying to figure out how to emulate the particular sound. I would almost describe it as chewing on that word, [laughs].

13:33 Um, the guy who sings it that I'm trying to emulate, it's kind of, we are all, he kind of really chews on the *er* part. And I think his tongue is probably very high in his mouth when he does it. And I was paying attention. I was *singing* it, and I was paying attention to where my tongue was in my mouth, especially the rear part of my tongue. Um, and I was also paying attention to, because of the shout-y-ness of it, I was also paying attention to how it sounds in my, how it *feels* in my throat. And for those reasons, I *know* that I was singing out loud. Not that that matters because the experience would've been the same either way, but I was in fact singing out loud.

14:21 RTH: [pause] That's the end of the exposition there?

14:22 Michael: That is the end of the exposition. Sorry, that was a bit long with probably lots of irrelevant stuff, but,

14:28 RTH: So I'm driving. Is that in my experience at all?

14:32 Michael: Not really, no. I'm, I am noticing the lack of cars and people. So to whatever extent that's connected to the act of driving, I suppose. But no, I wasn't thinking about driving while, while this was going on.

14:44 RTH: And then there's the noticing, the lack of cars and lack of people and the darkness. Is, are those three things, two things, or one thing?

14:52 Michael: Two things. Darkness and cars/people. I think darkness is one thing, and cars/people are kind of together.

15:00 RTH: And then there's the whole singing thing. [Michael: Right.] Which you yet, so there's a, there's at least depending on how you count, three things going on. Darkness, cars/people, and singing. [Michael: Yes.] And maybe four things, depending if you divide singing up into tongue and sound, or whatever.

15:15 Michael: Right.

15:16 RTH: But, and, and, and does it make sense to ask about percentages Relatively speaking?

15:23 Michael: I, most of my attention was on the singing part. Um,

15:29 RTH: 60—40? 90—10?

15:29 Michael: No! No, not 90—10. 60—40, 70—30, something like that.

15:33 RTH: Okay. And then between the darkness and the lack of cars, people,

15:42 Michael: Those were equal, they have equal shares of the,

15:46 RTH: So 60—20, 60—2—20 or something like that. 70—15—15.

15:51 Michael: Yeah, something like that.

15:52 RTH: I don't really care about the numbers, but [Michael: Right.] so I got the, it gives me the sense that it's substantially more about the singing portion than about the

16:00 Michael: That's correct.

16:02 RTH: Okay. So about the singing portion, I am in fact singing.

16:08 Michael: Yes.

16:10 RTH: And is my experience mostly? Predominantly? Evenly? whatever, about the tongue, tongue stuff. Tongue and throat, I guess?

16:21 Michael: I, it's about the tongue and the throat, but those are really two, those are, they're related, cuz they're both connected though, trying to produce the sound, the, the particular kind of tonal quality that I was trying to produce. But they are distinct elements of that. And I was paying attention to both of them.

16:39 RTH: And am I also paying attention to the sound?

16:42 Michael: Not in that moment. It was really all, this was more about *production* than it was about *listening*. I was paying attention to how it feels.

16:54 RTH: And how tongue-y and throat-y feels.

16:59 Michael: Yeah. Well, I would say it's a little more specific than that. So I was specifically, I was paying attention to the shape of the back of my tongue in my mouth. How high is it in my mouth? And I was also... I mean, this might, this is probably thinking about this sort of thing, probably is connected. The fact that I played French horn for a long, long time, and we were always talking about this sort of thing. So I just naturally think about where my tongue is in my mouth. But I was, I was paying attention to, specifically to the back of the tongue. And how high is it in my mouth, in the back of my mouth. And then as far as the throat goes, I, I'm trying to, I, I'm trying to learn how to sing this in a way that produces the, the slightly (Uh! what's the right word?)

- 17:53 I don't know. It doesn't matter, cuz this isn't part of the experience. But I was, it produces the sound that this guy produces without wrecking my own voice. So he, he sounds like he's shouting. I don't think he is, but I think he, but it has that quality to it. And I *could* produce that by just shouting myself, which would be a good way to wreck my voice for the rest of the day, and maybe for longer. So I'm focused on paying attention to how it feels in my throat so that it doesn't feel painful in my throat. So I'm trying to produce the sound. And so, you know how if you shout a lot, you can feel it's almost a little bit painful in your throat. I'm trying to pay attention and make sure that I *don't have* that feeling as I'm singing.
- 17:53 Russ comments: In interview 0 (before sampling), Michael had thought that experience has many layers (recall the snooker example at day 0 from 26:49 to 33:54), and that it would be difficult or impossible to tease them apart. For example, at day 0 at 30:41 he says:
It feels like the difficulty of the task might be in distinguishing between what am I actually conscious of right before the beep versus how might I reconstruct [laughs] what I was conscious of right before the beep. And that reconstruction could include all kinds of stuff that wasn't actually in consciousness at the time. It's just stuff that I *know* is true. And I somehow put that into the story even though it's not part of like what I'm directly experiencing at the time.
Now, on day 4, he seems quite confident in his ability to make those distinctions.
- 18:37 RTH: Okay. So, so let's, let's stick with the tongue for a minute, and then go back to the throat. So about the, the tongue, the, the experience of the tongue is the *height* of the tongue, mostly.
- 18:53 Michael: I'm feeling the high, how high it is in the back of my mouth. Yes.
- 18:56 RTH: And so that I gather, and that's a question like they all are, but I gather that this is, I've, I muscularly *have put* my tongue, my tongue up high, and now I'm feeling it there, rather than I am *trying to* put my tongue up high at the moment of this beep. Is that right?
- 19:15 Michael: That's right. I, I, I didn't, I did not intentionally put it in the position it was in. I was singing and, uh, I, I felt for whatever reason (this was before, this was like right before the beep. But I, i not right before, a little bit before what I'm talking about) but I felt for whatever reason, that I had done it correctly. And I was trying to pay attention to where my tongue was so that I could repeat it.
- 19:44 RTH: So this is, as far as the tongue is concerned, this is, uh, noticing, noticing where it is rather than a trying to put it there.
- 19:53 Michael: That's correct.
- 19:57 RTH: And then the throat, is that, is that the same kind of a deal? I'm noticing what it's doing rather than trying to do it?

- 20:03 Michael: Yes. I'm, it's almost like monitoring how it feels and making sure that I don't start doing something that creates any kind of discomfort strain in my throat. Yeah. Strain is a better way of putting it.
- 20:23 RTH: But these are, these are predominantly sensory aspects. I am noticing the sensory aspects in my tongue and throat...
- 20:34 Michael: Yes.
- 20:35 RTH: ...and not so much the sensory aspect of the sound that I am making. I'm making it, but it
- 20:42 Michael: Yeah, that's right. I wasn't paying a whole lot of attention to the sound. I mean, if we had to give it numbers, it would get like, like 5%. [RTH: Mm-hmm.] I, I don't think I was totally unaware of the sound, but that's not really what I was focused on at all.
- 20:54 RTH: Okay. And it is a fact that you're trying to get this shout-y sense, but I'm, I took that, (and this is a question) I took that as being more background than experience
- 21:17 Michael: In this, in this moment. There was no sense of the intentionality of trying to produce that.
- 21:25 RTH: Then I think I'm good about the singing portion. Agnes, are you happy with that?
- 21:28 AB: I, I'm good about the singing portion. Did we, I have a question about the other one, but did we, we're getting to that?
- 21:34 RTH: We haven't gotten there yet. [AB: Okay.] So then, then the, the other two are the noticing of the darkness and the noticing, the lack of cars, whichever would you like to tell me about, tell us about first?
- 21:45 Michael: Um, uh, how much is there to tell? I was aware of it's being dark. I was aware that there was no one else around. I, I'm not, I, I think I, I think I need to respond to a question at this point. I'm not sure what you're looking for.
- 22:09 RTH: So let's, let's go with the darkness. So do I, I'm, I'm understanding that it *is* dark [Michael: It is dark.] and my, and the darkness, whatever that is, is falling on my eyeballs. So I am seeing the darkness [Michael: Mm-hmm.] But it seems like it's somewhat more than just seeing the darkness. It is. Or maybe it's not. Maybe it is. I'm just, I mean, all the aspects that I could see, I mean, I could see the car over there and I could see the pavement in whatever, what I'm seeing, the dark, dark stuff.
- 22:43 Michael: So if you had asked me to report, if you had asked me to report this experience two weeks ago, I would've said to you that I was noticing that it's early morning, but that would've been wrong, I *think*, based on what's happened over the last two weeks, because I wasn't having a thought that it's early morning or anything like that, that

would be like a reconstruction [laughs] of the *import* of the experience itself. But the experience itself was just, *it's dark and there's no people*.

23:17 RTH: And is that a visual experience? [Michael: Yes.] Or a cognitive experience, or...?

23:21 Michael: I think it's primarily visual. I mean, I don't know. I mean, I guess in some sense, seeing that there are no people has gotta have some cognitive element to it. [RTH: (inaudible)] And I definitely feel like it was a, seeing that there are no people. Um, but it wasn't, yeah....

23:40 RTH: So I guess the difference would about the people (and the cars...) it would be *I see empty streets*. That could be a, an entirely visual phenomenon. *And* I was seeing, I'm gonna have to tell these guys about it....

23:54 Michael: I was seeing the emptiness, if you like. [RTH: Okay.] So it wasn't, in other words, to see, you could say, I'm seeing empty streets, but the focus of your experience is, let's say, the *street*. But that's not what I was focused on. I was focused on the *emptiness* of the streets, and the sidewalks for that matter.

24:10 RTH: Okay. And does that focus, does that seem like a primarily a visual thing? Yes. Am seeing the emptiness?

24:18 Michael: Yes.

24:19 RTH: In, in more or less the same way as I was seeing the greenness of the coffee maker light? [Michael: Yes.] So clearly there's gotta be some cognitive or whatever neurological structures that are making me see the greenness of it, rather than the shape of it or the brightness of it or whatever, but

24:38 Michael: Right.

24:40 RTH: But it seems like I'm, I'm just seeing that. [Michael: Yep.] Then I think I'm good about that. Did that answer your questions, Agnes? Or you got more?

24:51 AB: Uh, I have one other question. Um, so Michael, when you initially described the, the visual component, um, in addition to saying that you were *noticing* the darkness and *noticing* the lack of cars and lack of people, you also said that you're *taking in* the fact that there are not people around. And I was wondering whether that *taking in* was part of the visual experience of seeing that there are no people? Or whether you intended that as a distinct part of your experience.

25:30 Michael: I think there, there was this, this could be No, I'm, I'm, I'm making too many inferences now. I don't, I don't think I can answer that question. I think if I answer that, I think I'll be making up an answer to that question at this point. [AB: Okay.] I acknowledge the question. I just don't think I can give a good answer.

26:02 AB: I accept that you can't give an answer. [they laugh]

26:06 RTH: And I thought it was a reasonable question. And I, and I think that there are a lot of reasonable questions that don't have good answers. That's just the way it is.

26:14 AB: Okay. Well then those are all my questions.

26:17 RTH: Okay. Number 4.

Sample 4.4 discussion starts here

26:19 Michael: Okay. Number 4. Um, uh, I was, I was grading again, but now in my office, um, and I was, I had previous, so two, if we're talking about the moment before the beep, two moments before the beep, I had just finished typing the phrase "is surely too strong a statement," something I, the subject of that sentence is lost to my memory. But, um, but I was typing *something* "is too, *surely* too strong a statement." And then the moment before the beep, I was thinking to myself with, with inner speech of the irony of the fact that I had just said that something is *surely* too strong a statement, and that that statement *itself* was probably too strong. And so what I needed to, I needed to go back and revise it and say it was *probably* too strong of a statement. So I, so in the, the words that I spoke to myself were, "That's too strong!" But I was, when I, the *that* was referring to my own, my own statement being too strong. And I was aware of the irony of the fact that I was accusing somebody else of saying something too strong by saying something too strong to them. Um, that was, that statement was, um, I, I had, I had more of the sense of *production* of speech there than *hearing*, but I definitely also heard it.

27:58 And I wanna also use this opportunity to make sure that we're all clear about something that I'm, that when I wrote this down, I may, I, I wrote down a note to myself to say, "Hey, we should clarify something." [RTH: Do it!] Um, and that is, because it's come up several times, now: were you saying this out loud or were you not saying it out loud? And of course, there's an answer to that question. Uh, either, either the air was vibrating as a result of this activity or not. [RTH: Correct.] Um, and sometimes I'm aware of the answer to that question. So for example, in the, in one of the previous ones, I *know* that I was singing out loud, and I know that because I was paying attention to my throat.

28:40 But the experience is the same either way. There there's no auditory difference. And I, I've said this to people before in various contexts, and they look at me like I have three heads. Sorry, I mean, but that's just the way it is. When I speak to myself, whether it's out, whether it's whether the air vibrates or not, [laughs] I have a very hard time distinguishing between that and between air vibrating. And I hear it because the air vibrating goes into my ears and makes me hear something versus I don't know what the other process is, but it feels the same. When the air's not vibrating, I also hear something and it doesn't, it's, it's next to impossible without careful attention to distinguish from the first kind of experience. So I, I just wanted to emphasize that when I say I'm speaking and it's out loud or not out loud, or I don't know, from the point of view of my personal experience, unless I'm actually attending to whether it's out loud, the experience is the same.

- 29:44 RTH: So I've got a couple of things to say about that. One is: what you have said just now is pretty much exactly—or maybe just exactly—how I've understood what you have said in the past. [AB nods in agreement]
- 29:52 Michael: Okay, that's good. I just wasn't sure. And that's what I, that's why I made this note.
- 29:57 RTH: Yeah. So I, I, I, I feel like you're telling me something that, that I had already understood, and that's not, [Michael: Okay! That's good!] that's not a criticism by any means. I'm just saying that's [inaudible].
- 30:08 Michael: No. That makes me feel better! [laughs]
- 30:09 RTH: And the, and the other, the other thing is it highlights the importance, what, what, for me, the importance of the epoché between what's actually in the outside world and what's in experience. What, what's happening in the outside world *does not matter to me* in an important sense. I wanna know whether your *experience* is of speaking aloud or speaking [inaudible], or, or, or I can't tell the difference. And, and I'm gathering in many, maybe most, cases it's of the, I can't tell the difference.
- 30:39 Michael: That's correct. Uh, it is more likely I'm more likely to be attending to that when there are other people around. [RTH: Right.] Um, although, um, not always unfortunately. But that's, that's a different story.
- 30:51 RTH: And, *and* (I guess I would say one, one more thing about that). And, and that is a, I wanna be as even-handedly a *hearer* of what you're saying about that, regardless of whether you're saying, I hear it out loud, I hear it I can't tell, or, or I'm innerly speaking. And, and that the, the three-headed part, part does not apply to me.
- 31:14 Michael: I I didn't think it did actually. Um, you haven't given that impression. I hide the other two heads. They're off, they're off screen! [spreads his arms wide]
- 31:22 AB: [laughs].
- 31:26 Michael: Anyway, that, so sorry, I, maybe that was unnecessary, but I made a note to myself to clarify this point. So I did. And now we can move on.
- 31:36 AB: So, um, I understand that the first part that your typing "is surely too strong a statement" is just background for the experience of the beep, which is constituted by the inner speech, um, "was too strong" or "*that's* too strong."
- 31:59 Michael: "That's too strong" is what I said. And Yes. Um, the, so, so the way I characterize this, *two* moments before the beep, I had, I had [AB: Mm-hmm.] typed that phrase, and then right before the beep, (I mean, again, we already talked about this, like how much time are we actually talking about?), [AB: Um hmm] but right before the beep, I, I, I had, I was either right in the middle of, or I had just said, "that's too strong" with this kind of sense of the irony of the whole situation. .

- 32:30 AB: Mm. And is, so the entire experience of then is the, is that speech with the sense of the irony?
- 32:41 Michael: Yeah. There, I don't, I didn't, I couldn't, I couldn't conjure up any visual [AB: Mm-hmm.] at that moment. I think it was all saying to myself, that's too strong.
- 32:50 AB: Mm-hmm. And you mentioned that, um, there was production and hearing, but it was more of an emphasis on the production. [AB: Yeah.] Is that correct?
- 33:02 Michael: Yeah. I think that's re probably related to the fact that there was a sense of irony about it, because it was a sense of me chastising myself
- 33:14 AB: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.
- 33:15 Michael: More of a kind of productive thing. [AB: Mm-hmm] And yeah.
- 33:20 AB: And was the—I'm okay if the answer is no, if there is no experience [laughs]—however, I'm curious whether the irony was simply all contained within that statement "that's too strong." Um, I mean, you, you mentioned that, that the statement kind, I mean, I don't, I don't remember your, your exact word but words, but you said that it was like, part of the experience seemed to be noticing the irony and that noticing (sorry, I'm probably making too many assumptions. I'm realizing as I'm saying this), but I'm just curious about the, the irony, whether there's anything more to say. And if there isn't, then just say there isn't.
- 34:11 Michael: Well, the irony was in the, the irony was in the tone [AB: Okay.] that I said it to myself, right. So I, there wasn't a meta thought, *Oh, that's ironic*. [AB: Okay. Mm-hmm. Okay.] But, but the sense of irony was definitely present in the tone with which I said the words to myself.
- 34:28 AB: Gotcha.
- 34:29 RTH: And let me ask you the same question. I, I think, which I thought was a fair question. I think that, I think that's also a very difficult question to answer, but I'm gonna ask it a slightly different way. So I'm understanding that this is said with a sense of irony, that the, the irony is in the, in the speaking. [RTH: Mm-hmm.] And, and is there a sense of irony that goes beyond that? Or does it seem like I am saying this ironically and that covers the whole waterfront?
- 34:56 Michael: I, I, I, I think, I think the latter because when, when the beep went off and I, y'know, stopped and thought about, you know, *what was I just, what, what was I just experiencing?* That's when I had the meta thought. Oh, I said that to myself ironically. But I wasn't having that thought in the moment. I was *just doing it*. [RTH: Okay.] So it took that moment, I, and I, and I never would've reflected on it, had the beat not gone off, I just would've gone and changed the word, which I did anyway, of course. But, um, but I don't think I would've paused to reflect on the ironical nature of how I said that to myself. Um, but because the beep went off, that made me aware of the fact that I did in fact say it in the kind of ironical tone of voice.

35:48 RTH: Okay. Then are you happy, Agnes? Cuz I've got one more question that's... [AB: I'm, I'm happy.] So I, we talked about that at the beginning. This, this things are two, two beats before, there are two moments before the beep and then the moment before the beep. [Michael: Right.] And I would like to understand what exactly we mean by that. So is the moment of the beep here, the, "that's too strong"? Is that the caught-in-flight moment?

35:48 Russ comments: There are four noteworthy things about this question. First, RTH needs to clarify what Michael meant by "the moment before the beep" because of a potential for ambiguity when Michael was talking about "two moments before the beep" at 26:19. He needed to be sure that Michael's "the moment before the beep" is the same moment as DES calls "the moment of the beep" or "the last undisturbed moment before the beep." [Spoiler alert: it is.] Second, RTH has waited 9.5 minutes (since 26:19) to clarify that, because he didn't want a conversation about the procedure to interrupt the focus on the experience. Third, we are four days into sampling and RTH still feels the need to be confident that all participants are talking about the same moment. This is very typical in DES: Building the understanding of what is the moment and what is experience is an iterative process that often requires renewal well into sampling. Fourth, once RTH confirms that Michael's "the moment before the beep" is the same moment as DES calls "the moment of the beep," he does *not* instruct Michael to adopt the DES terminology. DES is not about the words. RTH is happy to continue to call it whatever is convenient for Michael as long as RTH is confident that they know what they are talking about.

36:19 Michael: Yes. That you, that, that the beep either? So I have this weird way of making these notes where I try to specify where the beep happened relative to the experience. And I put a little star where I think it might have happened [laughs]. [RTH: Okay.] Um, or I put a range. And in this particular case that it, it's, I, I *believe* that it, the beep happens somewhere after the word "too," but before the end of that sentence. So somewhere right in between "too" and "strong" is where the beep happened. I was in the midst of saying, "that's too strong." I finished the thought. I said the whole thing, but I think the beep happened midway through it.

37:01 RTH: Okay. So what I'm, what I'm hear from that is that this, this is pretty specific. This moment that we're talking about is pretty specific. It's, it's within the phrase "that's too strong." Probably in the latter half of that phrase somewhere. [Michael nods affirmatively] I can't tell you whether it's one quarter of a millisecond this way or that way, but the, but, but in there somewhere.

37:20 Michael: Yeah.

37:21 RTH: And that, and is, so what I really am trying to get at, is this somehow different from the "doesn't"? [of sample 4.2] Or is it just that this timing is slower? You were, you were pretty sure that the, the beep in the sample 4.2 was between the *s* and the *n*.

- 37:39 Michael: I **was** sure. And I, and, and the re I, I think, I think I was assisted in that certainty by the fact that the beeps somehow immediately stopped me from typing, could stop me continuing typing. [RTH: Okay.] But it didn't stop. (I, I, I don't know why this would be the case. I don't have an explanation here), but somehow the beep stopped my fingers moving [laughs], but the beep does not stop me from finishing sentences that I'm speaking.
- 38:05 RTH: Okay, fair enough. So what I gather from that is that the, that the, the experience of the beep is pretty clear for you. *I know when the beep is happening*. I's not like I am, uh, you know, within a few seconds of each other. It's within, we're, we're talking about tenths of seconds.
- 38:21 Michael: I think. I, I think that's an, I think that's, um, that has *developed* over the course of these, these four sessions. I think the, in the, in the, in the initial ones, I feel like I was much less certain about when it was occurring, and (I could be fooling myself, right, so you should ob obviously you should always hold that hypothesis out), but I do feel like I'm getting better at, at, at noticing exactly when it happens relative to the stream of experience.
- 38:54 RTH: Good. And, and I, and I felt a little bad when I said something about a tenths of seconds or whatever, because I didn't really, uh, it sounded like, it sounded *to me* like I was talking about clock time when I talked about tenths of seconds. But I don't really think that's true. I think I'm talking about experiential time. [Michael: Uhhuh (affirmative).] and, and your experience might be offset by the clock, or whatever. But, but the beep is, the beep seems pretty securely attached to how, wherever that offset is or whatever that is what I understand you to be saying. [Michael: Yes.] Then I'm good about number 4. On to number 5? [AB: Yeah.] Number 5.

Sample 4.5 discussion starts here

- 39:36 Michael: Okay. Um, so this is another case of singing to myself. Uh, it was still early morning, um, and I was actually singing the very same song I was singing before, because I'm obsessed with it at the moment. [laughs] Uh, and I was singing the, the words "we've been had." Um, and again, it was out loud. I was actually paying attention to the same things I was (well, I wasn't paying attention to my tongue because there was no need to for this particular phrase), but I was paying attention to my vocal cords. Um, I wasn't singing particularly loudly. Um, but it was out loud.
- 40:21 And at the same time as that was going on, uh, I was, uh, searching, [I was grading a logic quiz] and I was searching for a parenthesis. Um, so maybe, maybe a bit of background. I, I wasn't so previous to that. I had asked myself the question, not out loud. Um, not even really in words. But the question was, it, it, *has the student left out a parenthesis or have they put it in the wrong place?* I, I was attempting to resolve that question. So I was visually, I was searching for a, for a parenthesis in the inside, the student's answer. And I was at the same time singing. "We've been had" probably about that loud.
- 41:12 RTH: Is one of those more dominant predominant?

- 41:14 Michael: I probably the searching for the parenthesis. I think that we've been, I think the singing part was kind of a little bit on autopilot, cuz I had been singing it all morning to myself. Um, but I *was* paying attention to my throat, so it wasn't completely autopilot. Um, but, but I, I think the, I was more engaged in the grading process than I was in the singing process.
- 41:39 RTH: 80—20? 70—30? 60—40?
- 41:40 Michael: Yeah. Something like that.
- 41:45 RTH: And, so I'm searching for the parenthesis. And the reason that I'm searching for the parenthesis is because I hadn't found it yet or whatever, and it was trying to match up parenthesis.
- 41:55 Michael: Yeah. So you could say that the, there's a visual experience of the student's handwriting on the page. But, but that wasn't really what was important to me in the moment. I mean, I was looking at it of course, cuz that's where you're searching for the parenthesis, but it was really more the act of looking for the parenthesis amongst the student's writing than it was paying attention to anything that was not that parenthesis.
- 42:22 RTH: And so, do I see a model parenthesis that I'm looking for? Or is, or am I just, I am visually processing what coming in and when I get to the close parenthesis, I'll stop searching?
- 42:37 Michael: Uh, the latter.
- 42:40 RTH: Okay. And that's occupying most of my experience, but it's in a receptive, maybe not "receptive" but in a trying, in a, trying to find and when I find it, I'll know, I'll know it. I'll be, I'll be done.
- 43:00 Michael: Yeah. I would, I mean, I would just, I, I, I don't have good words for this, but I, I think the experience is very much like any experience of looking for something. You're not really focused in on things that *aren't* the thing you're looking for. Obviously there's somehow they're, you're *engaged* with them to some extent, cuz you have to, I somehow identify that's not it. But I wasn't pausing for any length of time attentionally on the stuff. That was *not it*. I was looking for *it*.
- 43:29 RTH: Okay. And I think I'm good about that aspect. Agnes? [AB: Yeah, I'm good on that.] And then I am singing to myself. And *so far* what I have heard about that is that *mostly* I am attending to my throat.
- 43:47 Michael: Yeah.
- 43:48 RTH: Mostly or entirely?
- 43:50 Michael: No, only mostly. I, I, I, I was aware of the, the, of the words I was singing

- 43:56 RTH: And of the words? O the sound of the words? Or the,
- 44:02 Michael: Actually I, yeah, that Alright, that's fair. More of the sound than the words themselves.
- 44:07 RTH: And by *sound* do we mean the auditory thing or the *feeling aspect* of the,
- 44:14 Michael: The qua? Uh, the *quality* of the sound. Because the thing I'm really working on is trying to get the right tone quality without destroying my throat. And so I was aware of the, I, I, I was singing the words "we've been had," but I was not focused on those words particularly. I was focused on the tone quality.
- 44:32 RTH: Okay. And all of that, the, all the song portion is 30% or 20%.
- 44:44 Michael: Yeah. Something like 30%. I, I had been doing it all morning at this point. It was on, it was a little bit on autopilot, but I was not unaware of it.
- 44:52 RTH: So in the, in the little-bit-autopilot way, I am tracking the feeling in my throat *and* the tonal quality.
- 45:04 Michael: Yeah. I think *tracking* is probably, uh, the right word to use. Yes.
- 45:10 RTH: And I think I'm good. [AB: I'm good too.] Number 6.

Sample 4.6 discussion starts here

- 45:16 Michael: All right. Number 6. [RTH: New record!] New record. Um, so I'm in the office, um, I'm shredding something. So I'm standing at the shredder. And, uh, (this is like, this is a little bit like the coffee experience. I'm noticing, I didn't realize that until I just looked at my own notes) and the shredder, uh, makes a *B*, [makes a low guttural sound] makes that sound. And it was doing that. I was not singing it quite that loudly, but I was, I was humming along to the shredder. And while it was shredding this piece of paper, I was noticing that there's a blue light on the shredder. I was also saying to myself in inner speech, and I'm pretty sure that the singing part was out loud, so the inner speech was not out loud. Um, I was saying to myself, "Turn it back off." So in other words, I had, I had, I had previously had to turn the shredder on in order to shred the piece of paper I was shredding. Um, and so I was, I was reminding myself "Turn it back off" while I was humming along to it and like 10% noticing the blue light.
- 45:16 Russ comments: RE "the shredder, uh, makes a *B*, [makes a low guttural sound]"
 Michael here is referring to the musical pitch *B* (his humming is a flat *B* pitch); it is noteworthy how matter-of-factly he mentions the pitch, as if *of course everyone would be hearing this as the pitch B*.
 However, RTH heard that as Michael saying "the shredder, uh, makes a *beep*." That surprised him, because he would have thought that Michael would have reserved the word "beep" for something that approximated the sound of the DES

beeper. RTH elected not to follow up on that. Apparently, AB also heard this as “makes a beep,” which will become an issue later (50:57).

It is noteworthy that when preparing this transcript, the AI process (which created the first draft of the transcript) and I (when watching the interview again while cleaning up the AI output) heard this word as “beep.” It was only when preparing the “Russ comments:” note at 50:57 that I re-watched this turn and discovered that Michael had actually said “B.”

46:31 And there was another kind of, I don’t know, 10 to 15% thing that was going on. Uh, the, the same voice that I mentioned to you before, we called him John, we’ll call him John again. Um, he was talking, but I was not paying attention to it at all. So it was, I was *aware* of it, but I was only aware of it as undifferentiated speech. Like, like if you’re like, I dunno, like if you’re in the coffee shop and people behind you are talking and you know they’re talking, but you’re not really processing the actual words that they’re saying. That’s what was going on in this case. So there was just unprocessed speech in my awareness. It was, it was coming, which is pretty common for John. It was coming from up here. You can’t see my hand. It was coming from above my head to my left.

47:22 Um, so there’s a lot going on here. I was humming to, but none of it’s very mentally taxing. [laughs]. I was humming along to the shredder. I was noticing the blue light. I was reminding myself, turn it off, “turn it *back* off,” is what I said. And I was aware of the speaking, but undifferenti, but not, *unprocessed*, undifferentiated words.

47:22 Russ comments: “John’s” voice first appeared in sample 3.4. In the first few minutes of interview 9, Michael will disclose that “John” is Michael’s colleague Chris Tollefsen. [See a related discussion in interview 6 at 25:39.]

47:50 AB: So, um, you said that the noticing the blue light was like 10% and John talking was 10 to 15%. What were the inner speech and then the shredder and the beep and the humming?

48:03 Michael: I think the main thing was the inner speech. So I don’t know. [AB: Okay.] I mean these are, these are a lot of different things going on. But if I had to put [AB: Mm-hmm.] numbers to it, I think inner speech part was probably half of the whole experience. [AB: Okay.] Then you can just split the rest up evenly.

48:16 AB: Okay. Okay. So,

48:21 Michael: But yeah, the main thing was, I was trying to remember to turn this thing back off when it got done shredding.

48:26 AB: Okay. Okay. So with the, um, inner speech, “turn it back off,” um, I’m understanding that it was no, I’m gonna phrase that differently. Was it productive or receptive?

48:47 Michael: It was productive.

48:48 AB: Okay. That’s what I was gonna say, but I didn’t wanna assume [laughs]. Um,

48:52 Michael: Mainly productive. Yeah. I in fact, maybe entirely productive. I don't, I didn't write down that I was hearing it and I don't recall hearing it. So I'm gonna say, but, and I did write down that it, that, that it felt productive. So it could be that it was *entirely* productive.

49:06 AB: Okay. Um, I wanna ask questions about the other aspects, but that's all I have for that one. Russ, do you wanna a, ask more about that? The inner speech

49:19 RTH: Is, is there a tone of voice involved? Does the tone of voice, does it seem like, well first, does it seem like your voice? I'm saying this?

49:28 Michael: I'm saying it. I, I don't recall. I don't recall any specific tone of voice

49:34 RTH: But my voice, my voice,

49:35 Michael: It was my voice. It was, but it's just more like a note to yourself, "turn it back off." There was no particularly strong valence to it.

49:44 RTH: Yeah. I didn't really mean to ask about the valence. I, I *did* ask about it, but that isn't really what I wanted to ask. I wanted to ask whether this seems like the same kind of a speaking that when you're speaking aloud.

49:58 Michael: [pause] Yes. The reason I'm hesitating is, um, I don't recall now that I was hearing it as I was saying it. And I didn't write down that. I usually, I write, if I'm hearing it and saying it, I've, I've tried to be good about writing down that fact. And this time I didn't. I only wrote down, I wrote down "producing inner speech, turn it back off." And I didn't write down that I was hearing it. And I don't, I don't recall hearing it. But the feeling that I had was the same feeling I always have when I speak innerly to myself.

50:36 RTH: <inaudible> So I'm good about that portion.

50:38 AB: Okay. Um, so one part of the ex, so then there are the other, the rest of the experience is roughly in thirds from what you've described. Um, one part of it was the shredder, making the beep and you humming along to the shredding. Um,

50:57 Michael: Doesn't make a beep. It goes, ah, actually it goes [makes a low growling guttural sound]

50:57 Russ comments: In the *it's not about the words* department, RTH was surprised at this interchange. Michael easily/confidently contests referring to this as a "beep," when he himself originally referred to this sound as a beep (45:16). Furthermore, AB referred to this sound as a "beep" at 47:50. Michael is a careful speaker; what's going on? However, neither AB nor RTH follows up on this detail.

In preparing this transcript, I wondered the same thing, which led me to go back to listen to Michael's 45:16 turn, and it was only then (on the third listening) that I discovered that Michael had originally said the pitch "*B*" rather than "beep."

It's a good example of the imperfection of communication.

51:01 AB: Sorry, I didn't, I wasn't able to reproduce that sound, Michael! [they laugh] The shredder making the noise that the shredder makes. [Michael: Right.] And you sing along to that noi, to whatever that noise is. Um, did...

51:01 Russ comments: RE "The shredder making the noise that the shredder makes"
That locution is a failure of the epoché—that locution exists entirely in the natural world, referring to the external, mechanical realm rather than to Michael's experience. In Michael's *experience*, the shredder did *not* make the *noise that the shredder makes*; it made a *B*.

(I will say that, given the confusion of "beep" and "*B*," it would have been difficult to enact the epoché here.)

The good news is that Michael brings us back to the experiential realm in his next turn.

51:01 Agnes comments: Well, the challenge for me here was that I wouldn't be able to reproduce Michael's description of his experience, which was communicated to us with the humming. So the locution I chose was merely a way to refer to Michael's actual description (which wasn't just in words). I didn't intend it to have any meaning beyond that. What should I have done instead?

Russ comments: In response to this, I provide this
Exercise for the reader:

Here is Michael's opening statement. It's complicated, and I don't want to distract us with the blue light, the saying to self, and the John's speaking, so I have snipped that stuff out.

45:16 Michael: Um, so I'm in the office, um, I'm shredding something. So I'm standing at the shredder. And, uh, <snip out previous beep reference> the shredder, uh, makes a B, [makes a low guttural sound] makes that sound. And it was doing that. I was not singing it quite that loudly, but I was, I was humming along to the shredder. <snip out blue light, Michael's speaking, and John's voice>

Um, so there's a lot going on here. I was humming to, but none of it's very mentally taxing. [laughs]. I was humming along to the shredder. <snip out blue light, Michael's speaking, and John's voice>

First, please verify that I have done those excisions fairly—that is, I have left in everything except those aspects.

Second, color code this excerpt by making **blue** everything that is a description of experience, making **red** everything that is context / explanation, and making **purple** anything that is ambiguously experience or context. You can leave the snipped portions green. I will provide my answer at the bottom of this transcript.

51:15 Michael: You It's a *B*, for, for the record.

51:17 AB: Sorry, I'm, I'm not musical like you guys, so, okay. Um, so was that, did you experience that as one chunk of experience, or was there a differentiation between the hearing that the shredder is making the, or what the experience of the shredder making the noise that it makes and the humming.

51:17 Russ comments: RE "the experience of the shredder making the noise that it makes"
AB's locution again refers to the natural world (of shredder noises) rather than to Michael's experience.

51:47 Michael: I would say that the experience was the experience you have when you sing along. Uh, now Russ probably hated that cuz I just appealed to *your* experience. Um, Agnes, but [laughs], so I'll rephrase it.

51:47 Russ comments: My speculation about what has happened here is that this turn translates as Michael's saying, *No, Agnes, I did not hear the shredder making shredder noises! I heard the shredder making a B, and I was singing along with it.* He is wedged into appealing to AB's experience because AB hasn't yet acknowledged his own experience.

That is, I suspect that if AB had acknowledged at 51:17 that the shredder was making a *B*, Michael would have been able to describe his own experience without resorting to mentioning AB's experience.

51:59 AB: I liked it! [laughs]

52:01 Michael: It was the experience that *I have*, how I feel when I'm singing along with anything or anyone. And so I, I think the, the sing-along experience involves for me involves sort of equal measures of hearing the other and producing something that goes with them. And I think this is probably just beaten into you as a musician, right? You, you have to listen to the other people that you're playing with. Now, obviously this was not a person, but I was still similar. It was a similar kind of thing, where I was listening to it and then also joining in, so to say.

52:38 AB: So, um,

52:40 Michael: But I was paying attention. I know I was paying attention to it pretty carefully because it, I said it's a *B*, but it's not actually a *B*, it's like, it's like a, like a third of a tone flat. And I was, I was matching its pitch.

52:40 Russ comments: For the record, the humming that Michael performed at 45:16 was approximately a third-of-a-tone-flat *B*.

52:56 AB: So am I understanding correctly, then, that the experience is a mix of, uh, receptivity, like the hearing the appropriate pitch and then the active humming of trying to match that pitch?

52:46 Russ comments: RE "like the hearing the appropriate pitch"
Good! AB has returned to the experiential world—she is no longer referring to the mechanical-sound world.

This is a good example of how DES interviews can be forgiving. The interviewer does not have to be perfect. As long as the intention to apprehend experience has been made clear across the interviews (and I think it has here), failures (for whatever reason) of the epoché can be overcome and the interview can get back on track.

53:14 Michael: Yeah, I mean, I, I, yes, that's true. I'm a little, I'm struggling a little bit because it feels wrong to say that these are two distinct experiences. It, it feels, it feels more accurate to say that it's one, the, the experience is one of singing-along. And if you, if you say, if you force me to analyze that sort of conceptually, I'll say yes, there's two parts to that. There's the listening and there's the, and there's the producing something that goes with what you're hearing. But it's not like I had conceptualized it in those two ways. It's not like in my mind there was two things going on. It was just the singing-along going on. So I don't know what to make of that. But that, I just feel like I needed to say that, that it wasn't like I was inde, independently aware of how it sounds and independently aware of me humming. It was more the, it was more the joint experience of, (and again, this sounds a little weird cuz I'm personifying the, the shredder [laughs]), but it was more the experience of we're doing it together.

53:14 Russ comments: This turn is, to my ear, Michael focusing directly on Michael's experience, even though the experience is difficult (or a little weird). That is the aim of DES; the interview has indeed gotten back on track.

54:19 AB: So it was a *productive* experience.

54:23 Michael: There was a productive experience. But there's also, I mean, if you force me to make this distinction, I'll say *yes, there was both production and reception*.

54:29 AB: I mean, I'm trying *not* to force you to make the distinct, like that's my, my the question I just asked was trying not to force you to make that distinction and describe it in your terms.

54:29 Russ comments: That states well the skill of the DES interview. It takes substantial practice and refinement to ask questions that do not force the participant in some direction (and that the participant does not feel forced in one or another direction). I think it is an entirely personal skill, in the sense that Russ has to do it Russ's way, Agnes has to do it Agnes's way, and so on. To master that skill, Agnes has to incorporate that into her own personality and manner, not, for example, trying to imitate Russ's way of asking. Agnes is her own instrument, and she has to learn to play it in a way that Michael does not hear it as forcing him one way or the other.

The good news is that it can be a virtuous cycle: The more genuine the interest in Michael's experience, the easier it is to ask non-forcing questions; the more non-forcing the questions, more higher the fidelity of the descriptions; the higher the fidelity of the descriptions the more genuine will become the interest in Michael's experience; and so on. It is a process, not a decision.

- 54:40 Michael: So, so the, so the best terms I would use, then, would, would be that it's a, it, it's a singing-along. And singing-along, y'know, if you rationally reconstruct, so to say, what does that actually, y'know, what does that mean? It somehow you're doing both these things at once. You're listening and you're producing, but it's not as if these are like separate intentions involved here or that I'm like independently aware of these two things. There, there are things that are happening essentially together.
- 55:14 AB: Okay. I'm good with that part. I'm sure I asked like five wrong questions, but [laughs]
- 55:19 RTH: Well, when, I would say, when, when, when you say when, when you ask, is this a productive thing? And he says "yes, but": "Yes, but" in the, in, in my world almost always means *No*. [Michael laughs]. And, and it's a, it's a nice guy's way of saying *No*. "Yes, but" is a nice guy's way of saying *No*. And, and I, I think what I think what he was trying to say, which he said the first time, and I didn't think you heard him when you asked it the, the second time about productive, is that he's trying to say, it's like I'm singing this thing, but it's not like I'm producing it like I've produced the other, some other inner speeches like turn it back off, turn it back off is definitely productive. But this singing along is not productive *like that*. It's, it is, uh, in sync with drawn out by as much the music as by the, or more or *more than* producing it on his own.
- 56:17 Michael: That seems fair.
- 56:22 RTH: So we've, we've got left the red, blue light. The blue light.
- 56:28 AB: Well the blue light and John talking.
- 56:30 RTH: Oh, right!
- 56:31 AB: Right. So, well, Russ, do you wanna ask a question about the shredder and the humming?
- 56:35 RTH: No, I'm good about.
- 56:36 AB: That. Okay. So I guess maybe with the blue light on the shredder, um, similar question to what Russ asked you about the green light on the coffee machine. Um, was it the blueness of the blue light that you were noticing? Was it the...?
- 56:53 Michael: No, in this case that's, that's, that's helpful. I mean, no, it was not the blueness *per se*, it was blue, but it was the fact that the, it was on at all because it, that was connected with the, with the, with the reminding myself to turn it back off. Right. So the light was kind of somehow reminding me, not that I needed a reminder, but somehow it, it was reminding me that this thing or indicating to me, or maybe it was representing the fact that's probably a better way of putting it, it was representing the fact that it's on and I needed to turn it off at some point. So it wasn't the blueness *per se*, although I think I was aware of its blueness. But it was, what was salient to me in that moment was the fact that there was a light at all.

57:40 RTH: The On-ness rather than the blue-ness.

57:42 Michael: That the On-ness. Yeah.

57:44 RTH: Whereas in the coffee maker, it was the green-ness rather than the On-ness.

57:48 Michael: Yeah. I, I was focused more on the green-ness than that case. Uh, may I don't turn the coffee maker off, cuz other people want to use it after me. So may, maybe I don't, maybe that's why. I don't know why I was focused on the green-ness, to be honest.

58:03 RTH: And I'm good about that.

58:04 AB: Well, I'm good with that part.

58:06 RTH: Yep.

58:08 AB: You too. [RTH: Yep.] Okay. And then the final part of, um, of the experience was that John was talking, um, but you were aware of the speech as kind of undifferentiated or unprocessed speech from above your head on the left.

58:28 Michael: Yeah. Well, that, that's where John usually talks from, but [AB: Mm-hmm.] Um, the, that had been going on for maybe half an hour before this. And I paid attention, a little bit of attention initially, but not very much. And then it kind of went into the background. I was aware of it, but I was ignoring it, kind of. Not, not fully ignoring it in the sense that like, it wasn't there for me anymore. But in the sense that not of not attending to the meanings of whatever the words were, and not really even parsing them as meaningful anymore. It was like, it was just chatter in the background.

59:13 AB: Okay. I'm, I'm good with that.

59:17 RTH: So is, by *chatter*, do you mean that I'm, I'm hearing words being spoken, I just dunno what the words are? [Michael: Yes.] As opposed to I'm hearing a, I'm hearing a voice that I could say, *well, that's John's voice*, but that's, I hear John speaking words, even though I'm not processing what those words are.

59:38 Michael: I didn't, I didn't understand what the difference was between those two options. Cuz I wanted to say yes to both of them, but it sounded like you were offering me distinct options.

59:50 RTH: What I wanted to know was: do I hear *words* spoken by John, even though I don't know what those words are, but it's, but it's definitely, he's speaking words and I'm hearing them; or do I hear John's voice and I don't even get to the fact that they're words I'm hearing the timbre or whatever of his

1:00:10 Michael: Oh, oh, no. Okay. The former, so th, this is a, this is a case where if I had wanted to, I could have attended to the meetings of the words in the same way that if there's a conversation happening behind you, but you're like, your attention is not really focused on that, you might still know that it's happening, but you're not attending to the words. But if you stopped what you were doing and really like, focused your auditory attention to what was happening behind you, you'd, you'd be able to follow along the conversation. It was like that. So I, I was hearing *words* in his *voice*, but I was not attending to what those words were.

1:00:51 RTH: I think I'm good about that.

1:00:56 AB: I think that's the end.

1:00:57 RTH: I think that is the end. [Michael: Wow!] Got all six! We're getting there. So shall we do this again?

1:01:03 Michael: Sure!

1:01:04 AB: Sure.

51:01 Exercise for the reader:

Here is Michael's opening statement. It's complicated, and I don't want to distract us with the blue light, the saying to self, and the John's speaking, so I have snipped that stuff out.

45:16 Michael: Um, so I'm in the office, um, I'm shredding something. So I'm standing at the shredder. And, uh,<snip out previous beep reference> the shredder, uh, makes a B, [makes a low guttural sound] makes that sound. And it was doing that. I was not singing it quite that loudly, but I was, I was humming along to the shredder. <snip out blue light, Michael's speaking, and John's voice>

Um, so there's a lot going on here. I was humming to, but none of it's very mentally taxing. [laughs]. I was humming along to the shredder. <snip out blue light, Michael's speaking, and John's voice>

First, please verify that I have done those excisions fairly—that is, I have left in everything except those aspects.

Second, color code this excerpt by making **blue** everything that is a description of experience, making **red** everything that is context / explanation, and making **purple** anything that is ambiguously experience or context. You can leave the snipped portions green. I will provide my answer at the bottom of this transcript.

Russ's answer:

45:16 Michael: Um, so I'm in the office, um, I'm shredding something. So I'm standing at the shredder. And, uh,<snip out previous beep reference> the shredder, uh, makes a B, [makes a low guttural sound] makes that sound. And it was doing that. I

was not singing it quite that loudly, but I was, I was humming along to the shredder. <snip out blue light, Michael's speaking, and John's voice>

Um, so there's a lot going on here. I was humming to, but none of it's very mentally taxing. [laughs]. I was humming along to the shredder. <snip out blue light, Michael's speaking, and John's voice>

The part that I wish to highlight is that I think that “[makes a low guttural sound] makes that sound. And it was doing that” is *context*. I think it is context because (I think) Michael tells me so (“and it was doing that”) in the service of trying to explain what “makes a *B*” means.

The moral here is that the low guttural sound is in the natural world, but Michael's *experiential* world is more about the humming-along-to-*B* than about the low guttural sound. This is, of course, epoché practice—bracketing the natural world (guttural sound) in favor of the experiential world.

So now I am going to answer your 51:01 question:

Well, the challenge for me here was that I wouldn't be able to reproduce Michael's description of his experience, which was communicated to us with the humming. So the locution I chose was merely a way to refer to Michael's actual description (which wasn't just in words). I didn't intend it to have any meaning beyond that. What should I have done instead?

There is no one right way to refer, but it has to aim at Michael's *experience*, not at the context of that experience. Which is to say, it has to aim at the humming-along-to-the-*B*, not at the low guttural sound of the shredder. So you *shouldn't* say “And you sing along to that noi, to whatever that noise is” because that is a reference to the natural world sound (and also says “sing” when Michael has said “hum”). You could say “And you hum along to the shredder *B*,” which is better but suggests that Michael hears *only* the *B*, which is probably not warranted. How about “And you hum along to the shredder” (which is what Michael used) or just “And this humming-along...”

The point here is that if you skillfully perform the epoché (which is something that happens *within Agnes*), then it really doesn't matter what you say. You will say something, and then you will hear what Michael says, and if he seems to be describing experience, then you don't need to worry about what you said—he apparently has understood that you are asking about experience. But if he goes in some direction other than experience, then you can consider going back to whatever it was you said and try to polish out anything that might have led him in the non-experiential direction.