

Michael D.
Michael D. Interview 5
Sampling Day 5

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February 19 interview with Michael that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/p8zXOJbdj7s>. 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.
- 0:03 RTH: So we have started the recording, and this is going to be Michael Day 5. I think if we can all count to 5.
- 0:11 Michael: Yep.
- 0:15 RTH: And anything that we should be talking about before we do that?
- 0:19 AB: Not for me. [Michael: Uh, no.]
- 0:24 RTH: I'd say I'm finding this process totally interesting. So let's do it.
- 0:30 Michael: Okay. Um, so these are all this morning, um, [laughs] I, I've developed a whole system of notation for how to write this stuff down now, which I won't bore you with. Um, so, um, I was, uh, so,
- 0:48 RTH: [interrupts] So let, let me say as, just as, just an aside about that. That's great as far as I'm concerned. And I want you to be a independent researcher, developing your own way of, way of doing things, I think. And, and, and I'm guessing that you're noticing that there would've been no way for me to have told you how to do that. You...
- 1:08 Michael: No. Yeah. That's correct. That's correct.

1:10 RTH: ...You have, you have to do it yourself. We can be aimed at the same goal or, or similar goals or, or overlapping goals, or whatever. But, but you're on your side of what I call the chasm. You're doing it your way. And I'm on my side of the chasm, and I'm not, I haven't told you how to do it. And, and this is exactly why.

1:31 Michael: That, that, that, uh, experientially makes full, complete sense. Um, so, [RTH: But I digress.] Uh, no, no, that was relevant [laughs].

Sample 5.1 discussion starts here

1:41 Michael: Um, so I'm, uh, I'm, uh, I was backing out of my just background information. I was backing out of my driveway this morning. Uh, I was, it was a quiet, dark morning. I was very much, I don't know, my mind was, I wasn't very present to myself, um, until, *until*, um, the beep went off. Um, and ironically what was happening in the moment was that my car was beeping. [AB: Mm-hmm.] And, um, although it's a different beep, so I did, there weren't, there wasn't, uh, any confusion about which beep was which. But, um, so this is also background information, but I think relevant also experientially because, because of *why* it was beeping. So I should, I probably should tell you that.

2:36 Um, I, I have a, this is a, this is a relatively new car to me. I, my, my newest car before this one was 2004. And this one's much newer than that. So it has things like a backup camera and stuff like that, which drives me insane. (Uh, I mean, you may say you were already insane, but this doesn't help.) So [they laugh], um, so, and, and here's an example of that. I have a bike rack on the back of my car, and the backup camera does not understand that the bike rack, I will *not run into* the bike rack [they laugh]. And so it, it's beeping at me, and there's this like large red circle in the car on the dashboard that's flashing red [they laugh] at, at the same time. And the beep of the, the, the beep of the beeper went off while this was happening. And while at some point in the phrase I, well, the, the phrase I said was, "C'mon!" almost like that, it was kind of pleading and exasperated.

3:40 That's why I think that history is important, cuz I, that was, although I wasn't like formulating in my own mind the words "gosh, this always happens, you stupid camera. You don't know that there's a bike rack back there." Somehow that's behind the exasperation that I'm feeling, cuz this is not the first time this has happened, of course. Um, and I'm a little exasperated with myself as well, because I keep meaning to do something to stop this from happening, even if it's just like putting black tape over the camera or something. I don't know. I should do something. But, so I'm exasperated with the car, I'm exasperated with myself, the whole situation. But all of that is just kind of packed into the, "C'mon!" It, I, I would say that that come on, came out almost involuntarily, almost. Like if you were to say "Ouch!" in response to something happening, there was certainly, I, I didn't, it wasn't premeditated in any way. Um, it was, it was very much like an "Ouch!"

4:42 RTH: So more an expostulation than a speaking?

4:42 Russ comments: He should have said "interjection" or perhaps "ejaculation" (in its old sense) instead of "expostulation."

- 4:46 Michael: Uh, yeah, exactly. I, it wasn't like I was telling, I mean, I talk to myself a lot. I guess that's kind of obvious by now. But, um, but usually that there's some purpose behind it. Like I'm *telling* myself something or I'm *imagining* a conversation or whatever. But this wasn't anything like that. This wasn't so much a speech act as it was a "ugh."
- 5:05 RTH: Got it. And is there anything else going on in your experience?
- 5:08 Michael: No, that was it.
- 5:10 RTH: So I, I would like, uh, to de to be clear, I would like me, I want, I want to be clear, I guess that's what I'm saying. I wanna be clear: Do you feel exasperated / pleading whatever with the car? Or is that background? And it's just that I am saying, "C'mon!" with a pleading exasperated tone or whatever.
- 5:38 Michael: I mean, I almost want to say both because the, I would say that the exasperation was manifest *to me*. I was, y'know, it's, it's not that I was, it, it was, it was manifested *in the way* I said it in or *in the very fact of* it's being said. But if you're asking, y'know, did, was there a meta thought to the, to the effect of, *gosh, I'm exasperated right now*, No. But I was definitely *feeling* exasperated in the sense of it was an exasperating experience. But that that wasn't formulated...
- 6:17 RTH: So I'm, I'm definitely *not* asking about a meta-formulated thought. I, I'm accepting that there is *not* such a thing. [Michael: Right.] What I'm trying to get at is whether there is an experience of exasperation. I'm... So, I'm, I'm accepting that you *are* exasperated, there's no question about that. And I'm accepting that you are sss-expostulating "C'mon!" in a exasperated way. The, the question is, if for whatever reason, maybe you didn't say, "C'mon!", would you still feel exasperated? And if so, how would that feel? And, and the answer to that might be, *I'm, I'm, don't feel it, but I'm, but I am exasperated and I, and I speak in an exasperated way*. Or it could be, I, I *do* feel exasperated and this is how that feels. Or the question doesn't make sense. Or whatever.
- 6:17 Russ comments: That question is not very well presented, but the upcoming will clarify the issues.
- 7:08 Michael: Uh, I mean, the question makes sense. Um, when I pause to write stuff, when I pause to write, write all this down (cuz I, I, it went off, I was pulling on my driveway, so I just literally stopped on the side of the road and out, y'know, and, and, and wrote the stuff down, so it was right afterwards). Um, sorry, that wasn't a very good way of answering your question. I'm not gonna answer your question, but here, here's a better way of not answering your question, [laughs]. [RTH: Fair enough.] Um, there, there are certainly, so counterfactually, if I hadn't said, "C'mon!" would I have still felt exasperated? I think so. Um, and if I, if that were, if that had been the situation, what would this whole thing look like? Probably I would've focused on that feel. I, I would've identified that feeling. I don't know how it would've manifested exactly. Um, but in fact, what happened was, I said, "C'mon!" And to whatever extent I was exasperated, the feeling of it was contained in the saying of,

"C'mon!" There was not some other like bodily sensation or something like that. That was also the exasperation. That's how it manifested was in the saying.

8:39 RTH: So I think you've answered the *exactly* the question that I've, that I asked in a, in a quite skillful way, I think. [Michael: Okay.] So what I, what I, what I'm understanding, and so let me tell you what I'm understanding. You tell me whether I got it right. I *was* exasperated there. That's, *as a matter of fact*, I was exasperated (for all the historical reasons that you've said). [Michael: Mm-hmm.] And I expressed that exasperation in the "C'mon!" And I *didn't* experience exasperation in any way beyond that. But if I hadn't said "C'mon!" I might have. So it's, it's not like I'm ruling out the possibility of that experience, but it's not, like I said "C'mon!" and at the same time, I felt tension in my chest or [Michael: Right.] I felt a mental exasperation or whatever. That was separate from the "C'mon!" [Michael: That's correct.]

9:31 RTH: Okay.

9:32 AB: Can I ask a question about that? Um, and maybe about your question, Russ, a little bit. Um, so last time, um, there was an experience, uh, I don't remember if it was last time or the time before, but there was an experience of, um, anger manifested as spider crawling on head. Yep. Um, would it be fair to say that the exasperation was manifested in the "C'mon!"?

9:32 Russ comments: RE "an experience of ... anger manifested as spider crawling on head"

That is not true, I think, and it reflects a theory that I would like AB to bracket. The word *manifest* implies that there is an underlying emotional state (anger) that appears (manifests itself) as the spider. That may be a true theory, but it is a theory none-the-less, and *not* available to experience. That is, Michael did *not* experience the manifestation of a state; that is, Michael did *not* experience anger manifesting itself as a spider. Michael experienced anger, period. The spider was anger, period. Or the anger was the spider, period. Michael had no experience of anything manifesting anything else.

Perhaps you feel within you something like *of course anger is a state that manifests itself as <some sort of feeling>*. If so, that is the natural attitude asserting itself within you; said another way, that is a presupposition protecting itself. That is the feeling that must be battled if you are to bracket presuppositions (= perform the epoché).

10:10 Michael: Yes.

10:11 AB: And is that an okay question to ask?

10:18 Michael: It's fine by me [laughs], but I'm not, [laughs]

10:20 AB: I'm asking Russ! [laughs]

10:27 RTH: [pause] I, I think so. I'm, it seems to me that there's something different about him, but I can't put my finger on it. Maybe in the comments I'll figure it out [AB: Okay.] and, and answer that question. I'm not trying to evade the question.

10:27 Russ comments: I did so in the comment at 9:32, and do so in a different way at 10:46 below.

10:38 AB: Okay. Okay.

10:39 RTH: It's in the, seems like it's in the same ballpark.

10:41 AB: Okay.

10:46 RTH: [pause] No, no, no. That's not true. So this is what, this is what it seems like the difference is. The, the difference was, the difference is, is it seems, as it seems to me (and this is all, everything is always a question in open the discussion), but the difference is, it seems to me, is that in the, in the bug on my head deal, that *was* anger. *I felt anger, and it was this.* [AB: Mm. Mm-hmm.] And *here* the experience is of saying "C'mon!" with exasperation, but it's not that I feel exasperation. [AB: Mm-hmm.] It's like I'm saying, "C'mon!" colored by exasperation.

11:23 Michael: Something. [AB: Mm-hmm.] That, I think that's a fair distinction. [AB: Mm-hmm.] Mm-hmm.

11:25 AB: Yeah, that makes sense.

11:28 RTH: So what difference that distinction makes, I don't actually know.

11:31 Michael: I don't either, but I, but I agree to the distinction.

11:33 RTH: And that's, and, and as far as my career is concerned, that's all that, that's all there is. I wanna make, I wanna make those distinctions.

11:41 AB: So I, sorry, I know this is, I'm kind of getting away a little bit from the, just the experience itself, but I guess more generally, the kind of question I just asked, I was, I guess I'm not sure that it clarified Michael's experience of *this* moment, but it helped *me*, maybe *us*, make that distinction. And so from *that* perspective, is it helpful? And more generally, like a kind of question that maybe isn't specifically about the experience, but maybe helps make distinctions that *may be* helpful down the line? Is that the kind of question that is okay to ask?

12:29 RTH: Yes. That is the, that is the heart of the iterative process, as far as I'm concerned. [AB: Okay. Okay.] Because not only does, not only is the iterative process designed for *Michael* to become better at apprehending and describing or whatever, but it's for *us* to be able to come better at, at asking and understanding what it is that he's saying as long as... But, *but* the iterative process shouldn't *stand in the way of*. As, as long as you can, as long as you can ask an, an iterative question, which goes away

from the experience that maybe doesn't help about this experience, but, *but doesn't screw up this experience*, then everything's cool.

13:07 AB: Okay.

13:10 Michael: I, I mean, I found the, I found the distinction that Russ made in response to the question, actually clarificatory for myself, for what that's worth.

13:23 RTH: And I found Agnes's question helped, helped me to make it clear, [laughs]. Yeah, yeah,

13:27 Michael: Yeah, yeah.

13:28 RTH: Help, help me to clarify it so that then it would be clarifying. So the que the, the question was a *useful* question, I think as far as this process is concerned. *And*, and I, and I would say it's another example of, of, of being, uh, of having... It's a three-sided chasm. Agnes is on her side, and I'm on my side, and Michael's on his. And, and we *don't* have exactly the same interests in this process. That that's, that is just the way it is. But they overlap, they intersect. And as long as we, as long as we can keep that intersection clear, that really the heart, of *the heart of the matter is Michael's experience and we gotta figure out how to do that* . Other, other, otherwise Agnes is fucking up the whole process, or I am, or Michael is, or whatever. That's

14:19 Michael: Right. That makes sense.

14:24 RTH: So I think I'm happy with beep number 1. We done with that?

14:30 AB: I think I'm happy with, I mean, I was gonna ask one clarifying question earlier, um, but maybe it's already been answered. The, the whole of the experience was just the, "C'mon!"

14:41 Michael: No, I was seeing the red circle. I was hear, I was hearing the car beep at me, and I was seeing the red circle also.

14:47 AB: Okay. Because we, I, yeah, that's, I had written down the red circle and I, I wasn't sure whether that was also part of the experience.

14:53 Michael: . Oh, sorry. Maybe I should have been more clear about distinguishing background from foreground. Yeah. But no, I was definitely aware of the red circle, and I was aware of the car making the b-b-b-b-b-b sound.

15:06 AB: So should we talk about that as well? Or

15:12 RTH: Probably. And so by the, the term *aware* is problematic for me and for a variety of reasons. So is that, in your experience, are you directly apprehending that?

- 15:22 Michael: Yeah, I, that's what I, I guess what I say aware. I, so I, I've said, I've said something else in the vicinity of that before, which is something like, "if you were to stop and ask me, I would've been able to answer that question." But that's not what I mean here. I don't mean that if you had asked me is the car beeping or is the red light on that, I would've been able to answer it. I mean, I was, I was, they were part of my experience at the time.
- 15:48 RTH: Okay. And, and it, does it make sense to ask how much of your experience, like, is it 33? 33? 33, I see beeping and
- 15:57 Michael: <crosstalk>. It does. And ironically, we're gonna get to that in a minute. But the answer is, I, I did think about that in a moment. And I wrote 50—50.
- 16:05 RTH: So 50 "C'mon!" and 50 hearing and seeing?
- 16:10 Michael: Oh, no, no. I mean the, the red circle and the beep are 50—50. If you, if you want, if you wanna divide, come on from those things. That's probably all I, the whole, the best I can say is 50—50—50 [laughs], they were *each* 50% [they laugh]
- 16:26 RTH: Okay. And that, and that's totally fine with me. I, I think that's, there isn't any reason why everything has to add up to a hundred.
- 16:37 Michael: I won't let my students hear you say that! [they laugh]
- 16:42 RTH: It, it depends on, it depends on the realm.
- 16:45 Michael: [laughs].
- 16:46 RTH: Everything is relative. And, and are you, so about, I guess I should ask about the redness. I see the red circle. Is it the red of the red circle or the, the,
- 17:01 Michael: Yeah, it's very much the red. It's very much the red. I mean, these are these, these, the, the, the, the red circle and the beeping are almost difficult to distinguish because they come together. [laughs] Uh, I mean, of course they can distinguish in one's heard in one's seen. But that's why, that's one reason I'm saying 50—50—50 is the red circle only comes on. I (at least as far as I know, I've never seen it come on any other circumstance) it only comes on when the b-b-b-b-b-b comes on also. So these are very tightly connected in my experience. And so that's why I'm saying they're... I, I wasn't focused on one rather than the other. I was focused on just the, the overall fact that both of those things are happening. But the redness was very present to me, cuz it really, it's quite bright, especially on a dark morning.
- 17:54 RTH: So it is, it is, you *are saying* that it is the *color* redness, the *bright color* redness that is at least partially or maybe even prominently present. It, and I know that it means look out, you're backing up or whatever, backing into something. But at this particular moment, it is the redness of that rather than the warning-ness of it.
- 18:19 Michael: Yeah, that's right.

18:22 RTH: And, and the beeping? Would we say the same thing about, I'm, I'm hearing the pitch of the beep.

18:28 Michael: Yeah. Because that, that also only ever happens. I (maybe this car does that in, in other circumstances. I have no idea), but in my experience that it only ever happens in *exactly* this situation.

18:42 RTH: So that *could* mean that I'm experiencing the warning-ness of it. But, uh, but what I hear you saying is it's more about the color rather than the warning-ness of it, for me, at this particular moment.

18:58 Michael: Yeah, it was, um, the, it was, I mean, again, these things are all tightly connected in my own mind, at least the, the fact that it's a warning, the fact that it's a *stupid* warning, the fact that it's a red circle, the fact that it's b-b-b-b-b on a G for some reason, um, all that is very tightly bound up. So it's difficult to distinguish those things. But the one thing that I was *sure of* in the moment at the, I mean the moment after, when I was writing this down, is that the (because I knew you were gonna ask me this), that the redness was very present to me.

19:35 RTH: Okay. And, and is the beeping-ness present in the same way? The, or maybe the G-ness of it or the...

19:51 Michael: I didn't, I wasn't reflecting on, I only, I only... I know it's a G because, because for other reasons. So it, it's not that wa I was not,

20:01 RTH: So this was not about the G-ness of that?

20:03 Michael: No, it was not.

20:04 RTH: That would've been the sort of the parallel question to ask you about the redness.

20:08 Michael: Yeah. No, it wasn't, the G-ness of it was not present. [RTH: Okay.] Um, but the redness of the circle was present. I don't know why that distinction is what that means or why that would be the case, but that's, that's what how it was.

20:20 RTH: So I don't, I don't know why it would be like that either, or what the significance of, of, of that is. And I think the, I think at least in part (this is an aside), the, the reason that we don't know the answer is that nobody's ever really been careful about asking about it. [Michael: Right.] If we, if, if there were a lot of people out there asking the kinds of questions we're asking now and doing it fairly well, *then* we would be able to say, "well, that's not important! [laughs] We, we, we have, we have examined it and, and it, and it is meaningless!" [Michael: Right.] *Or* we, we would be able to say, "well, we've examined it and this is why it is important and in what realm." But we don't know the answer to that. *I* don't know the answer to that. I don't think any, [Michael: I certainly don't either.] I'm pretty sure *nobody* knows the answer to that.

20:20 Russ comments: Russ's aside at 20:20 is the answer to the question: *DES is a lot of work. Is it worth doing?*

21:00 Michael: Okay.

21:05 RTH: So now I'm ready to go into number two if Agnes is happy with that.

21:08 AB: I have one more question. Um, what is the relative timing of the beeping red light experience and the "C'mon!"

21:23 Michael: [pause]Okay, so there's, there's two, so there's two ways of answering that. In my own experience, I don't know. I, I don't, I don't, I'm not, I, I wasn't aware now, and I have no recollection of like how much time might have passed between when the thing started and when I said that. Um, so, so, so it's not a part of my exp, so that, that, that difference in time was not any part of my experience. Um, in the real world. I, it was probably pretty soon after, but that was, I wasn't,

22:01 AB: I'm only asking about your experience, Michael! [laughs]

22:01 Russ comments: Exercise for the reader 1 (from 22:01)
Watch, and especially *hear*, Michael's 21:23 turn. Don't worry too much about the content, the *what* he is saying, but focus on the manner of saying it. The perspective I want you to take is to grok whether Michael is easily describing experience, or whether his delivery is tortured or pained or tentative. My answer is at the end of this interview.

22:03 Michael. I know you are! [laughs]. Um, I, so the answer is that was not part of my experience. That temporal relationship [AB: Okay.] was not anything that was in my experience. I mean, I, it could have been, it could have been like, I, I, y'know, I was, I was aware that it had been going on for a while and I finally said, c'mon, or something like that. But that's not how it went down.

22:28 RTH: You happy?

22:29 AB: Yep.

22:30 RTH: Number two.

Sample 5.2 discussion starts here

22:32 Michael: Okay. So number 2 was shockingly soon after this [laughs], in fact, I was writing in the little book, [they laugh] when, when number 2 happened.

22:44 RTH: So let me, let me say if, if, if what you, if what if, if what you're about to say is that you find it sort of confusing to be able to write about this while I'm writing about that, or to pay attention to this while I'm writing about that, then let's just skip this beep. If you're *clear* about what the experience was, then I'm happy to talk about this beep.

23:01 Michael: I think I'm pretty clear.

23:03 RTH: Okay. Um, but as, as a, as a general rule, I think it's hard enough to do to describe a beep and it's doubly hard or squared-ly hard or whatever [Michael: Right.] to describe a beep while you're describing another beep. [AB laughs]

23:15 Michael: Right. Well, well, maybe that'll, I was almost done, so maybe that's helpful. But, but, uh, I'll, I'll just tell you and then may, maybe it'll come out in conversation that I'm much more confused about this than I thought I was at the time.

23:27 Um, so I was actually had been considering exactly the question *how much beep versus how much redness*, cuz I knew that was gonna be asked, and I was (you almost didn't ask it! And I was like, oh, okay!) [they laugh]

23:44 But I, I was considering that, uh, and I actually said to myself, and this was a, a *productive* saying, although there was also a hearing involved, "they'll ask about that." So I said those words, "they'll ask about that."

24:00 And then the other thing that was going on at the time was I, again, I was parked on the side of the road next to my house. There was, uh, there were droplets of water on the windscreen. And while I was sitting there writing in the book and sort of, y'know, trying to think carefully about what had just happened, I was also kind of absent-mindedly looking at the, the, the wind, the, the, the drops on the windscreen. And I was kind of watching them with a, a, a vague interest in whether or not two particular drops that were moving around on the windscreen would intersect with each other. Y'know, so there were drops on the windscreen. They were sort of making their way down the windscreen slowly. [gestures miming the drops] Um, and there, there was a thought, but not, not articulated in words. The best I can say is I was looking at them with expectation or anticipation about finding out whether they were gonna intersect with each other or not on the windscreen. But those, those, that conceptualization of it is *post hoc*. That's my best attempt to, to characterize the nature of the looking. The, the what the reason I, I was interested in them for the question *Will they intersect?*

25:22 RTH: This is your beep if you want it, Agnes.

25:23 AB: Yep. I was just seeing if Michael's finished.

25:26 Michael: I'm done.

25:27 AB: Okay. Okay. So it sounds to me like there are two aspects of this experience. Um, one is they'll, "they'll ask about that." And then the other is the absent mindedly looking at the drops on the windscreen. Is that correct? [Michael: Yes.] And so what is the, was it 50—50? Or different?

25:54 Michael: Uh, yeah, I mean, it's almost more like 100—100. I mean, I don't, that doesn't make any sense! But what I'm saying is, each of the e each of these experiences was like fully present to me. So, so sometimes 50—50 means I was kind of half-attending to this and half-attending to that [laughs]. Uh, so each of those experiences may be like slightly distracting from the other. But this, this felt more like I was completely

focused on both of these things, [laughs] “they’ll ask about that” and looking at the drops. I don’t, I don’t know how to characterize that except saying it’s 100—100. And I just got permission to, to not for my percentages, to not add up to 100. So I’m, that’s what I’m going with.

26:41 AB: Well, that makes sense to me. What you just said makes sense to me.

26:45 RTH: And it totally makes sense to me too, because I don’t think there’s any reason to believe, actually, that there is one experiential realm which divides up into like a pie chart or whatever. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] There can be two or more experiential realms. And it sounds like what you’re saying here is, it seems to me there’s sort of two experiential realms going on here. In one realm, I’m 100% saying whatever it was that I was saying, [Michael: “They’ll ask about that.”] “They’ll ask about that.” And in the other experiential realm, I’m watching these drops and wondering whether they’re gonna hit each other.

27:15 Michael: Yeah. That’s, that’s, that’s a fair way to put it.

27:19 RTH: And I think I, I think that’s a totally, totally important observation, because I think, for example, most of philosophy believes that there’s one realm, which I just don’t think is true.

27:29 Michael: Well, philosophers are stupid! [they laugh]

27:33 RTH: Mis, mis, let’s call it misguided. [they laughs]

27:37 Michael: I, I just got out of an annoying meeting with philosophers. That’s, I’m, I’m willing to say something mean right now,

27:42 AB: [inaudible] philosophers. So, um, “they’ll ask about that.” Um, you said that it was a productive saying, but also with a component of hearing. [Michael: Yeah.] Um, after talking about percentages and so forth, would you assign any kind of percentage to

28:03 Michael: It was, it was more productive than hearing, like, so it was primarily a productive thing. But of course, the production goes along with hearing, and I did hear it. [AB: Mm-hmm.] Um, I mean, so production doesn’t have to go along with hearing, I realize that, but, but it, it’s a natural consequence. And in this case, the consequence played out. I did *hear* it. But it was, but the sense was much more, I am producing these words rather than these words are impinging themselves upon my ears

28:35 RTH: And I am producing them in the realm of “saying”? I’m, I’m *speaking* these words?

28:35 Russ comments: We have taken to using *producing words* in our conversation, which has a mechanical or analytical flavor, as a machine *produces* widgets. RTH here is trying to refocus on the experiential flavor, which in the original was about saying. (The original [23:44] was “I actually said to myself, and this was a, a

productive saying, although there was also a hearing involved, “they’ll ask about that.” So I said those words, “they’ll ask about that.”)

28:40 Michael: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

28:40 RTH: Okay.

28:44 AB: That’s all I have to say about, they’ll ask about that. Russ, do you wanna say more about that?

28:54 RTH: I don’t think so, unless, unless... Is there some particular tone or whatever that these

29:00 Michael: Just like I said it just now, “they’ll ask about that.” Something like that. Yeah.

29:03 RTH: So, so clearly intonated with a, with a meaningful, I guess,

29:12 Michael: I mean, if you wanna, I mean, yeah, it was definitely meaningful. Uh, it was kind of me assuring myself that this is something I should think about when I’m writing down these notes.

29:27 RTH: So this was a meaningful utterance spoken, [Michael: Definitely.] spoken, in a spoken in a way that would be appropriate to that situation.

29:37 Michael: Absolutely, yes.

29:41 RTH: Okay. And, and do we know whether this is innerly or outerly?

29:45 Michael: No.

29:46 RTH: Okay. Then I’m good about that part.

29:51 AB: Okay. So then the second part was the abs, absent mindedly looking at the drops on the windscreen with this vague interest in whether two particular drops would intersect.

29:51 Russ comments: See the discussion from 32:09 through the comment at 36:42.

30:07 Michael: Yeah.

30:08 AB: Um, and you also mentioned that you had this fe, I, I can’t remember how you described it. Here I wrote down “thought,” but I think you didn’t describe it as, I can’t remember how you described it, but this sense that you were looking at them with expectation or anticipation.

30:31 Michael: Yeah, I mean, that, that, that’s the best way I can describe it. So it’s the, the, the point is that they were being seen almost as objects that have a kind of (I just got done razzing on philosophers. I’m gonna use a philosophy term) that have a kind of

telos, right? There's some direct, I mean, I wasn't like investing them with like personalities or anything crazy like that, but, but I was seeing them as objects that like, have a destination. And my, and I was kind of vaguely wondering, but not with words, like *are they going to intersect with each other*? Um, so obviously I have to describe this in words, but, and, and that's my best attempt to articulate the nature of the seeing. It was a kind of seeing things as directed, but not knowing quite what the direction is.

31:24 AB: So the, the anticipation and expectation component of this experience: would you describe that as residing entirely in the seeing of the droplets?

31:37 Michael: Yes. And also, I just thought of the better word. I even wrote in my notes here, it's not really *anticipation*, but I couldn't think of a better word at the time, but I just realized what the better word is. Cuz anticipation, it wasn't that I was anticipating that they will intersect. It was more like I was *wondering* will they intersect? I like, I, I did, I, I, I definitely didn't think I knew the answer to that.

32:06 AB: Okay. I'm satisfied.

32:09 RTH: So what I would say is about this is that when, when you restated this question (29:51), this part, this portion of it, Agnes, you, you emphasized the absent-mindedness of it. But I don't think there was much absent-mindedness in there. And so I would say that the absent absent-mindedness came from his initial description. He used the word *absent-minded*.

32:32 Michael: I did, but I don't like that word, either. Yeah.

32:36 RTH: So that's the, that's the, that's the part of the art of it. You sh I think there, I think there is available in what he said *I wanna retract the absent-mind, the word absent-minded*. He said "absent-minded," but then it's a hundred percent, and it was, I was *interested*, [AB: Mm.] and I wanted to *figure out*, whatever, that... None of that stuff is *absent-minded* anymore. So DES is not about the words, and Michael's pretty good. So he, he's not gonna be badgered by your emphasizing a word that shouldn't have been emphasized or whatever. But, uh, but not everybody is as good as Michael is in that regard. And so there is, I, I was worried when you emphasized absent-mindedness when, in, in your question, let's put it that way. But we're, I, we're in the, the meta realm, which we probably shouldn't have been. And so I,

33:27 Michael: I mean, it does, it does give me a chance to say, I don't really think it was absent-minded. It was, it was just more like, I, I let, let me not try, let, let's leave it at that.

33:38 AB: Well, part of why, I mean, so part of what I'm trying to do, right? I mean, I know we're getting in the meta realm, but let me just say this one thing. Part of what I'm trying to do now in response to your comments is be really careful in hearing what Michael is saying. Um, but I, I mean, I accept what you said, like I agree with, with what you said that yes, he initially said absent-mindedly, but if you take the whole thing in context, um, he didn't perhaps mean that, even though he used that word. So, so I, I accept what you say. So anyway, this is just a learning experience for me.

34:14 Michael: Yeah. For me too. cuz I still don't know what the right word is. Maybe *a lack of focus* or I, I don't know. But I don't have the right language to say what it was, but it wasn't as if I was like intently looking at them, y'know, thinking what's gonna happen next? It was much more casual than that [laughs].

34:35 AB: Well, and I was trying to use *your words* so that I wasn't

34:38 Michael: Yeah, no, I used the wrong word.
!

34:39 AB: My own interpretation.

34:41 Michael: I, I used the wrong

34:41 AB: Word. I'm trying to be like interpretation-free as much as I can.

34:45 RTH: You can't be! You, what you, what you can do. If you, you could have asked, "you used mind wandering, but then you talked about a hundred percent or whatever [AB: Mm-hmm.] And [AB: Mm-hmm.] And that would've not just presuppose the mind wandering. That was, that's what bothered, that's what, what jangled my careful-thin-ice deal here from when you used that word. It was that, you could, you could have asked about it if you didn't, if you didn't know or whatever.

35:13 And, and the reason that, the reason that they're important, *I think*, is that from the standpoint of the, "they'll ask about it," the water droplets were ab were *in fact absent-minded*, I think, because they, it was in a different realm! And, but in the, but in the realm in which the, the water droplets were, were the, were the *thing*, it wasn't absent-minded. [Michael: Mm.] So that term is, i, it's important to not slide across that term and not import it into the wrong thing because it screws up the, there are really sort of two experiential realms going on here.

35:50 Michael: That, that actually was helpful.

35:52 RTH: And that I, that's, I very often say *DES is not about the words*, but it is about... It's, it's not about the words in that *the words have to mean exactly one thing*. It's, *that's* what I mean when it's not about the words [AB: Mm-hmm.] But it *is* about the words if the words push you in the wrong direction or over overlook a contradiction. The problem with the word amp *absent-minded* here is that it is that it undermined the contradiction between *one point of view* and *multiple points of view*.

36:27 Michael: Right. Right. Okay. Yeah, that was helpful in a both, in a both second order and first order way actually.

36:42 RTH: Yeah. I, and I don't, I, I, I think, I think asking about experience is very difficult. I do, I absolutely think it is un until you, until you hear what it, what is experience, and it's just easy. You just ask em what's experience. But in, but until you're good at it, it is sort of. And it's, it's sort of like what they say about Michaelangelo Angelo and

sculpting. You just, you just knock off the parts of the marble that not, that aren't part of David, and, [Michael: Right. It's...] but it is not a trivial skill. Number 3?

36:42 Russ comments: The natural attitude is to assume the Cartesian theater—there is one center of experience that attends to one or another aspect of the world at a time. That is not actually true for most people at least some of the time, and it is apparently not true for Michael much of the time. I suspect that Michael's holding (along with almost everyone else) the natural attitude, which then fails to portray his own experience faithfully, has important consequences for Michael (but I don't know what those consequences are, if any).

Here, the bracketing of that natural attitude (that is, the epoché) is important is we want to apprehend Michael's experience with fidelity.

Sample 5.3 discussion starts here

37:20 Michael: Number 3, um, okay. So again, just starting with a tiny bit of background. I was in my office by this point, and um, I had just used an email, um, that was actually written to me and Agnes, but I was using it to reply to just Agnes. And so I hit Reply, but I accidentally hit Reply all, which is actually in retrospect, although this was not part of the experience, I would've had to have done, because, anyway, it doesn't matter. Um, and then, uh, I wrote the email and I clicked Send, and then I couldn't remember in that moment whether I had deleted the other recipient from the email or not. And so, um, so, so there's really a, a few different things that are happening in very close proximity. Some of them are probably on top of each other, so making distinctions about, temporal distinctions, might prove a little difficult here. But let me just tell you what they were, and then we can try to sort that out. I said the words, sorry, I don't, I don't curse a lot, but I did say a curse where I said, "Shit! What did I do?!?"

38:33 And the oth, the, the, the second thing was a kind of slight feeling of panic, which this does, this was a physical feeling in my left shoulder. And then the other, the other things that were happening were my eyes. So, so I was trying to find out whether I, I was trying to discover whether I had correctly deleted the, the recipient from the email that needed to not be on it. And so I was (this is now the real world's description stuff. And then I'll get back to the experience) I was looking for, the, the sent, the, the sent emails part of my email program so I could look back at the email and see if I had deleted Owen Flanagan (as it turns out) from the email and, um, my eyes. So that's what, that's, that's the real world.)Now, back to experience, my eyes were following the arrow on the screen almost as if the arrow was the thing that was looking for the folder. And I was watching it look.

39:47 And with my right hand, I know this is a lot, and I'll try to sort out what was happening when, but with my *right* hand, I, (I use my mouse left-handed, so my right hand's free with my right hand.) I had, I, well, I had spotted the thing, and I was beginning to point to the, to the spot on the screen where the arrow needed to go [laughs] to open up that folder so I could look at the email.

40:13 So to recap, I think maybe this might be the moment before the moment before the beep, I said, "Shit! what did I just do?" And then there's this slight feeling of panic, which definitely overlaps with that, but continues beyond the point when I have finished that sentence, and that slight feeling of panic is throughout this entire

experience. The my, I'm visually watching the mouse arrow as it looks, looks for the folder. And I'm pointing with my right hand to where it needs to go. So it may, it may be maybe there's just the panic and the eyes and the right hand thing. Maybe the, the statement, "Shit! What did I just do?" You might consider that just prior to the actual experience we're talking about. Okay. But it's very closely tied to it, obviously.

41:10 RTH: So let's, let's imagine that that's before. I don't, I don't, I don't think there's any rule that says it should be before, after, but we've got enough to talk about to [Michael: Okay.] with there. So it seems like there are three things. There's a feeling of panic. There is, my eyes are watching the arrow looking. And my right hand is about to point, or is pointing.

41:32 Michael: Yeah. And there's, there's a sense in which the, the arrow, I'm not re, I mean, obviously in the real world, I am controlling the arrow. My left hand is on the mouse moving it. I'm not aware of that at all. I'm, it's, there's almost a sense in which the arrow is an independent actor in this whole thing *looking for the folder*. And I'm my right hand is the other actor saying *there it is*.

41:55 RTH: And so does this seem like we've, we've talked in previous beeps, does this seem like one thing that gets divided up into pieces? Or does this seem like two or three or whatever, independent seper, separable realms? [Michael: I, I think...] Or maybe, maybe that question, maybe that question doesn't make sense here.

42:16 Michael: I understand it. Uh, the, I I think that I could, I could, I could conceptually ea, very easily distinguish the panic feeling from the other two things. Yeah. No, they're, there are three separate things. There are three separate things. They're obviously tightly connected, which was preventing me for a moment from, from seeing that. But there are three separate things, all happening at once.

42:44 RTH: So the, I feel a little bit of panic and that I gather... Well, I don't, shouldn't say again that. So let's, and this

42:58 Michael: Is like, this is like the, this is like, y'know, emotion. It, it's right there. [indicates a specific region with his right hand on the high front of his left chest, almost at shoulder level]

43:04 RTH: Okay. And, and when you indicate *right there*, do you mean it's **exactly** right there? Like a circular region?

43:12 Michael: Yeah! It's about that big. And it's right there underneath my skin. It's not on top of me. It's inside of me. But yeah, it's about, it's about fist size *right there*. [indicates it again]

43:23 RTH: And, and, and do you mean in a region that's about fist size? Or do you mean th this region is, I, I wanna know whether this region is demarcated or, or whether it's just about, about that size? The

43:37 Michael: No, it's demar.... It's not super sharply demarcated. Um, but yeah, no, it's a, it's a, it's a reasonably well-defined it area.

43:46 RTH: Okay. And three dimensional.

43:48 Michael: I, I said area, but I, and then I, but I meant volume. Yes.

43:51 RTH: Okay. And, and, and in the, in the depth, does it go all the way through your body or is it closer to the surface? or the middle?

43:58 Michael: It's closer to the front, but it's underneath the skin. It's not on top. [RTH: Okay.] And it's,

44:04 RTH: But it doesn't get all the way to the back.

44:06 Michael: It doesn't get all the way to the back. That's correct.

44:08 RTH: And is it, does it have a shape, a particular shape? It's a sphere or an oval? Or...

44:12 Michael: Roughly sphere-ish. Yeah.

44:14 RTH: Okay. So a roundish pretty clearly defined region that's right in here. Beneath the bones, beneath the bone. That's the panic.

44:25 Michael: That's the panic. Yeah.

44:27 RTH: Okay. Is there anything more to be said about that?

44:34 Michael: Um,

44:37 RTH: Like is that what, what does it feel like? Does it,

44:40 Michael: It doesn't, it doesn't, it just feels like panic. I mean, there's not, so you, so you might be tempted to say, "oh, that, what that means, Michael, is that your shoulder was tensed up." And of course that might be true. But that's not what, what I was experiencing, I was experiencing the *actual panic is right there*.

44:59 RTH: And I'm gathering, there's nothing more to be said about how that panic feels. It's not like it's a hotness or a tightness or a sharpness,

45:07 Michael: Or it's not really a physical feeling. It has a physical location, but it doesn't, it's not, it's not a, it's not a hotness or a tightness or a pain or any of that stuff. It's panic [laughs].

45:07 Russ comments: Exercise for the reader 2

At 22:01 I provided an exercise for the reader aimed at hearing what Michael sounds like when he is forced into answering a question that does not rest easily on his experience. With a similar instruction, listen to Michael's 44:40 and 45:07 turns.

Does he sound the same or different from 22:01? My answer is at the end of the interview.

45:18 RTH: Okay.

45:22 Michael: Not, I want, I don't want to give too strong impression. I wasn't like completely wiggled out about it. So it's, so it's, I I would call it *slight* panic. It wasn't like I was...

45:32 RTH: You *did* call it "slight panic," kinda,

45:33 Michael: It's not a panic attack or anything like that.

45:38 RTH: So I feel a slight panic. And that slight panic is in a clear physical location in my body, but it doesn't feel like a bodily panic. It just feels like panic. And that's where it happens to be.

45:50 Michael: Yes.

45:51 RTH: Okay. Agnes, you happy with that part.

45:54 AB: Is the panic exhausted by the shoulder? Um, earlier I thought you said something about the panic permeating the rest of the experience. I may be getting that wrong and I may be imprecise. Well, all I'm, is it entirely contained in the, in the shoulder or is there some element of the panic that is in any of these other experiences?

46:18 Michael: So, so spatial location, it's right there. Well, defined, y'know, reasonably well-defined. Is it, so what, what I, what I was trying to say earlier was just that there, there's a pretty tight connection between these three things, cuz they're all kind of about the same issue. [laughs] [AB: Mm-hmm.] Of did I, did I accidentally just email this person that I didn't want to accidentally email? So there, so in that sense it permeates everything else. But it's, but it's spatial location is very well, not very, is quite well-defined.

46:59 RTH: So we talked yesterday or whatever about a *yes, but* question that a yes but answer. [AB: Mm-hmm.] That was a *yes, but* answer to your question, which, which means the answer to your question is *no, it doesn't permeate the rest of, but* (I think). So, so about the, so the eyes are watching the arrow looking.

47:21 Michael: Yeah.

47:22 RTH: And does this do, do I mean that about my *eyes*, I feel my *eyes* to be looking? Or, or does it mean I'm watching it? It

47:29 Michael: No! No, it, I don't feel my eyes at all! It's just, I'm, I'm *attending to* the arrow.

47:34 RTH: So I'm watching the arrow look for the Send button.

47:38 Michael: Yes. What for the sent mail?

47:40 RTH: Yeah. Sent the, sent the sent.

47:43 Michael: I'd already sent the email. And so I was trying to go back and look at the thing I sent.

47:47 RTH: Got it. So the Sent file Sent folder, I guess is

47:50 Michael: Yeah, exactly.

47:53 RTH: But I'm watching that happen.

47:55 Michael: I'm watching that happen.

47:56 RTH: And the, and the experiences of I am watching it as an observer of *the arrow which is looking* [Michael: Yes.] rather than *I experience myself as looking*.

48:08 Michael: Yes. That's correct. In fact, I, I, if you had, again, I don't know, maybe these comments aren't helpful and you can tell me to stop saying them. In this particular instance, if you had caught me off guard, I would've said something like, "it's the arrow that's looking not me." Now, if you had, let me reflect on that for a second, I would've said, well, obviously my hand is in control of the mouse. It must be me looking. But the *experience* was as if it's the arrow doing the looking, not me. [pause; RTH looks as if he is trying to ask something] That's why I had to point, cuz I was showing the arrow where to go.

48:48 RTH: Right. Right. I, I understand that. But, but I, what I, my pause, my pause there was, I, I, I was reflecting on whether I wanted to ask you about the *as if*. And, because my, my experience of your description was didn't that there was no *as if* involved. It wasn't that I'm watching *as if* the arrow was looking. It's, I'm watching the arrow looking.

49:11 Michael: Well, okay, so, so maybe I was being too subtle. It's, it's the latter for sure! What I was trying to say is what I, what this was too compactive a statement on my part. So what I said a minute ago, I think, was something like, if you had caught me off guard, I would've said it's as if the arrow is looking. But that's already a meta comment about what was happening. What was *actually* happening was *I was watching the arrow look*.

49:39 RTH: Right. And that's what I, that's what I understand. And in, in reality, we could say, well, I'm, I'm, I'm doing the looking and my left hand is actually enacting that looking or whatever. But that, as far as the *seeing of the arrow* is concerned, that is not relevant.

49:54 Michael: Yes.

49:56 RTH: Okay. So the, as the point there is that the, *as if* it's not part of the experience

50:02 Michael: That that's right. And I was misleading about that, but that's, yeah. So,

- 50:06 RTH: A huge, hugely important difference, from my point of view. And, and then I am pointing with my right hand. [Michael: That's correct.] And, and that's, I'm taking that as being a, this is a fact of the universe. I am in fact pointing at the screen.
- 50:22 Michael: Oh, there was, there was definitely intentionality involved here. So it was, in fact, the beep happened actually literally somewhere between like here. [points towards the screen] And he, I mean, I was, my, my, my finger was moving towards the screen as the beep happened. But I was def, I didn't have, there was no words here, but if I were to describe it in words, I would say something like "I was showing the arrow where to go." Like that was a co, totally intentional act, as if I might show somebody where the door to the room is or something.
- 50:54 RTH: So this, so this portion of the experience is more about the, it's *over-here-ness*, than it is about the action of the pointing.
- 51:03 Michael: Yeah.Okay. That's fair. And I probably should have made been more clear about that. So I, it was, I *was* pointing, but it was *really*, but *really* it was the, you're right, it really, it was more about the *showing* than it was about the, the physical activity of doing this.
- 51:18 RTH: Okay.
- 51:20 Michael: That's just how the showing manifested.
- 51:23 RTH: Right. So there, what we've got here, I guess is three aspects. I feel a slight panic. And it is *here* in a well demarc, pretty well demarcated region that has extent and whatever in inside my body; that I am watching the arrow look for the Sent folder; and I am telling the, I'm indicating, I'm gesturing, I'm, I'm gesturally indicating with my right hand, where that Sent folder is going, should be looked, should be looked for, I guess.
- 52:09 Michael: Right. That's, that's all accurate.
- 52:14 RTH: Then. I think I'm good about that.
- 52:16 Michael: This story has a happy ending. By the way, I did delete his name from the email! [laughs].
- 52:22 AB: I was gonna say that too. But [they laugh] Congratulations, Michael!
- 52:28 RTH: So I'm good about that. You, you're good about that. [AB: Me too. Yeah.] Number 4.

[Sample 5.4 discussion starts here](#)

- 52:33 Michael: Um, so I'm still in the office. It's still this morning. Uh, I am in the middle, (Again, this is all just background information.) I'm in the middle of, of creating a makeup quiz for a student who missed a quiz. And there's, um, there's, there's two then

experiential aspects to this. One, again, in the mode of production, primarily, but not, but hearing not absent, uh, I said, “let him try the bonus.” So I had gotten to the point of the makeup quiz where there was a bonus question on the original quiz. And I was, I had been pondering, very briefly pondered prior, prior to this, whether I’m going to let this makeup-quiz student do the, have an opportunity at the bonus question or not. And I had decided, yes, I will let him try it. And I had expressed that by saying to myself, “let him try the bonus.” So that’s one, that’s one thing.

53:29 And then the other is I was looking at the bonus problem, cuz y’know, the way I was making this makeup quiz was I was just basically trying to ask very similar questions, but change the actual details of the question. So I’m testing the same thing, but not by asking the same questions. And I was looking at the, the, the bonus problem, while I was saying “let him try the bonus.” And also kind of at the same time then beginning to plan out how I was gonna change it. And the way that manifested as an experience was, uh, (this was a logic problem). And so there’s characters on the screen: it’s the Tilde BD arrow JA is what’s on the screen. The B and the JA capital, and I’m focused right now on the tilde. And the, the tilde was very quickly, not, not slowly at all, but, but still continuously not, it didn’t jump, it moved across, it started its life on the original quiz in front of the BD. And while I was looking at it, and while I was saying let him try the bonus, it very quickly moved in across the arrow to, in front of the JA. And that’s in fact what I ended up doing to it. But that’s not relevant to the experience right now.

54:50 So it, it was a little bit like if, if the, if the tilde was showing me what to do, like, *here’s what you can do with me to change this problem*. I didn’t experience it that way exactly, but it was a little bit like, it was a little bit like that. But, but if you want to get more sort of, um, hardcore about it, there was a visual experience of a tilde very, very quickly moving a few characters over on the screen.

55:26 AB: Okay. So there are two aspects of this experience. There was the, um, production primarily, um, of “let him try the bonus” and then this, um, visual experience with the tilde moving across the screen. Is that correct?

55:47 Michael: Yes, that’s correct.

55:48 AB: And would you, what percentages would you assign to each of those? 50—50? 100—100? 70—...

55:55 Michael: No, no, it’s more like 50—50. Yeah.

55:57 AB: Uhhuh, Uhhuh. [affirmative]

55:58 Michael: I mean, obviously again, these are, these are connected in some way conceptually. It’s not like there’s two unrelated things happening in my experience. But yeah, they were equally present to me.

56:12 AB: So, or, um, “let him try the bonus.” You said it was primarily production, but hearing was also, also present. Is that correct?

56:12 Russ comments: Michael had originally said it was “saying to myself,” which was modified by specifying it was primarily production etc. I thought it was a bit risky to have emphasized the clarification without acknowledging the original description. See the comment at 28:35 and the conversation between 58:05 and 58:48.

56:25 Michael: Yes.

56:27 AB: And was there anything, um, did you say it just like that, “let him try the bonus?” Was there anything else about

56:34 Michael: That? Yeah, it was pretty, it was pretty vanilla speaking. [AB: Mm-hmm.] Yeah. Okay.

56:42 AB: That’s all I wanna say about that aspect.

56:44 RTH: Aloud? Or inner? Don’t know?

56:48 Michael: I’m sorry.

56:49 RTH: Aloud or inner or don’t know?

56:51 Michael: I don’t know. I was in my office alone. Not that this is part of the experience, but in almost always t(here are exceptions, of course), if I, if I think I’m by myself, it doesn’t even really occur to me to monitor that. [RTH: Okay.] and that, the, the good news about that, Russ is, and I, I think I’ve mentioned this already, maybe even on the second day, is the, the, the, and this is one of the most surprising, (this this is a meta comment, sorry), but this is one of the most surprising things to me about this whole process. There’s a couple things that are surprising to me about it that I think I may have learned. But one of them is I thought the, I thought the beeper was gonna be massively intrusive. And in fact, like it takes 30 seconds, [laughs], maybe that’s a comment on my lack of, of long-term attention, but it takes like 30 seconds and I’ve, it’s gone. I haven’t, I, it just, I’m not aware of it anymore. Until it beeps! Of course.

57:54 RTH: I, I think that’s pretty common actually, cuz it’s not that interesting

58:00 Michael: [laughs] until it beeps!

58:05 RTH: So I’m, I’m, uh, I’m understanding this. We’ve been, we’ve been using “productive,” but my understanding is that this is really, *I’m speaking this*, and the speaking in while some hearing and whatever, but the experiences of *speaking it* rather than producing words. I’m *speaking* this.

58:05 Russ comments: RTH is now responding to the issue he thought was raised at 55:12. See also the comment at 28:35.

58:24 Michael: Question. Yeah, no, what That’s right. What I’m, what I’ve been saying, productive. I mean, *I’m aware of the act of speaking*.

58:32 RTH: Right? So I'm, I'm more speaking than I am. Uh, it, it makes sense to call this *speaking*. I am saying this.

58:39 Michael: Yes. I'm not just hearing it. I'm *saying* it. but

58:42 RTH: I'm not just hearing it.

58:43 Michael: Yes. Got it.

58:46 RTH: And I'm not just *producing words*, I'm *saying* these words

58:48 Michael: And I'm not just like thinking words or something like that. No, I'm definitely *speaking*.

58:52 RTH: Okay. That's the way I understood.

58:57 AB: Can we go to the tilde other thing now? The tilde? Um, so the tilde moving across from in front of the BD to in front of the J, um, that was a visual experience. Um, when you say it moved across, are we imagining that it, like, or sorry, what's the visual experience of it moving straight across?

59:27 Michael: No, it jumped over through

59:28 AB: [inaudible] or over,

59:29 Michael: No, it went, it, it was an arc. It jumped over arc, it jumped over the BD in the arrow and landed in front of the JA.

59:36 AB: Okay. And was the motion just how you described like a ooh ooh? [with her finger traces an arc up and over and down]

59:41 Michael: Woo. Yes. It was just like that, but much faster.

59:44 AB: Much faster. Okay. Yeah. Okay. And you also mentioned that there was this quality to this experience of the tilde showing you what to do.

1:00:04 Michael: Yeah. It was like, it was, it was, it was in some ways almost the inverse of, (I, I didn't think about this before) the other one. I mean, it was, it was, yes, it was, it, it it had the feeling of it. I mean, I wasn't personifying it in this way, but it had kind of the sense of the tilde was saying, "here's, here's where you can put me." [laughs] And it was Right! [laughs].

1:00:33 AB: [laughs]. Okay. That's, that's the, those are all my questions.

1:00:43 RTH: So we have used the term *visual experience*. And by that do you mean *see*?

1:00:49 Michael: Yeah, I mean this was, I, I almost, because I introduced you all to my crazy concept of magic mind, I almost use that to describe this, but it's not really that, um, at least

in the way, in my way of thinking. But maybe someone else would classify these as the same. But it's very similar to that in the sense that it starts by just seeing what's there, and then the thing that's there does something. And in this case, we, I already said what it did.

1:01:18 RTH: So my question is: from the standpoint of your experience, do I, (and, and I don't really care about the explanation magic mind or whatever about it), do I see this tilde move?

1:01:31 Michael: Yes. It was a complete visual experience. [RTH: Okay.] Or completely visual, I should say.

1:01:38 RTH: And, and do. And do, I mean, as experientially, I see this tilde take this arc and go up and over. [Michael: Yes.] Do I mean, do I mean *see* in the same way that I *see* the JA and the BD

1:01:53 Michael: On the street? Yeah. It's all there in the same, it's all living in the same space.

1:01:56 RTH: Okay. And, and experientially the same kind of a deal. And I can *say*, "well, y'know, this is magic mind. And I know, I know, I know. And in fact, it really wasn't moving or whatever." But as far as my experience in the moment was, I am *seeing* this tilde arc arc up across the screen. [Michael: Yes.] Okay. And about the tilde being, *here's what you can do*. Is that, is that the same kind of a deal as the arrow? I was watching the arrow?

1:02:32 Michael: It, it is a little bit similar. I was, I started to make that connection a, a second ago and then stopped myself. But there is some similarity. Yes. And the, the difference, the difference is, and the reason I stopped, is that the arrow didn't really, like, (again, I don't want to, I don't, I don't want to, before I say this, I don't want to suggest that I had consciously personified these things, but I'm gonna speak kind of an anthropomorphizing terms here). It's not that the, in the case of the arrow, it kind of was looking but wasn't finding it, didn't know where to go, but the tilde knew *exactly* where to go.

1:03:13 RTH: So I see the tilde *demonstrating* to me, I see the arrow *searching*.

1:03:24 Michael: Yes.

1:03:25 RTH: But in both cases I *see* as if it, I, I, I, I *see* the (I don't know exactly how to say this), but I see the, I, I see this, the thing demonstrating something, the thing, the thing having a mind of its own, I guess is what I wanted to say.

1:03:48 Michael: Yes. The way, I mean I, again, I, it's that, that's the right way to describe it from one point of view. But there was never in my mind (that I can recall at least, um, or could recall when I was writing these notes) there, there was, it, wasn't it, I did, I hadn't really invested these things with, with, y'know, personhood or something like that. They, they were, they were inanimate objects, but they were, they had a mind of their own at the same time.

1:04:21 RTH: So maybe...

1:04:22 Michael: I just invested them with personhood, but I don't...

1:04:24 RTH: How, how does *agentic* mean to [inaudible]?

1:04:27 Michael: Yeah. Yeah. That, I mean that, that's, that's fair. Yeah. That, that's fine to me.

1:04:36 RTH: So I, I see in a, the, the tilde agentially is saying, "this is what could happen."

1:04:42 Michael: Or Yeah. Or showing, showing me rather than telling.

1:04:45 RTH: Showing, showing, showing me agentially and the, and the arrow is agentially looking.

1:04:53 Michael: Yes.

1:04:55 RTH: In my experience of it.

1:04:57 Michael: Yes.

1:04:58 RTH: And I'm not, I, I understand you're, you're, you're not confusing whether the arrow really is an agent and whether the tilde is really an agent.

1:05:05 Michael: I mean, those things weren't really, the question wasn't part of my experience. I wasn't asking myself that question in the moment. [laughs]. Um, but it's, it's, again, it's one of these cases where if you had been able to interrupt me in that moment and said, "Michael, what's happening here?" I would not have said, "oh, well the arrow is a, is an agent and is looking for something," right. But that's how I was experiencing it.

1:05:27 RTH: But that's what the experience was. [Michael: Yes.] The experience was as the agent as arrow, a arrow as agent and the tilde as agent. [Michael: Yes.] So I'm good. I'm good about number 4. And we are eight minutes past our hour. And uh,

1:05:43 Michael: That's fine by me, cuz I, I didn't know how the hell to describe the next one.

1:05:48 RTH: So I'm sorry to be missing that one! [laughs]

1:05:49 Michael: Now I don't have to describe it.

1:05:53 RTH: So, so we *could*, we could describe it or we could say, *well, let's*,

1:05:57 Michael: I, I, I'm, I'm done for the day. I don't know what Agnes schedule looks like. [AB: I'm also, I have to get going also.] Yeah, okay. No, I, I meant I'm done for the day, as in, I could sit here forever. But you can't, so that's fine.

1:06:07 AB: I can't, I have to go. Yeah.

1:06:09 RTH: Alright. So I would say let's, let's say that the gods of the whatever who are watching over us is saying "we're not gonna, we're, we're not gonna do that! We're gonna save ourselves the interest or the difficulty or whatever it would be of that." And we'll, so are we gonna do this again?

1:06:26 Michael: Sure. I'm happy to do it again.

1:06:29 RTH: Me too.

1:06:30 Michael: I, I don't know Russ, what the protocol is for ending. So I'm probably, unless I, unless I turn 75 at some point during this year, I'm probably, every time you ask, just gonna say "Sure!" [laughs].

1:06:43 RTH: Well, well the pro, the protocol is when, when we have a better, when we have something better to do, then we're gonna do the something better. And, and, and that comes from you, you turning 75 or, or the calendar showing that, y'know, we got, we don't have these many times, or it seems like we've said these things all, all before or whatever. I don't, I don't think,

1:07:06 Michael: Yeah, I guess it's, I guess it's the last one that strikes me as the most natural way to say, "okay, we've done this now." And I, I don't know, I don't have any experience with this of course. So I don't know what that looks like exactly. Um, but that does feel like, to me like that when, when, when things start to feel, not to *me*, cuz it's my, it all feels similar. It all feels familiar to me, cuz this sort of, that's my life. But when you guys are thinking to yourselves, oh, well, we're just getting more of the same here.

1:07:36 RTH: Well, I, I, my guess is it'll, it will occur to you, too. So when, when *you* think, *well, this is like be 4.6 and sort of similar 3.7* and we're, we're talking a lot like that. And, and we're all, we're all, we're all gonna think that more or less at the same time, is my guess. And, uh, um, we'll think we've done enough.

1:07:56 Michael: Well, I maybe. I, my, um, I, I have really pretty poor episodic memory. Um, so you guys probably remember the lot, the, the, the former beeps much better than I do. That'd be my guess. I could be wrong about that.

1:08:14 RTH: I used to have better memory than I've got now! [shrugs] But I also think that there's a, there's some, there's some value to forgetting things, so. [Michael: Well that's good because...!] there's good news and bad news there! [they laugh] So when, when are we gonna do this, I guess is the question, right?

They compare calendars

Exercise for the reader 1 (from 22:01)

Watch, and especially *hear*, Michael's 21:23 turn. Don't worry too much about the content, the *what* he is saying, but focus on the manner of saying it. The perspective I want you to take is to grok whether Michael is easily describing experience, or whether his delivery is tortured or pained or tentative. My answer is at the end of this interview.

Russ's answer:

To my ear, Michael's 21:23 delivery is *not* easy description of experience. The main DES rule suggests, then, that Michael's manner of answering suggests that AB's 21:08 question is *not* a good question.

Here is my understanding of why the 21:08 question is problematic. The question AB actually asked is grammatically a natural-attitude question—it assumes in the structure of the language that *of course* there *must be* a relative timing of these experiences. Things in the natural world have relative timings, but things in the experiential world do not (or at least do not necessarily) have relative timings.

So AB asked a natural-attitude-type question about the experiential realm, and that made things difficult for Michael.

It would be a good exercise to listen to each of Michael's turns from the perspective of whether he is easily describing experience in that turn. It is a valuable skill, because it is like having a good teacher sit on your shoulder and say "You asked a good question. You asked a bad question. You asked a good question..."

See also the exercise at 45:07.

Exercise for the reader 2 (from 45:07)

At 22:01 I provided an exercise for the reader aimed at hearing what Michael sounds like when he is forced into answering a question that does not rest easily on his experience. With a similar instruction, listen to Michael's 44:40 and 45:07 turns. Does he sound the same or different from 22:01? My answer is at the end of the interview.

Russ's answer:

I think here Michael sounds like he is aiming directly at his experience, which is much different from 22:01. My recommendation is to become alert to those differences in sound / tone / equivocation, because they are Michael's grammar producer (soul, if you like) communicating about the quality of his apprehension of his experience.

Agnes comments: So, I did both exercises for the reader, and came up with the same responses as Russ. I have a question about this process. If I understand correctly, the idea is that, every time you ask a question and Michael does not easily describe his experience, you learn that it was the wrong question to ask. And then you examine why, and you learn from that as part of the iterative DES process, so that you can ask a better question next time. So, in this case, the problem was Agnes's assumption that there

is some relative timing between the different experiences, and she should have instead asked whether there was an experience of relative timing. Is that right?

Russ comments: RE “every time you ask a question and Michael does not easily describe his experience, you learn that it was the wrong question to ask.”

That is what I said in the comment, but it is a bit of an oversimplification. If Michael does not easily describe his experience, then *either* it was the wrong question to ask *or* there is something difficult / problematic / sensitive / whatever about Michael’s experience relevant to that question. That is, if Michael does not easily describe his experience, then it is either my problem or Michael’s, and I think as a general principle it is a good idea to start with the likelihood that the problem is mine.

RE “And then you examine why, and you learn from that as part of the iterative DES process, so that you can ask a better question next time.”

That is an important part of it, but an equally important part is that it guides the present line of questioning. I find it desirable (and it is a basic desirability, sort of like when things smell or taste good) when Michael is (or seems to be from my perspective) describing his experience, and I am attracted by that direction (or repelled when the “smell” is undesirable)—I want to go in the direction where Michael is describing his experience. So the profit is not just about the future (iterative) process but also about the present (shaping of today’s interview) process.

RE “the problem was Agnes’s assumption that there is some relative timing between the different experiences, and she should have instead asked whether there was an experience of relative timing.”

That’s pretty much right, but I would polish it like this: When Agnes assumes something about Michael’s experience (as, for example, when she assumes a natural-attitude timing about it), Agnes is aimed at Agnes-confusing-herself-with-Michael rather than at Michael himself. When Agnes wonders whether she should have instead asked X, she is inserting Russ-as-expert between herself and Michael. Both of those things have sharp edges aimed at Michael. That is, both of those things prevent (or at least make it difficult for) Michael’s wanting to reveal himself to Agnes.

Agnes is in fact ignorant about Michael’s experience, and that is an ignorance to be cultivated if she wants to apprehend Michael’s experience. Cultivation of ignorance is approximately the same thing as bracketing the natural attitude or the epoché; Agnes’s genuine ignorance coupled with her genuine interest in Michael’s experience is the attractive receptance that will inspire / enable Michael to reveal his experience.

So I would revise: “the problem was Agnes’s assumption that there is some relative timing between the different experiences ~~she knew anything about Michael’s experience~~, and she should have instead asked whether there was an experience of relative timing ~~accepted / conveyed her genuine ignorance about and interest in his experience.~~”