

Michael D.
Michael D. Interview 6
Sampling Day 6

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February23 interview with Michael that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/YumoqF7sfNM>. 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.
- 0:04 RTH: And this is going to be Michael 6, I think.
- 0:11 Michael: Yes.
- 0:13 RTH: And I would say we ought to proceed according to the plans that we've had for the last couple days, which I think has been working fairly well, which is to say we should try to focus on Michael's experience and deal with procedural issues in Comments or whatever. Does that work for everybody?
- 0:35 Michael: Uh, that's fine. [AB: Yep.]
- 0:36 RTH: All right. And anything else we need to talk about before we look at number 1?
- 0:44 Michael: Um, no. Um, may, maybe I should just say, cuz I know it's coming and you all don't, um, so you're gonna find out that I had a pretty bad morning, but everything's fine now. Lemme just, I'll just say that to you now.
- 1:04 RTH: Well, I appreciate that! And, and I, well, I don't, I don't know what's coming, but I appreciate you telling me that it's okay. [they laugh]
- 1:16 Michael: Right? I, I thought you might, so anyway.
- 1:18 RTH: Alright, let's do it then.

Sample 6.1 discussion starts here

- 1:19 Michael: Okay. Um, so number 1, um, I just gotten up. It was very early. Actually, I hadn't gotten up to wake up. I had gotten up just to put a log on the fire. It was like probably four o'clock in the morning and I decided I couldn't go back to sleep. That's all background information, of course. Um, so it was chilly cuz the fire hadn't been going for a couple hours. I would, and so there was a, a couple different things going on. One was I was tired and I, that kind of manifested as a kind of, the best words I could use to describe it was like a, like a headache, but without the pain [laughs]. So there's kind of a pressure in your head that was kind of, that I interpreted as being, as being a result of, or a manifestation of, being sleepy but not being able to go to sleep. Um, I was washing some dishes and I was noticing or enjoying (not, noticing isn't the right word) I was enjoying the pleasant feel of the warm water on my hands cuz it was cold.
- 2:36 And I was also noticing, I was sort of not very, not very attentively, but I was looking out the window and it was, and I was seeing the darkness of the early morning. And I also wrote down (this isn't the bad part of the morning, I was still pretty, pretty okay right here um, that it might be worth talking about this for a minute). So I, I initially wrote down that this was like a, an this was another kind of experience that will for hereafter ever be called stirring the oatmeal, even though there was no oatmeal involved here. Um, because I initially wanted to say, "well, this was like that" in that I, you know, I was kind of like half not present, so to say. And then whatever, whatever sense in which I was present, it was like, you know, 20% pleasant feeling of warm water, 20% head-pressure tiredness, 10% darkness. But then I got worried after I wrote that, that, that, that way of characterizing this experience and that there's been some others that I also characterize in the same terms.
- 3:55 And I don't know what to make of this. And you can make whatever you want of it. But I just thought I'd mentioned the worry I had and the worry was, and is, that maybe I'm interpreting the experience as half not present *only* because what these experiences tended to have in common, I think (I didn't go back and look at my notes to see if this is true), but I think what they had in common is that there was no verbal aspect to them at all. And so then I got worried that maybe I'm just like, maybe when I have experiences that aren't verbal, I just think of that as being, *I'm not fully there* or it's not a full, I don't know how to characterize it. So maybe it's a hundred percent, maybe, maybe it's a hundred percent experience. I'm not absent, I'm just not having worded thoughts of any kind. I don't know. I, I, I just got worried that I was describing it as being not present only because there, there wasn't active speech-like activity going on of any kind. So make of that what you will. But anyway...,
- 5:10 RTH: [interrupts] So, so lemme, lemme make, lemme make a little bit of that. So what, what I take the kinds of things that you're describing to me are *sensory awarenesses*. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] So that's, that's my term for, for paying attention to a sensory quality, a sensory characteristic of the in internal or external world, sensory awareness. And what I would say about sensory awareness is that many people don't start reporting sensory awarenesses *at all* until about the third

or the fourth sampling day. [Michael: Okay.] And I, and I think that might be for any of several reasons, and I don't really know, I don't know, I've never really investigated, so I'm just sort of speculating here. But I *think* it is, I think there's sort of two reasons. One is people think *it doesn't count*. And, *you know, that's just a sensory awareness. Who cares about that kind of a thing*. So I think, I think that's possible. And, and *another* reason that I think is that sensory awareness is very close to something like sexual awareness because it's what you, what your body likes, what you, what you attend to, what you want, whatever. And people are shy about talking about that stuff. [Michael: Mm.] And, and, and justifiably so I think, you know, that back in the day when, when you expressed a sexual interest in the King's wife, then your gene pool ended, your gene your genealogy was over with! So,

6:37 Michael: Right. Okay.

6:37 RTH: So I think, I think there's a, I think there's a reason to be, or there may, there may be reason to, for, for sensory awarenesses to be something.

6:56 Michael: Okay. I don't, I don't think I've been shy about it, but I, but I (maybe I have, I don't know) but, uh, but I definitely was, I I, well I I got worried that I would, that I had the idea that an experience that's *just* sense sensory awareness is somehow partially empty. [laughs]

7:17 RTH: Well, that's, that, that was, that was the part that I think I was reacting to when I said that the first part was that people think it doesn't count. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] So in, in, in, in the world according to Hurlburt, a sensory awareness is just as important as any other kind of awareness. If it's, if that's what occupies my experience, well, that's what occupies my experience.

7:35 Michael: Mm-hmm. I mean, I guess I would add to that though. There's still, when the few times that I've characterized it in these ways, I, I still think there's some sense—maybe I don't have it arti, have a way of articulating it very well—but I, I do still think there's some sense in which there's a kind of lack of focus, maybe is the right word. [RTH: Okay.] Um, cuz I was aware of the warm water; I was feeling it. But I wasn't like intently noticing the warm water or saying to myself, "gosh, what lovely warm water" or something like that. And same with the darkness out the window. It was more of a just, it was there rather than I was carefully attending to it. I don't know. Um, so now I'm, now I'm now I feel like I'm taking back what I said. I don't know. [laughs]

8:31 RTH: Well, I, I think this, it does highlight the interesting part about, and, and the challenging part about descriptive experience sampling, because the question of whether the warm water on your hands that you're noticing as being pleasant is the same as the water on *my* hands that I notice warm water on my hands that I notice as being pleasant. That's a fundamentally important question. [Michael: Hmm.] And, and as a matter of fact, I do notice the pleasantness of warm water frequently, maybe every time that I wash my hands! It's like, it's a real treat. [Michael: Aha!] There's, uh, thousands of people in the world that don't get a chance to have warm water on their hands, y'know! [Michael: Right.] Thousands of *billions* of people is

what I meant to say. And, and that is not lost on me, I think. But that doesn't make my experience be the same as yours. It makes, uh, trying to, trying to communicate it about an, an interesting and challenging endeavor.

9:25 Michael: Right, right.

9:27 RTH: But I, but given, given the preambles of, of, of this day, I would say a, what I am understanding here is that there's three sort of sensory aspects going on here. A headache-y kind of thing, which is more like a pressure; and a warm water, pleasant, enjoying sensation; and a something of the darkness. And none of that seems gripping to me, but it's not, not, not nothing either.

9:27 Russ comments: RE "given the preambles of...this day"
RTH is conveying here that, given Michael's preliminary commentary about this being a "bad day," RTH preferred to move on to sample 6.2, rather than extract any additional details from sample 6.1.

9:53 Michael: Yes. That's, that's, that's a reasonable description. Yes.

9:56 RTH: And then I would say we oughta go on to number 2, if that's alright with Agnes.

Sample 6.2 discussion starts here

10:05 Michael: Okay. Number 2. Um, okay. So, um, I was, (now I'm resisting a temptation to control your reaction here) I was, I was in a chair in my office. Uh, it's a reclining chair. It actually can recline almost completely horizontally, but I was not horizontal. I was sort of three-quarters reclined, I would say, in this chair. And I was trying to relax, and I was trying, and, and I was focusing my attention on, uh, a guitar. There were several guitars in front of me, but I was looking at one of them in particular. And I had almost a kind of tunnel vision. I was very, really, quite focused on the guitar. And th-this wasn't, this wasn't the tunnel vision. Like I didn't see other things. It was more a tunnel vision, like there was just blackness around. So it wasn't like I was ignoring the stuff in my peripheral vision, or not attending to it, or whatever. It *wasn't there*. It was like blackness where there would normally be peripheral vision. And I was aware of that blackness. And the, and so it was like almost more like literally a tunnel. And then the guitar was at the end of the tunnel.

11:35 And there was-so I, I was seeing it, but it, it was, it wa- it, it felt like, at any moment it could melt, or, or it could, (I mean, there wasn't, it wasn't melting specifically that was, that was part of this experience or the potential for melting.) But it could, it could melt. Or maybe it was just a *facade* of a guitar or like a, that could get *pulled away* at any second. So in other words, the guitar was there, but it, it wasn't a, a, a kind of stable part of reality. But I was trying to make it feel stable.

12:28 And then the other thing that was happening was that there was a voice, a very nasty one that showed up sometime last summer. And at this point, I was still hearing the words that it was saying. And it was saying at that time, "people just pretend to like you. People just pretend to like you."

12:52 So there's, those are the two things that were going on. This voice was saying those words. And I was trying to relax and sort of convince myself that the guitar is

real. So vi... So I wasn't saying words to that effect though, I was just *looking at* it. And I guess there was some effort involved, but the effort was not articulated in any kind of words. The only words were the words of this guy. And everything else was just the guitar surrounded by blackness seeming like it could disappear in some fashion at any moment. That was it.

- 13:47 BD: So, um, there were these two experiences. There was the visual experience, the guitar tunnel-vision experience. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] And then the nasty voice, auditory experience. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] Um, how salient was each of those?
- 14:06 Michael: They were both very present. Um, if I, I mean fifty/fifty, but more like hundred/hundred. I mean, they were like really intense experiences, both of them.
- 14:19 BD: So with the visual experience, um, you described that there was a guitar that you were, uh.
- 14:30 Michael: Yes. This is a real guitar. [BD: Mm-hmm.] It was, I mean, the chair is facing the guitar. I, I was, so, I was having, already, maybe a little bit of background to would help here. I was, the, the bad morning had started by this point. And, I had, on purpose went to sit in the chair cuz it's a familiar place. And I was looking at the guitar because it's a very familiar object. I mean, I probably hold this thing for at least an hour a day. So I was putting myself in a familiar place.
- 15:05 BD: And so, um, you're really focused on the guitar. And around the guitar, there's just blackness. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] Um,
- 15:17 RTH: So could I ask one question about that? [Michael: Yeah.] Do you, do you mean blackness that I see blackness? Or do you see nothingness, that all there is, is, the guitar?
- 15:28 Michael: No, I see it [pause] I see [pause] blackness, like, shadow.
- 15:35 RTH: And is that three-dimensional-tunnel-like? Or just so black that you really can't tell?
- 15:45 Michael: Probably more the latter.
- 15:46 RTH: Okay. Sorry Agnes.
- 15:50 Michael: I said tunnel, but I, but I, it wasn't, it wasn't like, it wasn't like, look, it wasn't like looking down a tunnel where that, you can tell that it's three dimensional. It was only tunnel in the more metaphorical sense of *there was nothing else except blackness and guitar*.
- 16:13 BD: So, um. [pause] how much of your visual field was the guitar versus the blackness? Is that something you had an experience of?

- 16:29 Michael: Yeah, it, the, it was, probably, (I mean, who knows how to measure these things) but probably three quarters guitar, one quarter blackness, something like that. The guitar was filling a good portion of my vis- of my visual experience.
- 16:50 RTH: But not all?
- 16:51 Michael: But not all.
- 16:57 BD: And you mentioned that, um, you felt like it could, it could melt at any moment?
- 17:06 Michael: Yeah. I mean, I don't, I don't want to emphasize *melting* [BD: Mm-hmm.] because that thought didn't occ- [BD: Mm-hmm.] There weren't really any thoughts going on, to be honest. But, um, or no, no, like verbalized thoughts, uh, or conceptualized thoughts, really. But, so I don't want to emphasize the *melting* part too much, [BD: Mm-hmm] but just the irreality, like. [BD: Mm-hmm.] This thing, it, it could, you, you could say, I mean, there's lots of ways to just, to say it and I don't have a good one. [BD: Mm-hmm.] But melting, you know, potential for, melting, potential for like, like someone could pull a curtain away and say, "ha! It's just a *fake* guitar!" Or it could just disintegrate or, but none of those specifically. They were just like, just the very fact that it could at any moment not be there was really what was present to me.
- 17:54 BD: Mm-hmm. And that, what you just described [pause] would you characterize, I mean, you said it was not conceptual, like you weren't saying that to yourself or anything like that. Um, was that experience a visual experience? Or something else?
- 18:21 Michael: I would say it's visual. [BD: Mm-Hmm.] Um, I would say that it's, it's like I, I've ne I, I I, I shouldn't say it's *like* this, cuz I don't think I've ever been in this situation, so I'm just imagining! [laughs] But I don't know, like, like people say, like when you go into a fun house or something (it doesn't sound very fun to me, which is why I've never been in one). But when you go into a fun house, right, that, there's also the all kinds of tricks are being played on your experience, I guess. They're like, you know, funky mirrors and whatever. I don't really know what fun houses are like, but, but people say, like, you see stuff and it seems real, but you're not sure if it's real—it's something like that. But it, but it's a visual uncertainty. It's not a, *gosh, I wonder if this is real?* It's more like you're seeing it, but you're not sure you're really seeing a, a real thing.
- 19:26 But it's not, it's not that it's like, any different from seeing it. Like, if I were, it's right behind me, I could turn around and look at it right now and I'd have a certain visual experience. And apart from the seeming irreality of it, or potential irreality of it, the actual like, content of the visual experience, apart from that, wouldn't be any different. So it's not, I know, in other words, what I mean is it's not like, wavy or [BD: Mm-hmm.], y'know, partially transparent or I don't know what. It, it's, it's there as a solid-looking, like a solid object. But, but also there's this sense that at any moment it could be, it could, it could do something weird and, and it's not real.
- 20:14 BD: Well, I'm good with that part of the experience.
- 20:18 RTH: So, you said that you were trying to keep it there. Is that part of this experience?

20:25 Michael: I, uh, so, so I had sat in the chair, partially with the intention. I was already having this feeling of everything is not real. And I sat in the chair partially with the intention of looking at the guitar as a kind of anchor point of reality. But it wasn't really serving that purpose for me cuz as I was looking at it, it was like, that also felt like it could, it could dematerialize at any moment. [RTH: And] But I wasn't thinking those thoughts, it was just, that's just how it felt.

21:08 RTH: And is, and is and is what you said about "I'm, look, I'm, I'm sitting there, I'm looking at it with the intention of," is that, is that more context or is that part of the, part of the experience?

21:19 Michael: That No, that's, that's, that's, [exhales] I mean, the intention was still there. I said so, so it is both. I mean, I, I, I, I went, I sat in the chair *for that purpose*, but that's all before the beeping. I had been in the chair for probably, I don't know how long actually, But, certainly I didn't, I hadn't just sat down. Um, but the intention of it becoming an anchor was still present. It's, I, I wasn't thinking, I wasn't thinking words to that effect. Like, "oh, get my, gosh, I have to make this thing be my anchor," or something like that. [RTH: Mm-hmm.] But that's why I was looking at it. And I hadn't lost track of that purpose.

22:00 RTH: So I am *seeing* with the experience of unreality and trying to hang on to reality.

22:10 Michael: Yes.

22:12 RTH: Okay.

22:12 Michael: And specifically the guitar was the, was the anchor point.

22:17 RTH: Intentional anchor point.

22:18 Michael: Yes.

22:20 RTH: Okay. Then I'm good with that part.

22:28 BD: So, um, the second part was the experience of hearing the nasty voice saying "people just pretend to like you." [Michael: Yeah.] Is that correct? [Michael: Yes.] And is that, um, do you experience that as, coming from a particular direction? [Michael: Yes.] Hm.

22:51 Michael: Sorry, I should have mentioned that. Um, so, uh, that, that's coming from somewhere above me. Directly above me.

23:01 BD: Mm-hmm.

23:02 Michael: I, I realize you can't see my hand. It's coming from up there. [laughs]

23:06 BD: Mm-hmm. We saw your arm.

23:08 Michael: Okay. [laughs],

23:09 BD: [laughs] And, um,

23:12 Michael: Like, maybe like three feet above my head? Something like that.

23:16 BD: And is it loud? Does it have a particular volume?

23:21 Michael: It's normal volume. [BD: Mm-hmm] It's not loud. It's very matter of fact. Th, this voice is a very... One of the things that's nasty about it is he says nasty things, but he says it in a completely, like, like he's reading the phone book.

23:33 BD: Mm-hmm. And is he saying that line, um, over and over? Um, once? Does he pause? Does he,

23:44 Michael: He's, he's saying that in similar, very similar things. There's minor variations in the words, um, but pretty similar to that, over and over. Not, not continuously, but I would say (now, of course, that's not part of the immediate experience, but, so this is context now), but I, I would say, time is difficult in this situation, but experientially it would feel like there was probably no more than 10 to 15 seconds between utterances.

24:21 BD: So I'm good with that.

24:24 RTH: And, and with another voice, you have given a name "John," is there a reason...

24:28 Michael: Well, that's not his actual name. But,

24:29 RTH: I, I under, I understand that. And, but what I wanna know is whether this voice has a name that you are. [Michael: It does.] Okay. Okay. So this is a familiar voice.

24:44 Michael: Familiar, John's been around for, for over a decade. This voice came, came on the scene last, I think last summer. I'd have to think more carefully to give you an exact time, but that's pretty much it.

24: 54 RTH: Okay.

24:57 RTH: And. And does this voice seem real? Does it seem, does it seem like someone [Michael: Yeah.] talking to me?

25:07 Michael: Absolutely.

25:11 RTH: And,

25:11 Michael: I mean, it is the same, it's the same voice every time. So I *know* it's *not* real, but if I heard it for the first time, I probably would turn around.

25:23 RTH: So the experience is of reality, even though there's some, knowledge, somewhere in my bone, bag of bones that understands this to be not real?

25:34 Michael: Yep.

25:35 RTH: Okay.

25:36 BD: And is that the case with John as well?

25:39 Michael: Yep. That's most, that's the case with most voices. Yeah.

25:39 Russ comments: After the meeting, Russ wrote the following description of this sample and then commented on it:

6.2 [Michael was concerned about losing his ability to maintain a grip on reality, to keep reality from melting away or disappearing. He had reclined $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way in his office reclining chair trying to relax and to keep himself focused by looking at his favorite guitar which was on a guitar stand in front of him.] There were two experiential strands. First, he saw the guitar surrounded by directly apprehended blackness (that is, this was *not* merely ignoring the stuff in his peripheral vision—the peripheral things were not at all seen or otherwise present). [Michael referred to this as the “guitar was at the end of the tunnel,” but this “tunnel” had no 3-D extension into the distance.] This seeing felt like at any moment it could “melt” (by “melt” he meant somehow lose its reality—dissolve, reveal itself as merely a façade that could peel away). [That is, Michael was trying (not very successfully) to relax, focusing on the guitar with the specific intention of trying to make the guitar (and Michael himself) feel stable.]

Second, Michael heard James saying “People just pretend to like you.... People just pretend to like you.” James’s voice came from directly above him (perhaps three feet above him). James spoke (as he always does) in a very flat affective tone [“like reading a phone book”—that’s part of what makes him particularly nasty.]

In this description, Russ is calling the voice “James,” a pseudonym Russ made up here in the creation of the description. There was no mention of a name during the interview itself. Michael said that the voice does have a name, but he did not say what that name was. He acknowledged that the voice had a name in the same way that “John” (see samples 3.4 and 4.6) had a name. The first voice’s name was not “John”; Michael did not use his real name but was willing to use the pseudonym “John” in the interview. Here, by specific contrast, the voice had a name, but Michael did not provide it or produce a pseudonym in the interview, even though he had the opportunity to do so (as for example at 24:29).

I consider here why, in the writing of this description, I give him a name at all. Here are the alternatives for the opening of the second paragraph:

Possible wording	Implications
Second, Michael heard a nasty voice saying “People just pretend to like you”	Emphasizes the vocal characteristics of the voice, particularly those that are typically thought of as nasty (harsh, abrupt, clipped, etc.); that is misleading because the actual voice is monotone.
Second, Michael heard the nasty voice saying “People just pretend to like you”	Emphasizes the enduring-ness and familiarity of the speaker, but it makes the speaker one-dimensional—emphasizes the nasty and only the nasty.
Second, Michael heard a familiar voice that usually says nasty things saying “People just pretend to like you”	Emphasizes the voice-ness of the experience—downplays any other experienced personhood, as well as being cumbersome.
Second, Michael heard James saying “People just pretend to like you”	Emphasizes the enduring being-ness and familiarity of the speaker.
Second, Michael heard a voice whose identity is known to him, and who typically says nasty things, saying “People just pretend to like you”	Emphasizes the enduring being-ness and familiarity of the speaker without making up a name

When I wrote this table, it included only the first four options, and I wrote: To my ear, the “James” option seems the most rhetorically convenient way of conveying the voice’s familiarity and specificity. However, I do not at all understand the non-rhetorical ramifications of that choice. There is perhaps (probably?) a reason that Michael did not provide a name when RTH gave him the opportunity at 24:29. If so, I would be happy to edit this description in whatever way suits Michael.

Michael subsequently suggested the option shown in the last row, which also seems good to me.

What makes this discussion interesting is not so much the result (how to refer to the voice) but the process: it is *that kind* of attention to detail that results (or at least can result) in high-fidelity description. Not just the detail of voice references, but how to refer to *anything* experiential.

(There is further discussion of this in the first ten minutes of interview 7.)

25:46 RTH: Okay. Then I think I’m good. Number 3.

Sample 6.3 discussion starts here

25:50 Michael: Number 3, I’m still in the chair, at this point I’ve closed my eyes. And I’m lying in the chair. I’ve put it all the way back. Um, and the, the, the voice is still talking, but I have gotten to the point where I’m not really paying attention to it. So I, it’s more

like background noise at this point, than words that I'm attending to the meaning of. And I'm, I'm paying, I'm paying a lot of attention to the chair, the feeling of the chair, supporting me. So I feel the chair holding me up.

26:30 But there's again, this, this sense which is kind of unnerving [laughs ironically], that the chair could itself disappear at any moment. And so there's this feeling like, *am I gonna fall?* because this thing that's holding me up could, could, stop doing that, somehow. And, this is gonna sound very coincidental, so I'll tell you for background, I had already said this to myself probably 20 times, so it was, it was a phrase I was repeating to myself. So it wasn't, it wasn't a coincidence at all that the beep happened to go off at this particular time, or while I was saying this cuz if, if it had gone off at any time in the five to ten minutes, it would've gone off while I was saying this. I was saying, to myself, not, not repeatedly, but more than once per minute, probably, something like that. I was saying, "You should take an Ativan." That, which is a weird thing for me to say, Ativan is, is a medication. That's the, that's the brand name. And I almost never refer to it by its brand name. So I don't know, that, I guess that's not really part of the experience, I'm just commenting now that it was a weird thing to say. Uh, I don't, so I don't know why I was calling it Ativan. It's "Lorazepam" is what I normally call it. But anyway, I was saying, "you should take an Ativan."

27:54 Michael: Which if you don't know, is a drug that basically puts you to sleep. Or it puts me to sleep, I don't know what it does to other people.

28:05 RTH: And is that the end of the exposition for this?

28:07 Michael: That's it. I was saying that, I was saying that "you should take an Ativan." There was the chatter. And then there was the. But what I was really focused on was the chairs supporting me, but also there's this sense that it could. That could end at any, any second. So it's a very, if it's a very precarious feeling like I'm currently being supported, but that might not last.

28:32 RTH: So the feeling from the chair is not *pressure on* me, but *support of* me. Is that right?

28:40 Michael: Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

28:41 RTH: And, and head to toe? Or, particular place, or?

28:46 Michael: Pretty much head to toe. Yeah. I mean, probably not toe, exactly, cuz my feet hang over the end of it, so, but yeah, I'm, I'm, I am, I am. It's a full body experience though. I'm not just like paying attention to holding my head up or something like that. And I'm not really focused on any one part of my body. It's more like I can just feel the whole thing supporting my whole body.

29:08 RTH: Including your arms?

29:10 Michael: Yes.

29:11 RTH: And, uh, are your arms in contact with the chair? [Michael: Yes.] Or folded across your chest or whatever?

29:15 Michael: No, the arm arms are like, so the chair has armrests and the arms are on the armrests. [RTH: Mm-hmm.]

29:21 RTH: And, and so I guess the question I was asking is, am I, am I feeling the chair in the places where it actually touches my body, [Michael: Yes.] where my body and come in contact? [Michael: Yes.]

29:39 RTH: And am, I, my, am, am, am, I correct in saying, this feels like a normal, I guess you might say, sensation of the chair, *along with* it's holding me up? Or is it the whole, the whole of this experience is *holding me up*? [Michael: Wh] So what I guess I'm saying is when I sit in the chair, I don't gen, when I sit in a chair, I don't generally feel it to be holding me up, I don't think. I feel the pressure or whatever. And obviously it is holding me up, but that's not my sense of it. So I, I'm,

30:16 Michael: No, my sense of it is that it's *holding me up* because I, because the worry is that it, that at any second it might *not* be doing that. So it's really the sense of being held up, for now.

30:27 RTH: Okay.

30:30 Michael: It's not really a sense of pressure. Like right now, if I think, if I attend to it, I can feel the pressure of this chair on certain parts of me. And that, that is more like what you were, that's more like the other option you offered. I can feel the pressure, but it's not really the sense of it that it's holding me up, although of course it is. But this was really more about *being held up* than it was about *pressure*.

30:52 RTH: Okay.

30:55 RTH: And there's a, there is a worry or concern or unnerving, precarious, precariousness or whatever of the, of the, the holding up might disappear?

31:06 Michael: Yes.

31:08 RTH: And is that the same or different from the previous beep about the guitar? That the guitar...

31:12 Michael: Very sim, very similar.

31:17 RTH: So it's the, precariousness of the attachment to reality, or the,

31:23 Michael: It's, it's, it's the, it's the *not feeling confident that the chair will remain real*.

31:31 RTH: Which is similar to the *not being confident that the guitar will remain real*.

31:35 Michael: Correct.

31:36 RTH: Okay. And then I think I'm good about that, portion.

31:44 BD: Me too.

31:46 RTH: And then, there is the voice, which is the same voice, speaking in the same phone-book way. [Michael: Yep.] But I'm not really paying attention to its message anymore. [Michael: Correct.] I hear it, but it's background-y or....

32:06 Michael: That's right.

32:07 RTH: Okay. And then there's, um, and I'm happy with that portion too. Agnes, are you, happy with that?

32:22 BD: I mean, I was gonna ask, um, about the voice being background. Um, in a previous Zoom, a previous beep of yours. Um, at one point you had described background voices. (I, I, I can't remember. I think these were people, maybe the Frisbee people.) Um, as you hear them and they're saying something. And um, if you were to tune into what they were saying, you would, you would be able to follow it, but you're not paying attention. Um, was it background like that? Or was it background in some,

33:01 Michael: No, it was background exactly like that. I had been trying to, I had been trying to tune it out, and I had succeeded.

33:08 BD: Mm-hmm.

33:08 Michael: But tuning out here doesn't mean it goes away. [BD: Mm-hmm.] It just means that you're not paying attention to the meaning anymore. [BD: Mm-hmm]

33:16 RTH: And is it still up there? Three feet up?

33:18 Michael: Yeah. It hasn't moved, Yeah.

33:19 BD: Mm-hmm

33:20 RTH: Okay. Then you heard about that Agnes? [BD: Yep.] And then there is you saying "you should take an Ativan." And there's something weird about that. And I didn't understand whether the weirdness was just my use of the brand name as opposed to the generic?

33:36 Michael: Yeah. It was just that it was, and that, that I didn't, it didn't strike me as weird at the time. That's why I said that was just commentary. I probably shouldn't have even said it. But I was struck again cuz I wrote down the words, and I was struck just now again when I wrote the words, like, *why did you say that?* Um, but that's not really part of the experience at all. I just said it, I knew what it meant. It, It didn't strike me as odd at the time that I was using the brand name.

- 34:00 RTH: And is the saying of this like, and, saying it to yourself, I'm saying to myself,
- 34:07 Michael: Yeah. Yeah. I was, yeah. I was saying it to myself
- 34:08 RTH: In an instructional or?
- 34:10 Michael: In, in an instructional way. This was speech I was saying it, um, and it was more "speech-y" than "hear-y" [laughs]. (Um, I just made a new word!) And, um, yeah,
- 34:27 RTH: As an aside, I think "more speech-y than hear-y" is better than what we've been talking, which I think is "more productive-y than receptive-y" [BD and Michael laughs.] So I think it, I think it's actually more, more faithfully descriptive to call it "speech-y" and "hear-y."
- 34:27 Russ comments: The distinction between "more speech-y than hear-y" and "more productive-y than receptive-y" is important for two reasons. First, the terms productive and receptive are (I think) probably references to some theoretical position on the difference between speaking and hearing. That puts the terms into the natural attitude (theory is indeed part of the real world), which DES aims to bracket. Second, the terms productive and receptive are adjectives that modify the experience, rather than referring to the experience itself. The experience, as it is directly apprehended, is of *speaking* or of *hearing*, that is, of the *action*, that is, of the *verb*. To take that apprehended verb and transform it into an adjective (by appending -y) is to begin with the directly apprehended experience, which is the aim of DES.
- 34:40 Michael: All right.
- 34:44 RTH: So I think I am good.
- 34:49 BD: I, I wanted to ask one question about that. Um, previously we had, sometimes distinguished between you having the experience of *knowing that you said something out loud* as opposed to *being unsure whether you said some, w, whether you said it out loud*. Um, was this speech-y experience [laughs], um, more like, yeah. Was this speech-y experience like the former or the latter, or unlike either?
- 35:27 Michael: I, I did, I have, uh, it was like speaking out loud, but I have no idea whether I actually did.
- 35:32 BD: Okay. Mm-hmm.
- 35:35 RTH: Number 4.

Discussion of missing a beep

- 35:37 Michael: Okay. So I, I wasn't sure what to do here. I, I actually did take a Lorazepam, actually. I took half of one. It, it's probably, what, six o'clock in the morning or so at this point. Something like that. Um, and I fell asleep, and I should have turned the

beeper off, cuz if I had thought about it, I would've real, and I, obviously, I knew I had the beeper on. I had not too long before written down these notes. [laughs] Um, but it, it went outta my mind that I had it on. And I, if I thought about it for two seconds, I would've known that there's no way I'm gonna hear it if it goes off. And that is in fact what happened. Um, so I slept for probably two and a half hours, something like that. Um, and the, when I woke up, the thing was chirping.

35:37 Russ comments: As a battery-saving feature, the beeper chirps intermittently if it has beeped for a few minutes with no response from the user.

36:23 RTH: Okay.

36:24 Michael: Um, so I just shut it off and turned it back on and [RTH: Perfect.] let it just, I just let it collect three more beeps after that [RTH: Perfect.] Okay. I wasn't sure, I couldn't remember if you told me what to do in that circumstance, but that's what I did.

36:38 RTH: I, that's what I told you to do!

Sample 6.4 discussion starts here

36:40 Michael Okay! All right, [laughs]. Um. So, uh, the nap was good. I mean, can you call it a nap if you're, if it's from 6:00 AM to 8:30 AM, I don't know. Anyway, um, so I was at that point, um, but the next time it went off, I was, um, sitting at my computer, here, where I'm sitting right now. And, I was deleting old emails. I wasn't really paying very careful attention to them. Um, they were old. Uh, so I was kind of glancing at each one to, I guess, check whether I should really delete it, although I'm not sure how much checking was really going on. But I, but what was, but, so I was only, that was like 20% of my experience.

37:29 Michael: What I was really doing, was I was listening to it part of a song. Um, I had isolated a part of a song and I was listening to it for meter. So now some background is, is probably required here. So, we had played, we some friends and I had played this song a few days earlier, and I claimed, so I, I was, I was, I was, playing part of the song in a, in a strange meter. Uh, not on purpose, it's just what I was doing. And then that, and then the discussion came up while we were playing. And I said, "you know, I think that, um, I think that in the original, it actually, um, they actually do go multimeter here." And that turned out to be completely false. I don't know where I got that idea from.

38:15 But, um, I was li but, and I guess I must've suspected that it was false, cuz I was listening to the song in various, in, in various performances to see if I could hear them go into a, a different meter for a little while. And...

38:37 RTH: Is this in your imagination or in real, real?

38:40 Michael: No, no. I'm, listen, I'm really listening to it. Yeah. [RTH: Okay.] I, I had found a few different live performances of it. And the, I was listening to one of the earlier live performances that I had found, and I got to that part, and it definitely didn't go into multimeter. And I said, "oops," [laughs] to myself when I noticed that I had been

wrong about that. So I was listening *for meter*. And not too long before the beep went off, you know, a matter of several seconds probably, uh, I said, “oops.” So there’s, and that was most of what I was attending to. And the, and most of my experience was the listening to the song. But I was specifically listening to it for meter and noticing, I guess, the lack of a change, of meter.

39:34 BD: So, is this experience of this beep, um, would it be accurate to say that it’s characterized by, um, *the listening for a meter*. Is the oops, part of the experience as well?

39:49 Michael: I mean, depending on, yeah, I think it was several seconds, like more than three seconds and less than 15 seconds before the beep. So I don’t know if you count it or not. But it, I, the, the music was still going. But I wasn’t, I, I guess, I mean, so if we, if we cut it off, if we say that the moment before the beep is the one second before the beep, then “oops” is not part of that. I think it was longer than that. If, if, if we go to, if we go, if we narrow the focus to one second, then I would say... The, the music is still playing for sure, cuz I had to shut the music off to, to when the beep went. So I could write [Inaudible], I guess I didn’t have to turn it off to write, but I did. Um, but I was probably still listening to the meter, but I, I had already learned what I wanted to learn, so I wasn’t being *as* attentive to it at that point. If you go, if you go out to five seconds, I think maybe you capture the “oops” and the more intensive paying attention to the meter, if that makes sense. And I *had been* deleting email the whole time. That didn’t really change.

41:13 BD: So, um, earlier you mentioned that the, the deleting emails was taking up like 20% of your attention?

41:21 Michael: And I should be more, I should be more, uh, precise about that. What I was noticing about each email was just the subject line. So I was, I was looking at the subject lines and on that basis, determining *delete* or *not delete*. But I couldn’t say which subject line I was looking at, at the time with the beep, I wasn’t paying enough attention. Cuz really, I’m just kind of glancing, and if it doesn’t look like it’s really important, it gets deleted.

41:53 BD: So, um, I mean, I was gonna ask, uh, whether given that the, that that part of the experience was 20% for you, was the rest of it 80% or was it twenty per or, or because we, it doesn’t have to add up to 100. Yeah,

42:18 Michael: I mean, it was, I, I was still even even af, I mean, again, depending on how long, how long you want this period to be. But even if you shrink it down to, so the “oops” is not part of the experience, I was still listening to the song pretty carefully. I was probably no longer like super carefully attending to 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, you know, checking the meter. But I was still listening pretty carefully. Cuz it, because now I know you don’t like *because*s, but, um, it’s a song that we’re trying to learn. So I, so I am interested in it. Even if I have already answered this question about meter, I’m still attending to it quite closely.

43:04 BD: [pause] So, um, [pause] Russ, you go ahead.

43:14 Michael: I'm probably not doing a very good job with this. Sorry, go ahead.

43:16 RTH: So what, what, lemme tell you what I understand and we'll see what, see we got. What I understand is that at the moment of the beep, I am listening to a song attentively, but not as, maybe perhaps not as focusedly attentively as I was before, before I was focused particularly on the meter. And I'm still somewhat focused on the meter, but more, but maybe equally or whatever focused on the, on the song itself. So not so much the "meter-ness", but still the "meter-ness,"

43:45 Michael: The meter became, the meter, the meter became less important at that, a, a few seconds, bef, earlier,

43:52 RTH: Cuz I'd solved my problem, I, I.

43:53 Michael: I'd solved that particular problem, but I still was paying attention to it. And I had intended to keep listening to the rest of the song precisely because I'm trying to learn certain aspects of it, and I'm trying to help other people in the band learn their parts, so I'm really listening to everything as I, as much as I can. But I wasn't so focused on the meter at that point.

44:13 RTH: Mm-hmm. And while I'm doing that, I am, looking at the subject lines of emails. And [Inaudible]

44:22 Michael: I'm looking at the subject lines, I, yeah, [RTH: (Inaudible)] I should have mentioned, I'm also noticing the, the sender. Cuz that's also a factor in whether I'm gonna delete it or not.

44:33 RTH: Okay. So I'm somehow processing that. And it's not entirely unconscious, but it's not center of my attention either.

44:39 Michael: That's correct.

44:43 RTH: And somewhere before the beep, I had decided that the meter wasn't the way I originally thought it was and said, "oops."

44:51 Michael: That's right.

44:53 RTH: So I'm good, I'm good about that experience.

44:55 BD: Yeah, me too.

44:57 RTH: Number 5.

44:59 Michael: Number 5. I was walking, I was on campus at this point. Um,

45:03 RTH: So, so before, before we get there we're, it's, it's 11 minutes before and I want to, and I've got, I've got plenty of time. I've got in, in, infinite time basically far as this is

concerned. But if there's, if, if y'all have time constraints and there is a sample, because we started out with the difficulty deal, so have we finished with the difficult ones or...? [Michael: Yes.] Okay. Alright then, then I withdraw my [Michael: Okay.] time, time concerns.

45:31 Michael: Um, okay. I don't think the, the, the next two aren't, are not difficult and... Well, we'll see what you think, but, so

45:39 RTH: We'll probably get there. Go for it.

Sample 6.5 discussion starts here

45:40 Michael: Um, [RTH: Number 5.] So I was walking on campus, and I was clicking my fingernails together, my, my thumb and my middle finger like this. [holds up hand and clicks fingernails]

45:52 Michael: And I was doing it. I, I, I don't know if, if you said zoom filters all this stuff out. Um, I was doing it like this, Da da da Da da da Da da. But I was doing that with my fingernails. And what I was noticing, there was two things that were, so that's just what was happening in the world. That was, I was doing that with my fingernails. But I was attending to two different things. One, well, three different things really. One of them was the pressure that I was feeling on, on my middle finger as my thumbnail pressed up on my middle finger. So my middle finger was kind of staying still and my thumb was moving back, my thumbnail was moving back and forth across my middle fingernail. And I was feeling, I was especially noticing the pressure as my thumbnail pressed *up* on my middle fingernail. That's one thing that was happening, [Yawns] excuse me.

46:47 I was also listening to the sound and specifically to the pattern of accents. I was, I was intentionally making a pattern of accents. It was Da da da Da da da Da da [even eight notes with the accents capitalized and underlined] like that. And then I was coordinating that rhythm with my walking (which now strikes me as, that must have looked pretty funny) [laughs] because essentially I was walking in 7/8 time. Um, so I would take a step on the first three notes on the second, three notes on the last two notes. So I was, I was like, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh. [speaks only beats 1, 4, and 7, repetitively, thus emphasizing the uneven or lilting nature of the rhythm]. That was the pattern of my walking. And I was coordinating that with my fingernail clicks. So I was, I, I was specifically attending to the cadence of my walking and making it match the rhythm of the clicks of my fingernails.

46:47 Russ comments: The meter, which does indeed have a 7/8-ish feel, is actually 8/8 (or perhaps, more technically, "8/8 (3 + 3 + 2)")

47:45 RTH: Okay. And, and about the, or about your fingernails, are you more feeling them or hearing them, or both?

47:57 Michael: Both. But I'm only really, I, I, I convinced myself afterwards when the thing went, when the beeper went off, that I was really much more interested, in whatever sense of interest is relevant here, in the, the *upward* stroke of the thumb from

underneath of the middle up. So I was feeling that pushing of the fingernail upward, much more than the downward stroke.

48:22 RTH: And am I feeling that with my middle finger?

48:24 Michael: Yes.

48:24 RTH: So this is a middle feel, middle finger sensation of being pushed up. [Michael: Yeah.] And the pushing is being done by the, by, by my thumb, but that's not what I'm expecting, what I'm experiencing primarily. It's the,

48:35 Michael: Yeah, that's, it's a strange thing! Cuz the thumb was doing all the work, but the, but the middle finger was doing all the feeling [laughs].

48:42 RTH: Well that's, that's the joys of experience. [Michael laughs] Experience doesn't have to pay attention to that stuff. And, and is the rhythm. So the rhythm is, is, is it upward on the, on the accent and one, four and

48:56 Michael: It's upward on one and six, and it's downward on four. So it's "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8," 1, 2, 3, 4," uh, "1, 2, 3, 4," "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6," No, wait a minute. What am I doing? "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8." Yeah, like that.

49:14 RTH: Right.

49:17 Michael: I miscounted it my own head for a second, but that's what I was doing. Yeah.

49:20 RTH: So does that mean my finger, my fingernail is going up on "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8." [Michael: So, so,] So 1, 4, and 7.

49:26 Michael: Yeah. It goes up on 1 and then down on 4 and up on the next, on the next accent. Yeah.

49:34 RTH: Okay. And I fe, and I feel that movement in my finger. It's being done by my thumb up on 1, down on 4, up on, [Michael: Yep, yep.] 7 or whatever. Okay. I'm good about that portion. And that, I guess that's both, that's both heard and felt.

49:58 Michael: Yes.

49:59 RTH: And heard in the,

50:02 Michael: It's not very loud, but I'm, I, but I am listening to it, so I *hear* it

50:06 RTH: And, and what I hear is a fingernail sound.

50:08 Michael: Yeah. Oh yeah. Mm-hmm

50:09 RTH: As opposed to a tone or something, which is,

- 50:11 Michael: No, that's right. No, I'm just hearing the, the clicks. Yeah.
- 50:14 RTH: Okay. So I'm, I'm hearing what my fingernails are actually doing. [Michael: Yes.] Okay. And then I am walking in that asymmetric rhythmic pattern.
- 50:32 Michael: Yeah. I'm a little embarrassed to admit that, cuz that didn't occur to me at the time. How weird that was, must have looked if anyone was paying any attention. But there you go.
- 50:39 RTH: My guess is that the body is big enough that it, you can, people wouldn't notice that, but,
- 50:44 Michael: Maybe so No, I mean, the walking part, not the clicking part.
- 50:47 RTH: Yeah. That's what I, that's what I'm referring to as well. And, and is that a fact of the universe that I'm walking coordinated with the sound? Or do I, do I *notice* that I am?
- 51:02 Michael: No, I'm definitely *attending* to it. Because actually what, so this is now context. I, I, I, maybe twenty seconds or thirty seconds before the beep, I realized that I was clicking my fingernails. I, I think I was doing it before I realized I was doing it. And I, and I tried immediately to, to coordinate my walking to it. And I initially failed because I didn't realize that I was, that I was clicking 'em in this weird metrically weird way. So I was definitely, I, I was definitely like, intentionally making myself coordinate the walking with the clicking. The clicking stayed constant once I realized what I was doing and I changed my walking to match it.
- 51:53 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good.
- 51:58 BD: Um, I have a question about the coordination part. Um, is your experience of the coordination of the walking with the, the clicking, is it, um, [pause] um, with the sound of the pattern? Or the pressure? Or both, or neither?
- 52:23 Michael: That's a good question and I, I hadn't thought about that, but I, but I, I think, so now this is with, you know, the, the lack of benefit of thinking about that immediately afterwards. But I *think* I was really, I, it was the pressure that I was, it was the *sensation of my fingers* and the *sensation of my foot hitting the ground* that I, tho, those were the things I was really lining up. Now, of course that means the sounds were also lining up [laughs], but I think I was really more, as far I was *hearing* the sound, but I think, I, as, as far as like what was guiding the coordination, I think it *was* the feeling more than the sound. That that's what I think *now* many hours later, I didn't think of that question at the time. So maybe that's a less high-quality answer than some of the others.
- 53:28 RTH: So I'm good. [BD: Me too.] Number 6.

[Sample 6.6 discussion starts here](#)

53:31 Michael: Number 6. So now I'm in my office. Um, I was reading a student's paper, graduate student paper, and writing comments on it. And I had just saved a moment ago, this is all context, I, a moment ago I had saved the paper with. Th, th, th, this is a student who seems to have two last names. And I thought I, I saved it, which with what I thought was his second last name. Um, and then typed in comments. So I was just saving, I was saving a file. I had just started typing some comments and I was making the initial save of the file. And I had titled it "Acosta hyphen comments." And then after that I realized, oh, that might, I, I remember that he had that, he has *two* last names. And so I looked up at the top of the paper to see what he had given as his own last name. And it wasn't that, it was *Alonso* and I, and I said to myself, "Alonso! Better change it now," thinking, uh, by it I meant the title of the, the, the, the file name.

54:42 But then at the same time, as I was saying that, I was also *thinking*, "I'll just change it before I send it."

54:53 So those two things were happening at the same time somehow. Not sure how. And there was also a kind of, there was a visual experience as well. Specifically I had looked at his email address because it was at the top of the, next to his name, he had put his email address on the paper, and the e, and, and it caught my attention because the first part of the email address was "AlonsoAD." And so that was for extra confirming evidence, I guess, if I needed any, about what his correct last name is. So I was noticing the "AlonsoAD" part of his email address. I was saying, "Alonso! Better change it now." And I was somehow at the same time thinking "I'll change it before I send it." In other words, the *la*, the latter of thought was like, I, I didn't, this wasn't part of the thought, but it was in contrast to "better change it now." Like, ah, I'll just wait, I'll, I'll change it before I send it.

56:01 BD: So, the experience, there were three separate, or sorry, there were three things you've experienced. There's this saying, "Alonso, better change it now." The typing, "I'll change it before I," sorry, *not* the typing! *Thinking* [laughs] [Michael: laughs], "I'll, I'll, I'll change it before I send it." It. And then the visual experience of the "AlonsoAD" part of the email address. Is that?

56:29 Michael: Yes. And the strange part about this, and I noticed this at the time when the beep went, I was like, *okay, what was going on here*, is that it felt like, so, so the "Alonso better change it now," that, that could have been out loud. It could have been in my, it could have been not out loud, but it was very speech-y. But the, uh, the the, I'll change it before I send it. I know that was not out loud, but it *was words*, it wasn't, it, I mean, there were, those words were definitely present to me. So I don't know how the actually spoken words, "Alonso, better change it now" and the "I'll change it before I send it," I don't know how those things seemed to, well, they seemed to overlap. Maybe they actually did somehow. I don't know. But they were both very word-like. One of them was definitely speech-like in the usual sense that I mean, that, and the other one was more thought-like, it was definitely not out loud, I'm sure of that. But it was still very word-like.

56:29 Russ comments: It is actually not that uncommon for people to have two simultaneous-but-different worded experiences. That seems impossible in the natural attitude, which presumes that people have one word processor, but that

assumption is not actually correct, and two simultaneous worded expressions is entirely possible in the experiential world.

- 57:37 BD: So about that one. Um, previously, in previous experiences, when you've talked about experiences that involve sentences [laughs], um, you have described to them as either "speech-y slash productive" or "hear-y" slash receptive," [Michael: Mm-hmm.] Um, now if I understand you correctly, um, you haven't, you've described this one as thinking and with like words, but not out loud. So,
- 58:17 RTH: So I think he's also described one like this before more. Okay. It might, might be more or less like this. Or at least, at least he's described a third option, which was that all the words were, all the words were there at the same time. There were words and all the words were present at the same time. Not one after another, somewhere, I think.
- 58:35 Michael: Yeah. I, I don't remember. I, I would have to take your word for that, but, but, but that is an, that is pretty close to what we're talking about. Yes.
- 58:44 BD: I mean, I don't remember that one right now either, exactly. So
- 58:51 RTH: Could be that I got it from somebody else, but I'm pretty,
- 58:53 BD: I mean, I mean, I rem so I remem I don't remem I remember there being a previous experience of just words. Um, but from my memory, which could be completely wrong cuz it's vague right now, um, that was something different from this one.
- 59:14 RTH: Um, what I, what I would recommend is let's stick with this one and let's not worry about, [AB: Okay.] let's not worry about any of the past ones.
- 59:14 Russ comments: As a general DES interviewing rule, it is almost always best to focus *first* on the current sample, as its own thing, until we get that in high fidelity. *Then* it is fair game to compare / contrast it with previous samples. There are two good reasons for that. First, it complicates things to try to focus on two experiences at a time. And second, it encourages the participant to take the easy way out, which is to say that the second experience is just like the first.
- 59:19 BD: Okay.
- 59:20 RTH: So the question is, were there words and how were they present?
- 59:22 BD: Yes!
- 59:23 Michael: There were words and they were kind. So there's these two sets of words. So there's "Alonso better change it now." That was normal speechifying. Normal for me at least. I, I don't know if it was out loud or not, but it was like normal speechifying. Then there was the words, "I'll change it before I send it." And those were not pro, those were kind of like what Russ just described. So they were kind of, all those words were present, not produced serially. But they were co-present with

the speaking “Alonso better change it now.” So there’s two sets of words that are kind of on top of each other. One of them is spoken, the other one, the words are just there. As a *thought*! They’re not, I mean, they’re, I, there’s no confusion in my mind. I know they’re my, they’re my words. They’re my, it’s my thought. But I didn’t have the sense that they’re being produced serially.

1:00:33 BD: So I’m good with that component of the experience.

1:00:38 RTH: Um, can I, can I ask for the third time maybe? Are, are we sure that there are words present? Or are there, is it possible that there are just this meaning that’s somehow present that’s not conveyed in words, but, but I understand to myself to be *thinking I’ll just change it before I send it*. I don’t need to put those words to it, but I, cuz I understand myself to be saying that, or *thinking* that?

1:00:38 Russ comments: This is a difficult part of the DES art. Michael has clearly said, twice or three times, that “I’ll just change it before I send it” *was in words*. However, many DES participants who say that they experience words all at the same time (not unfolding across time) later come to realize that there really were no words there at all—that the original claim about the words was the result of a presupposition that all thinking must be in words. The question is what to do about that here, at 1:00:38, with Michael.

RTH’s intent is to raise the possibility of no words present without pressuring the outcome—without suggesting that it is desirable for Michael to assent to that opinion. Viewers can judge for themselves whether this intent is accomplished.

1:01:07 Michael: Uh, so this could be a function of, I, I may maybe I’m, maybe I’m, I’m not at my best right now. Um, I’m, I’m over the bad experience of this morning, but the, the, the, the lingering effects of Lorazepam may, may be a problem here. But I’ll just tell you what I wrote. I wrote, “*Said*, ‘Alonso better change it now’” Also “*Words*, ‘I’ll change it before I send it’.” And I, and then after in parentheses, after that, I wrote, “not spoken.” So I, that’s, I’m probably, I’m probably being more, I’m probably giving you better information by *not* trying to answer your question based on my current memory is what I’m trying to tell you. [RTH: Okay.] And I’m just telling you what I wrote.

1:01:59 RTH: And, and what I would say about that is that the question that I’m asking is more, more about tomorrow than it is about this morning.

1:02:06 Michael: Yeah, I know. I get that. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

1:02:08 RTH: So I, I what I, what, y’know, I’ve been around the block a few times, and a lot of people who say “I was thinking and words and the words were all there at one time, and, uh, they, and they didn’t unfold” or whatever, at some later time, they would, they would end up saying, “well, you know, I was probably mistaken about that.” and I was just thinking that, but it seems like

1:02:28 Michael: I get it. Um,

- 1:02:30 RTH: Yeah, but it can, *but it can go either way!* [Michael: Yeah.] I think *words, words present not unfolding over time* is a thing. And *thinking something that is not in words but is, is as specific as said in words* is also a thing. [Michael: Right.] And so the conversation that we're having right now from my point of view is just to recognize those as being possible possibilities, *not* so much because I think we can distinguish it for the *past* sample, but because it might be useful coming down the,
- 1:02:58 Michael: I mean, I, I think, but again, this is me interpreting my earlier self [laughs], I think that I was trying to say **it really was words** when I, by writing word also these words, [laughs] colon, and then I wrote the words, but I maybe not. So that's the best I can do right now. I think
- 1:03:20 RTH: That that's *perfect* as far as I'm concerned. That take these DES is not, it is not about trying to get things absolutely right. It's about trying to do as good a job as we can do. So I'm happy with that portion.
- 1:03:38 BD: Me too. Um, so then the second portion was this, um, visual aspect of your experience. [Michael: Mm-hmm.] Um, where you were noticing this "AlonsoAD." [Michael: Right.] Um, was that, um, was that all that was in your visual experience, that "AlonsoAD" in that moment?
- 1:04:07 Michael: Uh, yeah. I mean that was the only thing I, that I was really noticing. I'm sure obviously there was other stuff happening visually, but that was the thing I was noticing was the "AlonsoAD. Yes.
- 1:04:18 BD: Mm-hmm. And you mentioned also that there was, um, that this "AlonsoAD" um, confirmed that, somehow confirmed that you were right, that it was Alonso. Were you saying that as part of, um, that context of this experience? Or was that an actual part of your experience? Yeah,
- 1:04:42 Michael: No, I think it was a part of, I wasn't, I wasn't thinking that. I wasn't thinking to myself, *oh, that confirms it*, or something like that. [BD: Mm-hmm.] But I was seeing it as a kind of confirmation. So it wasn't just a random set of letters. It had me, it's meaning for me was this is confirmatory. But there were definitely no words involved there. [BD: Mm-hmm.] Apart from AlonsoAD there was nothing, there was no explicit thought, oh, now it's confirmed, or something like that. [BD: Mm-hmm.] It was just the kind of corroborating evidence that presented itself to me as corroborate, corroborating evidence.
- 1:05:18 BD: I'm good with that one.
- 1:05:20 RTH: I am too. And that's number 6.
- 1:05:22 Michael: That was number 6.

Conversation after the sampling

1:05:24 RTH: And I would, I would say we corresponded by email about a slight change in plans, which would be that I have a student helping me do transcripts, and I would send the transcript to Michael.

1:05:40 Michael: Oh, that's, that's fine. Yeah.

1:05:41 RTH: On bo, on both counts.

1:05:42 Michael: Yes.

1:05:43 RTH: Okay. And as far as sending the transcript to Michael, you sh, you and Agnes too for that matter, should do with what, what, what you wanna do with it, which is to say, look at it, not look at it, respond to it. And, and in, in the past I have made what I, what I call *exercises for the reader*, which are designed for Agnes, basically when she has said something or question that I didn't like or whatever, and I'm going to call her attention something and she has responded to that. And you can, if I, if I am motivated to do that again, you can be part of that and you can comment and,

1:06:14 Michael: Okay.

1:06:15 RTH: So it's, it, it is, it is a, it is a thing that I will send and then you should do with it whenever it seems like it might be worthwhile *for you*.

1:06:24 Michael: Will do.

1:06:26 RTH: And then shall we do this again?

1:06:28 Michael: Sure,

1:06:30 BD: Sure.

They compare calendars

Agnes comments: I have learned two things from this sampling experience: (1) You have to listen carefully; and (2) words matter.

Russ comments: RE (1) listening carefully

I agree entirely about the value of listening carefully. It is remarkable how little attention is paid to that in education. In a typical clinical psychology PhD or PsyD program, there are usually no courses at all on the art of listening (see the section on revelatory words below). That is surprising, because clinical psychology is fundamentally aimed at the psychological difficulties of individuals, and surprisingly little attention is paid to discussing how to listen to individuals' descriptions of those difficulties. In philosophy, at least in my view of philosophy, it is not so surprising: the aim of philosophy is to characterize the world in ways that transcend the individual, so listening to the individual is not the centerpiece of the endeavor.

RE (2) words matter

This is a complicated issue. Words matter a lot in a revelatory way, but they matter very little in a descriptive way and are genuinely problematic in a prescriptive way.

Revelatory words: If someone is in a situation where they are motivated to describe the truth, which for me means motivated to describe their experience with fidelity, then the word choice and manner of delivery is quite revealing in terms of what they're trying to say. This is another way of saying it is worthwhile to listen carefully. Listening carefully is the attempt to grok, through the exchange of words, the experience at which the person's words are aimed. That is, when the aim is to reveal experience, the words and the gestures that surround the utterance of those words are the clues.

Descriptive words: In descriptions of phenomena, particular words are *not* essential. When we describe, for example, that Michael had two thoughts going on simultaneously, the words we choose to describe that is a little consequence. We could say there are two thoughts, or two trains of thoughts, or two ideas, or two parallel processes, or two worded expressions; it doesn't really matter which words we choose because whichever words we choose, we will follow up with clarificatory addenda. The object is to have the phenomenon clearly in mind, and then to use any of a variety of words to rest lightly on that phenomenon. In an important sense, the more variety of words we use to describe the phenomenon, the better. There are, to be sure, many wrong words that can be used in the vicinity of a phenomenon, words that are accidentally or intentionally misleading, so words do matter to some degree. In short, it is not the case that there is one specific word that is best in a particular situation, and it rarely if ever depends on the precise shade of meaning of the word.

Prescriptive words: Philosophers, in my view (and I may be mistaken about this, and would be happy to be corrected), attempt to define words carefully in such a way that they fit together in a consistent or coherent manner; they then seem to wish to prescribe that words be used in that carefully-defined way. I think that is a misguided approach. If a philosopher requires a book (or ten) to clarify the exact meanings and interlockings of words, there is no possible way that there can be a shared understanding of the details of those words. It is possible to *appear* to have a shared understanding, but that is more political than descriptive of phenomena.

The limited importance of words is not taught in philosophy, psychology, or consciousness science because, I think, those disciplines fail to appreciate the importance of inner experience and that there is a basically high-fidelity answer to what Michael was experiencing at the moment of some beep. The realm of theory and validity hide the importance of apprehension and description.