

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY

Olivia: A Podcast Journalist

Olivia Interview 3

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February 22 interview with Olivia that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/3nYCn1cj8eE>. In green are comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

AK = Alek Krumm

Olivia = Olivia R.

0:00 RTH: So this is going to be Olivia's third sampling day. Is that right? I believe it is.

0:07 AK: Yep.

0:09 RTH: And, and we have sent you a transcript of the first sampling day, and you said you haven't looked at it and that's fine. In fact, that's maybe even better that you haven't looked at it. Uh, when you're motivated to look at it, you should feel free to look at it. You said that, that you didn't wanna look at the whole thing. There are, there is commentary; what you would find if you looked at it, is that there's commentary throughout the transcript, and that commentary...

0:36 Olivia: Oh! You've added commentary!

0:37 RTH: That, yes. [Olivia sighs enthusiastically] And that commentary is, is in green. So you should be able to skip or search for "comment colon" and, and skip through it, *if* you're motivated to see what commentary I was writing,...

0:49 Olivia: Oh, I am interested!

0:51 RTH: ...we, we were writing.

0:52 Olivia: Yeah. I wasn't really interested in hearing, reading what *I* had said. Um, but I am interested in reading what *you* think.

0:57 RTH: Yeah. That's why I'm telling that's why I'm telling you this. So I, so you *knew* what you said, you *knew* what, what has happened in the, in the conversation, but you didn't, you haven't seen what we have said about it. And, uh, and you should feel free to look at it *or not*. Uh, the object of the, of the exercise is, uh, the main object of the exercise is to try to get at Olivia's experience in high fidelity. And so we don't want the commentary to corrupt that. But on, on the other hand, I think we're doing a pretty good job of staying attached to our task, or staying, staying faithful to the task, I guess you might say. And, uh, and I don't think the commentary is gonna screw that up.

And if, if you *do* read the comment, the comments, and you have comments of your own that you would like to either append to those comments, or write your own comments, or disagree with the comments, or, or whatever, you should feel a, a free agent in that regard either do it or don't do it. Whatever, whatever turns you on. These, we don't really have a, we, we don't really know *why* we're doing any of this stuff. We, we think this provides a window into, into something which is, seems to be of value, and the people who are participating in, of which there are three in this exercise, if they have commentary about what we're doing here, they should, they sh, and, and they feel like making it known, they should make it known in whatever, in whatever way. Either in comments, in the, in the, uh, document or, y'know, you've got your own blog or whatever you call the things that you do, you do, whatever it is that you want. It's. So that I guess is my preliminary comment. Anybody else have preliminary comments that they would like to make before we look at the beeps?

3:00 Olivia: Well, I have one that is maybe a comment in, or, and a slight question. So I, I feel like I was wearing it for three hours, but I don't know for whatever reason, I've only got five here. I think I definitely didn't note down a few, probably because I was in the middle of a conversation and thought I've already got one of those. They're not, there's nothing particularly interesting in those. Um, because as we we've established, I just am saying, I'm just, there's nothing else going on when I'm talking. Um, and then I wondered if I should pop it in for an hour this morning, just to try and get a couple more beeps, but then look, to be honest, I didn't get around to it, but I did wonder if that actually disturbs your, if you prefer all the beeps to be in a stretch, um, or not. Looks like not.

3:57 RTH: So there's very little about this process that is cast in stone, *other than* we're interested in the moment before the beep, and we're interested in as much high fidelity, in as high fidelity as we can get. Other than that, we can do whatever it is that we want to do. If you want to collect the beeps, while you're standing on your head in the corner, then go stand on your head in the corner and collect beeps, or whatever. We have a mild preference for gathering all of the beeps at one time, because that makes it easier for you to forget that you're wearing the beeper. But if there's a good reason to, to do it some other way, we're happy to have you have, you have you do it. And, and, and we also don't feel strongly about *six* beeps. We, five beeps, seven beeps. We say *six*, because it generally takes us about an hour to talk about six beeps. And, but sometimes it takes us an hour to talk about *one* beep and other times it takes us five seconds to talk about one beep. And so it doesn't really matter.

4:54 Olivia: Okay.

4:57 RTH: And I would say about skipping beeps, we have a mild preference for *not* skipping beeps, because we don't trust people when they say there's nothing interesting going on here. And that's not because we think Olivia is a liar, it's because we think people don't know what's interesting. And, uh, because what's interesting to you... what, what, what seems dull and boring to you might be very interesting to us.

4:57 Russ comments: People are really not in a good position to judge what is interesting about inner experience because that judgment is necessarily comparative, and people have only their own experience to compare to.

5:25 Olivia: And I probably would have, except that they were, y'know,... So I was doing it yesterday during a work day. And I think at, at the times I was actually on the phone, um, in the middle of a work conversation. So I couldn't exactly stop the conversation and say, "Hold on! I just need to, um, uh, write down," y'know, so, um,

5:43 RTH: And we understand that too. We understand that life goes on [Olivia laughs] and, and, and there are limitations and...[shrugs]

5:48 Olivia: Well, and I think the other comment is that I think I still want to try, and I haven't quite found what *I feel* to be the best time to do this. Because, y'know, as we discussed on the first time in, y'know, on a, on a weekend morning, there's just too much going on and I don't feel alone enough with my own thoughts. Um, and on a workday, obviously, I feel like my head is invaded by the various external stimuli of work. And I have noticed, y'know, thinking about this, um, in the times where I don't have external stimuli in the form of people or, um, work information that I, that is when I've.... I've sort of, um, y'know, like for say, for example, while I'm running or, y'know, doing a task where I'm on my own, um, and a task that doesn't involve reading or something like if I'm cooking on my own, or gardening, or running, or swimming, that I notice very interesting (what I consider interesting) and, and specific thoughts, um, that I, I feel like had I noted them down, I would be able to speak about them with much greater confidence than the ones that I speak about here. Now, of course, I can't wear the beeper when I'm swimming. Um, even running it's a bit heavy, I probably could. Um, and maybe I should try that, but then I'd have to stop when I was running. And that would be... But, y'know, I really do notice these very specific, often, often quite wordy (but not always) thoughts. Um, and, and, and I feel frustrated cuz I haven't yet to capture any of those in this, uh, yeah.

5:48 Russ comments: There are, broadly speaking, two possibilities here: (1) Olivia is largely right: there are experiences, different from those we have sampled, that are clearer, more vibrant, that would engender more confidence; and (2) Olivia is largely mistaken: whereas her armchair introspections may produce clear, vibrant experiences, her typical, in-the-wild experiences are not clear and vibrant. Alek and I are not mind readers, so we do not know, and do not presume to know, which of those options (or combination, or alternative, etc.) is correct. So we will follow Olivia's lead.

If (1) is correct, then Olivia will lead us into new perspectives which will undoubtedly help our apprehension of *all* her experiences: we will become more confident at grasping that some of Olivia's experiences are clear and vibrant, whereas others are (now confidently grasped) not so clear.

If (2) is correct, then Olivia's mistakenness must be understood as a (minor or major) delusion: she believes something about herself that is not true. (RTH has written rather extensively about presuppositions as delusions; we all have presuppositions; we all are deluded, except, perhaps, those who have arrived at nirvana.) Any competent clinician knows that there is no profit in trying to talk someone out of their delusions, and that applies here as well. The only way Olivia can overcome her delusion (continuing to explore the possibility that #2 is correct) is for *her* to explore her experience on *her* terms, counting as evidence only that which satisfies *her* interests.

The good news is that we do not have to know whether (1) or (2) is correct. Either way, the productive path is to follow Olivia's lead.

- 7:35 RTH: Well, I would say you should wear it whenever you think you might find it interesting. [Olivia: Hmm.] And because we're never really gonna get a full random sample of Olivia's experience from beginning to end. We, we don't claim to get the real Olivia, we just claim to try to get the beeps that we get and try to get them as best as we can. [Olivia: Hmm.] That that's really our goal. So you're right, don't w... .
- 7:56 Olivia: The problem is without limitation of needing to do it in the 24 hours before this call, um, those times don't necessarily happen in those proceeding 24 hours.
- 8:09 RTH: Well then we should, we should work out a way that we could do this, that you should be able... *Maybe* we should figure out a way that you should find a time when you can do it. And then you should let us know, and say, [Olivia: Yeah.] "I'm gonna do it today. Can we meet tomorrow?" [Olivia: Yeah.] And then we figure out whether we can do that and [Olivia: yeah] maybe one or the other of us--maybe Alek and I *both* can't do it, but one or the other of us could do it. And, and so we could, we could, we could work that, however it is that we, we could.
- 8:39 Olivia: Alright, well maybe we can try that for the next one, rather than having it scheduled in at this time that we try and make it a little bit looser.
- 8:46 RTH: And, and I would say, yes, don't wear it when it's swimming (the machine will not like it, like to be swam with), but any other time, I think you can do it including running. And, *and* if you would prefer to record notes rather than jot down notes. [Olivia: Umm.] So you're probably running with your phone anyway, you could run and click on your... You're probably, you're probably good at recording on your phone, given your job. [Olivia: Yep.] You could record your, what you would've typically written down. You could, you could speak it. [Olivia: Yep.] And then we can deal with how, how we would deal with that in, in the interview. You could either play it back for us in the interview, or you could transcribe it before the interview or, or, or whatever. That, those are the kinds of details, which, which we are *not*, we do not feel constrained to do it the same way every time. [Olivia: Um hmm.] We, we we're trying to get glimpses of, of Olivia's experience, and we're gonna do whatever it is that we can, that we have to do, or want to do, or think we should do to try to get that. So if you wanna wear it standing on your head in the corner, and you think that the only way that we understand that is to stand on our heads in the corner, then that's, we'd probably do that, too, have a standing-on-our-heads conversation. We've never *done* that, but, but presumably there would be, there... We're, we're open to alternatives; let's put it that way.
- 10:18 Olivia: I'm not sure I'm capable of standing on my head in the corner.
- 10:20 AK: I know I was gonna say, I might have to bow out at that point. [they laugh]
- 10:24 RTH: Me too, but we could try!
- 10:26 AK: That's right! We could try. Well, and I, y'know, I would add that... So I think it is, it's a tempting idea that if what we're doing is more interesting, or more solitary, or whatever, that our thoughts might be more vibrant or, y'know, and that might be the

case. And I, I think that would be fascinating to find out for you. But it also might be, y'know, that you're, y'know, deeply meditating and at the moment of the beep, you're just feeling a tickle on your neck. And I, we think that's totally interesting too, y'know. So I just don't wanna, I don't want you to go searching for experiences that are gonna like, wow anybody, because we we're pretty wowed by the mundane here, y'know, as long as that's, what's in your experience, that's what we care about.

11:12 RTH: Yeah. I agree with that. [pause] There, there are three of us involved in this task and, and all of us should have some say in when we, when we do whatever it is that we do. So did that answer that question?

11:40 Olivia: It does. Yes.

11:42 RTH: And do we have other, other comments before we...? [pause] Alright then 3.1,

SAMPLE 3.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

11:53 Olivia: 3.1. Okay. So. I was listening to a podcast and, and so I was listening to a podcast on the kitchen speaker, as I, um, uh, was sorting out the vegetables that have arrived in our weekly vegetable box. Um, so I had the beeper in my ear still, and I didn't have a headphone, the, the sound was coming through a speaker. Um, right at the moment, or, y'know, shortly, right before the beep, it was an episode of, I don't know if you listened to, um, The Ezra Klein Show, it's a weekly podcast where Ezra Klein does an interview and he was doing an interview with this woman who has a philosophy about parenting. And he, (sorry, this is too much information). He'd just said the word "upset," (but maybe it's actually not too much information). He'd said the word "upset" right before the beep, um, talking about when he (so he has a toddler) and talking about, y'know, what, something that, what happens when his toddler is upset. And as he had, or immediately after, y'know, obviously the conversation is about toddlers and how you respond when they're upset and blah, blah, blah. Um, immediately after he had said this word, and at the time of the beep, I think that what was in my head (and I'm just gonna pause while this plane goes over my head; [airplane noise] Australia just reopened its international borders to non-Australian citizens yesterday and the flight traffic....)

13:30 RTH: So. Hang, hang on for a minute. I've lost. I've lost your audio, Olivia. Can you hear her clearly, Alek? [The airplane noise has caused Zoom to cancel out Olivia's voice transmission.]

13:36 AK: Well, it was just cutting out a little, I think because of the airplane noise, but I don't think we've lost her audio.

13:41 RTH: I, I couldn't hear it.

13:42 Olivia: Hear, am I still here? Hello,

13:44 RTH: Now you're back. So could you say, ...

13:46 Olivia: And maybe could, the plane was literally flying overhead, I think.

13:50 RTH: So. So I, I was up, I was along with you when you're talking about Ezra talking about toddlers, how to respond and he says "upset," and then I lost you.

14:01 Olivia: Okay. So Ezra Klein says the word "upset." And at that moment, I think in my head, I have a sort of, um,... What I have noted down is "general unspecified thought slash visualization of my own child being upset."

14:01 Russ comments: As a general rule (of course, with exceptions), a DES participant's quoting her notes instead of simply describing her experience (using her notes to jog her memory) is a signal that there is something problematic in the vicinity: maybe the participant has no recollection of the experience; maybe there was no experience at all (but the participant feels coerced to report *something*); maybe the experience is at odds with some presupposition (deeply held, as are all presuppositions); maybe.... Something's up; we don't know what.

14:29 RTH: [pause] And can we, can we give a name to your own child? I don't care if we use the right name, but it's easier to talk about a, an individual person with a name.

14:38 Olivia: Yes. Yes. We can use her name. Her name is Aspasia: A S P A S I A.

14:38 Russ comments: Here's an exercise for the reader: Is there any difference between (a) "What I have noted down is 'general unspecified thought slash visualization of my own child being upset'." and (b) "What I have noted down is 'general unspecified thought slash visualization of Aspasia being upset'." We'll let you reflect on that for a while; we recommend that you jot down your response (that will serve to commit yourself). RTH will give his answer in a bit.

14:43 RTH: Okay. And so at the moment of the beep you have a general unspecified thought or visualization of Aspasia being upset. [Olivia: Yes.] Is that correct? [Olivia: Yes.] And, and what do you mean by a "general unspecified thought or maybe a visualization"?

14:43 Russ comments: Here is RTH's answer to the 14:38 exercise for the reader: (a) a "general unspecified thought slash visualization of my own child being upset" is a general statement about hypothetical relationships; it characterizes what *it would be like* for me if my own child were upset, regardless of whether I have one child or four or none: if this imagined being were my child, then this is how I would see him or her. No specific characteristics of the child are considered: whether my child is male or female, ill-tempered or mild, an only child or one of many, and so on; nothing of the child's history is considered (whether she is always upset; whether she has just been through a life-threatening illness; whether her family is chaotic or stable, etc.).

By (huge in my view) contrast, (b) "general unspecified thought slash visualization of *Aspasia* being upset" is specifically about one individual toddler (Aspasia), with Aspasia's particular personality and Aspasia's particular history and context. Talk about (a) is an invitation to the hypothetical; talk about (b) is an invitation to the specifically real.

When RTH (at 14:30) asked "can we give a name to '[your] own child'," he could not have known for certain whether Olivia intended the (a) or the (b) meaning. That is

the source of his (14:33) “I don’t care if we use the right name, but it’s easier to talk about a, an individual person with a name.” Had Olivia been talking about (a) children in general, she could have said “It’s not about any individual person,” or “I don’t care--let’s call her Betty or Sylvia or whatever.” But that’s not what Olivia said. Instead, she said “Yes. We can use her name,” demonstrating that Olivia was talking about (b) Aspasia, the specific Aspasia with the specific Aspasia-history and the specific Aspasia-Olivia relationship.

DES *always* aims at the specific. The target is *always* about the specific inner experience at the specific moment. Simply by shifting from “my own child” to “Aspasia,” we have substantially advanced the specificity of our questioning.

15:02 Olivia: Well, I wasn’t thinking, “Oh! I really hate it when she’s upset and I feel very uncomfortable and I always wanna stop her being upset.” I think I, I was just, which is maybe why I’ve written down visualization and, and, or, because I think, y’know, I, I do think I actually probably was *seeing* her face, a sad face. Um, y’know, yeah. As I, like the whole conversation was about how adults can respond to toddlers that are upset and how it makes you.... And I think, so I was just kind of thinking about that generally in relation to *my* toddler. [laughs] [RTH: Okay.] I mean, he was, it was funny cuz he was talking about *his* toddler and I was *thinking* about my toddler.

15:02 Russ comments: Olivia’s task is to describe her experience at the moment of the beep. DES calls anything that qualifies or undercuts or distracts from that task a *subjunctifier*. Nearly everything in this turn is a subjunctifier:

Well, I wasn’t thinking, “Oh!...

I think I,

I was just,

which is maybe why ...

and, and, or,

because

I think,

y’know,

I, I do think

I ...probably

Um, y’know, yeah.

I think

I was just kind of

With each of those expressions, Olivia is communicating, from the heart of her grammar-producing apparatus, that she should not be understood as simply describing a straightforward phenomenon. You might quibble about whether one or another of those actually undermines the description, but any way you slice it, there are a lot of subjunctifiers (at least 39 of the 103 words in this attempt at description are subjunctifiers).

The bottom line here: Olivia should *not* be understood as simply describing a general unspecified thought slash visualization of her own child being upset. She should be understood as communicating (shouting, really) that her experience *may be* in the ballpark of a general unspecified thought slash visualization, but where in that ballpark is far from having yet been described.

That is *not* by any means a criticism of Olivia. In fact, just the opposite -- to our ear, this is the very commendable sign (revealed by her grammar-producing apparatus) that Olivia is genuinely struggling to get right something that she is not yet skilled at conveying. The attuned interviewer can recognize Olivia's uncertainty and help her along so that she can approach subsequent samples with more skill, as RTH does next:

- 15:45 RTH: Okay. And so let, let's start from the premise that might be possible to think about such a thing *without* having any visual imagery at all. And it might be possible to think about such a thing and *have* visual imagery. Both of those things, I think, are entirely possible. And so the, the, one of my questions is, is there really visual imagery? Or does it seem like I'm talking about visual imagery because it seems like there must have to be. If I'm gonna be thinking about Aspasia, I gotta be seeing her.
- 15:45 Russ comments: One could quibble about the details of RTH's question, but his aim is to honor the high frequency of subjunctification in Olivia's previous response. He has to figure out some way of talking about Olivia's experience without going directly to the visualization--Olivia worked very hard in her previous turn to signal that *visualization* should *not* be taken as a straightforward description of her experience.
- 16:20 Olivia: Mm. I, I can't say for sure. I don't think I feel that there needs to be. I feel comfortable with the idea of thinking in a sort of general, nonspecific way without [RTH: Okay.] an image. Um, so I don't think I just wrote it cuz I felt like it had to be there. But I think if it was there, it was not, I mean it was not a, y'know, crystal clear image. It was sort of a notional image in the way that the, the thought was a notional thought as well.
- 16:59 RTH: So do you... L L Let's start with the basics. So as best you can say, do you see in your imagination as Aspasia?
- 17:12 Olivia: Yeah! Yeah. I mean, yes. I think I can and do, but not necessarily in... I feel like sometimes when *some* people describe their own visual imagery, it's very clear. They might be able to describe what she would be wearing or, y'know... Whereas I feel like my visual imagery does exist, but is more, is more general. Like if I'm seeing somebody in my mind, I'm not necessarily seeing them in a specific set of clothes with a specific hairstyle and doing a specific thing.
- 17:46 RTH: Okay. So, so what makes these conversations diff, difficult is that the word "see" is a quite complicated word because sometimes "see" has visual characteristics--y'know, I can say color and shape and whatever--and sometimes "see" has *cognitive* characteristics like, *oh, I see* in, in the sense of, *I understand*. And so sometimes when people say, "well, I see Aspasia," they might mean, *well, I sort of have an understanding of what she would be like, and there's no visual characteristics at all*. And sometimes when they say "I see Aspasia," they say, *well, I see her from the neck up and there she's looking a little bit off to the left* and, and can describe the visual characteristics.
- 17:46 Russ comments: If you recall our subjunctification comment at 15:02 (and earlier comments about self-theories and presuppositions), then your subjunctification antennae likely jangled multiple times during Olivia's 17:12 turn. RTH's upcoming

response honors that subjunctification and continues to wade slowly into the experience, not yet fully accepting that Olivia's experience was of *seeing*.

18:30 Olivia: I don't know either. [RTH: Okay.] Was it a question: which is mine?

18:34 RTH: Well, yeah, I guess sooner or later I'm gonna ask that question. But... So ...

18:42 Olivia: I mean, it does... Well just to respond what you said. I mean, it does feel like my "see" is more the *thought* kind of "see" and less the *image* kind of "see." But I don't know...

18:51 RTH: Okay. And I'm not, but I don't want to know about, Olivia's seeing in general. I want to know about this particular beep.

18:59 Olivia: Mm, okay.

18:59 RTH: Ezra's talking and at the, at the moment I "see" Aspasia. I'm thinking about Aspasia being upset, and, and I *see* Aspasia, and I would like to know whether there are visual characteristics. Do you see just her face or her whole body? And do you, is she looking to the left or to the right? Is she, can, is this in color black and white? Those would be the *visual* characteristics of "see." [Olivia: Mmm.] Or I would like to know whether I sort of *understand* what Aspasia is like when she's upset, but there aren't any visual characteristics. [Olivia: Mmm.] And either one of those is fine with me. I don't, I don't have a preference. I just wanna know what we're talking about.

19:42 Olivia: Yeah. But I'm not sure it's necessarily either, just one. I mean, look. It's definitely, it, it's not an image that I can say "it's black and white and she's looking to the left and she's wearing this, and she's..."

19:53 RTH: It's not that.

19:54 Olivia: ...standing up or sitting down. It's not that. [RTH: Okay.] Um, but I'm not yet willing to fully discount it as not existing in a visual way at all. [RTH: Okay.] Thinking back to it, I feel like there was, um... Y'know, so we, our house kind of, um, we have this open, uh, like the kitchen sort of opens up onto the back here [she gestures toward the area to her left] and it's so like, there's a lot of time being spent in an, in, around the kitchen and in the outside area. Um, y'know, and it's open kind of most of the year anyway. So she's in that room a lot, where I was standing. And, um, and in and around it, y'know, she might be kind of buzzing in and out. And I, and it's often a room and especially recently because she really wants to eat frozen peas straight out of the freezer, and we don't want to give her frozen peas all the time out the freezer. And so she's often quite upset in the kitchen. Um, so I think I, the visual, I think she was there in the kitchen, standing there in the kitchen, um, looking sad. And maybe I, because, y'know, and, and I think I was, y'know, I feel like I'm often comforting her there in the kitchen. Um, uh, but it wasn't, y'know, it's not a, as I said, it's a hazy kind of fuzzy vision. It's not a precise *there she is, standing there or sitting on that step, looking sad*. It's kind of a, and it might sort of almost be a collage of various instances of her being upset.

21:31 RTH: Okay. So there's some sense of her being in the kitchen, in the vicinity of the refrigerator, in the context of frozen (and I couldn't, frozen pastries?) [Olivia: Peas.] Peas! Frozen peas! Uh, okay. In the context of frozen peas. So I understand that's what, that's what there. And the question is how much of that is *understood*, which would not be a visual thing, and how much of it is *seen* in a visual way. And the answer is that I, I guess what we're saying is, I'm not a hundred percent sure of how to answer that question. I, is that right?

21:31 Russ comments: DES is sometimes criticized for "leading the witness"; here we might be criticized for having unfairly not accepted Olivia's original claim of visualization and coerced her into denying visualization. We are presenting the entire unedited video so you can judge such criticisms for yourself. I myself think that criticism is unfair on three counts. First, Olivia did *not* originally claim visualization—she originally claimed (14:01) "I think in my head, I have a sort of, um,... What I have noted down is "general unspecified thought slash visualization of my own child being upset." Her original claim is a highly subjunctified maybe-sort-of-visualization. Second, Olivia did *not* eventually deny visualization—she denied *clear* visualization but ended up allowing the possibility of some sort of visualization. Third, we didn't coerce her. We asked her what she meant and noticed when she appeared to be ambiguous.

22:11 Olivia: [pause] Yep.

22:11 RTH: Okay.

22:12 Olivia: Sorry. I just realized I was nodding, which is no good for your audio, or mine for that matter. Yes.

22:18 RTH: Well, you, you will see that in the transcript, if you were gonna look at that, I sometimes say "Olivia nods in the affirmative" or something like that. So I can deal with that. We can deal with that.

22:18 Russ comments: We have spent more than 10 minutes teasing out whether Olivia had a visual experience at the moment of this beep, and we make these comments. First, we don't know for sure whether it was or was not visual. Second, if there was any visual experience at all, it was very unspecific. Third, this is an example of the iterative process underway: maybe next time we will be better able to make such distinctions. Fourth, as far as we know there is no possible method that might provide an answer to this question other than DES. Perhaps better ways will be developed, but as of now, there are no investigations that adequately focus on natural-environment experience in an adequately phenomenological way. Fifth, we think most (probably all) other methods would have concluded (if they had inquired at all) that Olivia had been visually seeing Aspasia. Sixth, we are not answering the question about why or whether it is worthwhile to make the effort that this process requires. Who cares whether Olivia knows (or that Russ and Alek know) that Olivia's inner experience involves instances that she would have called "seeing" but that probably more involve some sort of cognitive recognition than visualization? Probably no one other than those who would like to know the difference between apprehension and delusion.

22:32 Olivia: And so can I add one thing to this beep? [RTH: Sure.] Um, so I've, I've now noted down what I was doing at the time. Um, and, uh, which at that time I was putting, um, like green string beans into a cloth bag, um, cuz the vegetables always come in this big box and then I kind of sort them out. So, um, I was definitely paying attention to sort of trying to get the beans in, in a vertical fashion so that they would all fit rather than a mess of tangled, y'know, green beans. Um, but I have noted down "a tiny bit of putting green beans in a bag." So look, and now I feel like I'm, I'm not, y'know... Obviously the first two times I didn't note down anything about sort of my physical surroundings or activities / actions. Um, and they didn't really feature in beeps except for times when they did, when I was say, for example, those beeps that I was writing. I have now taken to noting that down. Is it because you asked the question? Or is it because I now, so are they even actually there in my mind or is it that I'm stopping after the beep and then thinking, *oh, how much was I paying attention to what I was actually doing?* I can't answer that at all, either.

24:02 RTH: So I got distracted a little bit in the, in the, in there. So are you coming down on the side of, this is what I was doing. I was parallelizing green beans, but I, I don't know how much of my attention was on that? Or...

24:02 Russ comments: RTH (perhaps because of the distraction) does not refer to Olivia's questioning *why* she was now noting this action. That's too bad, and probably should be called a mistake on RTH's part. DES is performance art, and interviewers fall short of perfection.

24:17 Olivia: I think,

24:18 AK: Yeah, go ahead.

24:21 Olivia: I, uh, I mean, I think I was, and y'know in many ways I was, I was paying attention in the fact that I wasn't just chucking the beans in the bag. I was kind of trying to line them up a little bit, so they would fit. Uh, like I think it was there a little bit in my head, but it wasn't... Not much, not, I don't know if I would've noted it down, had we not sort of started to talk about those things.

24:45 AK: Okay. Well, and sometimes we ask people to sort of quantify what they mean when they say this is a "tiny bit" of my experience. Y'know, they might say, well, 90% of the experience is about Aspasia being upset, but maybe 10% is about the green beans. And, and maybe we can't say here, but that can be a helpful...

25:09 RTH: Or 60-40, or 60-40.

25:09 Russ comments: RTH here is worried about AK's implication that "tiny bit" means "10%," so he presented another (60-40) alternative. His object is to weaken AK's 10% suggestion so that Olivia might more freely choose the percentage on her own.

25:09 Olivia: Yeah, I definitely...

25:11 AK: Right. Or any other combination...

25:12 RTH: 99 - 1.

25:12 Russ comments: He's still attempting to weaken AK's 10% suggestion.

25:13 Olivia: Well, and there was also an element of listening to, and, and processing the words I was hearing in the podcast as well. Because a lot of the time I'm listening to something as we've kind of discussed, I'm just, I'm not think, y'know, I'm just absorbing the input. But I did notice that, that at this particular moment there was this other thought that was existing alongside, absorbing the input. And I don't know, I, I mean, I could put a bodgie percentage on it. Maybe it'd be like, I dunno, 40% input, 40% a thought slash image of Aspasia, 20%, what I'm doing.

25:54 AK: Sure.

25:55 Olivia: Maybe 40, 50, 10?

26:02 AK: And we won't hold you to the numbers, y'know? And maybe, maybe that's not helpful for you, but gives us a general sense.

26:11 Olivia: Yeah. I think that the proportion is perhaps, yeah, the, um, yeah.

26:17 AK: Right. Right.

26:17 RTH: So when you say 40% into the Ezra Klein show, is, is that well, *I'm, I'm directly experiencing that before the footlights of my, in, of my consciousness*, us in the same sense that my thought about my daughter is before the footlights of my consciousness? Or are you saying, well, I was, I was certainly *processing* that cuz I understood what he was saying, and I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna be surprised...

26:44 Olivia: Well, what's the difference... [pause] between those two, between it being before the footlights of my consciousness and definitely processing it?

26:44 Russ comments: Whether there is a distinction between direct apprehension and cognitive processing is a fundamentally important question. Perhaps DES is trying to make that distinction where no such distinction actually exists (perhaps there is no such thing as pristine inner experience). Perhaps no such distinction exists *for Olivia*, even though it is evident for others. Perhaps Olivia has had presuppositions about the nature of her own inner experience, and when those presuppositions don't match her actual experience, she fails to apprehend her own experience. Perhaps Olivia is having us on.

We are in our third sampling day, having invested nearly three hours of interviewing into exploring what is before the footlights of Olivia's consciousness, and she is now asking, basically, what does "before the footlights of consciousness" mean? Good! We are getting to the marrow of the issues, Olivia being confronted by her own samples. If the issues are presuppositional, we note that presuppositions are stubborn and don't give up without a fight. If the presuppositions are ours (pristine inner experience really doesn't exist, despite what we have written), then the fight will be

ours. If the presuppositions are Olivia's (e.g., her experience is not as visual as she had led herself to believe), then the fight will be hers. Either way, it is a battle, and it will take time to make progress.

26:57 RTH: Well, last time we talked about *driving*. And we said that we.... We agreed, I think, that we could, sometimes we... You and I could have a conversation, I think we said, and, and we could be totally engrossed in the conversation. And one of us would be driving and that one could have been driving without, driving *skillfully* without running into cars and making the proper turns and getting us where we, we were going. And, and yet a beep would never, would never say that was before the footlights of my consciousness. What was before the footlights of my consciousness was the conversation I was having with Olivia. [Olivia: Mmm. Mmm.] So it's possible that this would be the same way. Ezra's talking, and I'm *processing* what's going on in the same way as I would be *driving*. But I was *really*, as far as the footlights of my consciousness, what I was directly paying attention to was Aspasia and her upsetness.

27:52 Olivia: Mm. I see what, I think I see what you're saying. No, it feels like the, the content of the podcast was also before the footlights of my consciousness. And I, uh, yeah, cuz sorry, once again, there's an airplane....

28:07 RTH: So what happens, what happens when the airplane goes on is I can't hear the airplane. All I hear is that your voice gets [inaudible]. Alright.

28:07 Russ comments: They restart the Zoom call.

28:17 AK: Should we go to number 2 given the time?

28:19 RTH: I think we should go to number 2, given that we've probably muddied the water on number 1.

28:25 Olivia: Yep.

28:26 AK: In a good way.

28:26 Russ comments: RTH at 29:19 is right: we have muddied the water. As a general rule, the longer we talk about a sample, the more likely that we will confuse what we have *said* with what was *experienced* at the moment of the beep, and therefore the *less* likely we are to get high-fidelity descriptions. But AK at 28:26 is also right: whereas we have muddied the waters about sample 2.1, we have likely clarified the waters for upcoming sampling days. The 17 minutes of talk is likely a substantial iterative contribution to the apprehensions of tomorrow's samples.

SAMPLE 3.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

28:27 AK: [continues] Number 2.

28:29 Olivia: Okay. So number 2, I've just written down "mid conversation and nothing else." I, Yeah, I think that was possibly even a work call.

- 28:40 AK: So you're in a conversation. And is this one of those where it seems like I'm just in the conversation? Nothing else in my experience.
- 28:48 Olivia: Yeah. I mean I, yes. Yes. And, and certainly I'm just in the conversation, not able to stop and, and interrogate my thoughts as well.
- 28:57 AK: Sure. Okay. So maybe we just say a mid-conversation. I didn't really, I can't, I couldn't stop and pay attention to my experience. We don't know. Let's skip to number 3.
- 29:06 Olivia: Yeah.
- 29:07 AK: Okay. Good deal. Number 3.

SAMPLE 3.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 29:09 Olivia: Okay. So number 3, I'm back at the kitchen, back in the kitchen for (it seems like I spent a lot of time in the kitchen). Um, I'm back at the kitchen looking at three... So there's three nectarines sitting on the bench. (It's funny. I don't think I'm, I'm not still doing this sorting task. I don't know. Maybe this was cleaning up from lunch or making lunch or something.) There was three nectarines on the bench and I was just looking at the nectarines. And I really felt like I was quite, there was nothing else. I was really just looking at the three nectarines. [AK: Um hmm.] Um, y'know, I wrote that, I think Darcy, my partner, had just said to me, oh no, / had just said the words. He'd asked me where something was. And I said, "it's on the fridge." Um, but I felt like I had said that without thinking, and I was really quite absorbed in those three nectarines, looking at them.
- 30:06 AK: Okay.
- 30:08 Olivia: I'm gonna close my door because this rain is really loud. [she closes the door]
- 30:28 AK: All good?
- 30:29 Olivia: Yep.
- 30:30 AK: Okay. Okay. So I guess, let me just establish, not take this for granted. My eyes are *aimed* at the nectarines and I'm, I'm registering them. I'm experiencing these nectarines?
- 30:43 Olivia: Yep.
- 30:44 AK: And anything in particular about them? Or I'm just looking and seeing 'em as they are? I'm into the color? Or the shape? Or the threeness? Or ...
- 30:54 Olivia: I think a bit of all of that. I mean, yeah, definitely the color, the shape, um, y'know, the smooth texture of the skin, the fact that there was three of them just sitting in almost like a sort of triangular shape.

31:10 AK: Okay. And so I wanna understand that. So I guess I can imagine that I'm looking at this triangular configuration of nectarines and it happens to be that they're orange and they're round and they're in a triangle. *Or* I can imagine that I am looking at the nectarines and I am *particularly* noticing their orangeness, or their shape, or some other quality. Does that distinction make sense?

31:39 Olivia: No.

31:39 Russ comments: Wonderful. Olivia, embracing her role as co-investigator, declines to answer a question she does not understand. [The distinction AK is trying to make is between a straightforward perceptual awareness (I see X) and a sensory awareness (my experience is of the sensory detail Y, which happens to be a sensory quality of X, though I don't much care about X at all).]

31:41 AK: So I guess in the, in the first way of saying it, I'm seeing the nectarines, and of course they *have* sensory qualities. And if you want me to *tell* you about 'em, I can, they're in a triangle, they're orange, they're whatever. In the second possibility (and I'm, y'know, there's a million others), but in the second possibility here, I am particularly into some sensory quality. My experience is actually *more* about the orangeness than the nectarine-ness.

32:08 Olivia: Mm. I see. No, it feels like the former of those two.

32:13 AK: Ah hah. Okay. Like I'm just taking these in and I'm getting it accurately. I'm seeing them as they are. Is that right?

32:21 Olivia: Yep. [AK: Okay.]

32:22 RTH: Including the triangular, triangle placement of it? That I'm not more interested in the triangle placement of it than anything else?

32:31 Olivia: Nope. Nope.

32:32 RTH: They happened to be, they happened to be triangle shaped, but that, that doesn't grab me. [Olivia: Unh uh. (negative)] Okay.

32:42 AK: And you said that you were also at the same time, or maybe just before you've, you've responded to your partner, is that [Olivia: Um hmm. Um hmm. (affirmative)] right? And then I think you said that feels automatic. Does that mean like, not really in my experience? It's just coming out, but I don't actually experience myself saying I quote "on the fridge"?

33:00 Olivia: I mean, I heard myself saying it, um, audibly. I heard it. I, y'know, I, I produced it, but without thought.

33:16 AK: Mm hmm. And so does that mean that I had no presentiment of it? It just came out? Or does that mean it's, it's kind of like the *driving* example where this isn't actually before

the footlights of my consciousness, I'm making sense. I'm accurate. The thing is on the fridge. But really this is, this is outside the, the footlights of, of my consciousness.

33:41 Olivia: Um, so he asked me where the shopping list was, and the shopping list is on the fridge and it's always been on the fridge. Um, and so, like the driving example, like I feel like I just respond and say, "it's on the fridge" cuz I know very well. I don't even need to look. I know the, and that's where it is. Right? Like it's... I, whether this is after the fact, there's definitely a *tiny* bit of irritation at the fact that he asked me where this thing is, that is *always* there. And like, y'know, like how that can [laughs] be annoying. (Insight into my relationship here that I am now publishing on YouTube.) Um, yeah. I, so look, I can't, I, I don't know. I, I mean, I do feel like I felt a twang of irritation. Um, and maybe I meditated on the nectarines as a way to distract myself from that. But once again, I'm after the fact attributing way too much here. Um, I had said it, I had said it without thinking, without formulating, y'know, taking time to think about my response to his question. Think about what is the answer and then say the answer. It was question / answer came out without thought.

35:07 AK: Okay. Okay. So I think I'm understanding that. There's no analysis. There's no thought. I don't have to check the fridge or whatever. I just say this. Um, is there any way to say, or can we say whether this, um... So I get, there's no thought, but the speaking of it is that in my experience, either the producing or the hearing. I don't want us to just assume. Y'know, you could put noise out in the world and not, y'know, be registering it.

35:36 Olivia: I think I definitely register the noise, the sound, but I don't. Yeah.

35:43 RTH: In an auditory way? I *hear* it not.. I don't *speak* it, I *hear* it? Obviously in, in the real world I'm speaking it, but my experience is of the hearing of it, rather than the speaking of it? Or can't say...

36:04 Olivia: I mean, it, it, it, it, y'know, it feels like I, I hear and speak it at the same time.

36:12 RTH: Okay. Um, so, so let me, let me ask what the, the question that Alek asked, asked a minute ago. Can we put numbers on this? What, what percentage of your experience is about...

36:22 Olivia: The nectarines?

36:23 RTH: ...speaking and what is about the seeing of the tangerines and, or the nectarines? And what, what percentage is about the irritation twang?

36:36 Olivia: I'm gonna go 80% nectarines, like 10% speaking, maybe 5%, 5 to 10% irritation.

36:48 RTH: Okay. Then I think we probably shouldn't try to [AK: I agree.] analyze too many of the details down at 10%. That's just tough to try to figure that out, or impossible.

36:48 Russ comments: As another general rule, we decline to discuss in detail aspects of the experience that were only very minorly present to begin with (1%, or 5%, or 10%, for example).

37:03 AK: Right. My phone is being hijacked. Hold on. There we go. Wow. Bizarre. Okay. Sorry about that.

37:14 RTH: We've got, we've got some electronic issues today.

37:17 AK: It's just *odd*. In Do Not Disturb it starts playing a video someone sent me [they laugh] but [Olivia: Weird.] it seems like that would be disturbing me.

37:32 RTH: You would think. So. Should we move on to number 4?

37:34 AK: Yes. Works for me.

SAMPLE 3.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

37:36 Olivia: Okay. So number 4, I have written down. "Whaaa or whaat." What, like, so the word, "what," but, but hijacked, y'know, like, is that a "Whaaa" or a, "What"? There may been a *t* at the end of it now. Um, why, so [looks at her notes] thinking this word and uh, yeah. Okay. So I'm communicating with a colleague on a web chat Slack we use like a, so a chat interface. And she had just told me that she needed to get this interview with someone because they were about to go offline to a retreat without their phone for six weeks. And I was thinking, and, and, and I was sort of poised to, but like right as the beep went off, I, I had just read her message and was thinking "whaaat!" like, who goes away without their phone for six weeks these days. Um, so I've read, I've written this "hearing the sounds and seeing the letters." So I think, yeah, I'm doing both and I'm preparing to write it in, but in the end I realized that "whaaat," is not a very professional. And I ended up sort of saying "what," typing what instead of like W capital H seven capital As.

39:02 RTH: So at the moment of the beep, this is an entirely imaginary experience [Olivia: Um hmm.] of "whaaa." [Olivia: Yeah.] And, and I both hear it and see it written out.

39:02 Russ comments: For those who are also watching the video of this interview, notice that RTH has mimicked Olivia's somewhat silly "whaaa." If he had been too stuffy, preferring, say, a more "professional" tone or even preferring instead to say the entire word "whaaat," it would have signaled to Olivia that we are not genuinely interested in apprehending her experience with fidelity, and she very likely would have felt pressure to collude with the professionalism as the interview continued.

39:15 Olivia: Yes. And I, I can only assume that the reason I see it written out is because I'm about to, y'know, I'm, I'm in a, I'm communicating in a...

39:24 RTH: Maybe so, but let's not worry about that. [Olivia: Okay.] There's a lot of reasons why you might see it or not see it. And I don't think, I don't think we can get to the bottom of that. The question is whether you *do* see it [Olivia: Um] and I'm gathering the answer is Yes, I do see it. [Olivia: Yes.] And, and the way I spell whaaa when I say "Whaaa" is W H seven As exclamation point?

39:46 Olivia: Uh, no exclamation point. And, and I've written, um, and look seven's an approximation-several, let's say several As. [RTH: Okay.] And I'm not sure if there was gonna be, be a T on it. Like I'm not, y'know, like, I think mid beep I was literally in the "aaa," but there may have been a *t* [she makes a *t* sound] at the end of it.

40:04 RTH: Okay. So at the moment of the beep, I at, at the moment of the beep, I *see* W H A A A, and some indeterminate number of As, *and* I hear it at the same time. [Olivia: Um hm.] And are you more into the hearing it or the seeing it, or is that 50-50? The same.

40:20 Olivia: It feels pretty 50- 50.

40:22 RTH: Alright. Then let's keep going with what you see. So, uh, how, how, how does, how do you see this? What do you see?

40:29 Olivia: I think I see it typed, but yeah. Yeah. I think I see a, I think I do see it typed.

40:39 RTH: So typed as on a computer screen? Or typed as on a typewriter? Or...

40:44 Olivia: No typed as on a computer screen and probably as on, sort of in, in the window where I'm corresponding.

40:56 RTH: And, and is there color involved in...

41:00 Olivia: No, no, it's, it's, I think it's black and white because, uh, not *because*, but, um, and I am typing in black and white.

41:09 RTH: And when you say, *I think* it's black and white, does, does that mean, I'm *not sure* whether it's black and white? Or does that mean, well, let's call it black and white, cuz I got nothing better to call it than that.

41:19 Olivia: I feel reasonably confident that it's black and white.

41:23 RTH: Okay. So I'm, I'm reasonably confident that I am seeing WHAAA in black and white in a window as if I were to type that.

41:34 Olivia: Yep.

41:35 RTH: Is that right? [Olivia: Yes.] And, and do I see it in motion as in more and more As coming? Or, or is...

41:44 Olivia: No, I don't see it in motion.

41:45 RTH: Okay. And I'm confident about that too. It sounds like.

41:48 Olivia: Yeah.

41:49 RTH: Okay. And does this seeing have any location to it? It's in my head? It's out in front of me? It's behind me?

42:00 Olivia: I mean, I point to this general area. [Points above the left side of her head] I know it's in my head. It's maybe sort of, and if I have to situate it in space, it's kind of just outside of my field of vision up behind me. But no, it's, it's not, it's in that cavernous dark representation of my head that I think I talked about last time, this space a visual,[RTH: Okay.] y'know, an imaginary visual cavern that I think is a rendition of my head.

42:27 RTH: Okay. And capital W or capital, all caps?

42:36 Olivia: Either all caps or definitely W, capital W. I think all caps, but I'm not a hundred percent sure. Definitely a capital W.

42:46 RTH: Alright. So I, I I'm understanding that we are saying that this is a visual experience. I I'm visualizing in my imagination, W H A A A. Is that right?

43:02 Olivia: Yep.

43:03 RTH: In the first beep, we talked about what might be a visualization of Aspasia. Is that the same kind of a, do we mean *I see these* in the same way or a different way?

43:03 Russ comments: Recall from interview 2's transcript (see 22:02) the value of this kind of within-a-single-interview question: It encourages Olivia to evaluate and clarify based solely on her *own* experiences (not on theories / presuppositions / etc.) what she means by innerly *see*.

43:17 Olivia: Uh, I mean, that's an interesting question. Uh, I mean, it's a very different image, and it's a specific image in a way that, as I said, the image of Aspasia was potentially a collage of various renditions of her. Um, this is very clearly the letters. And while I can't give you complete confidence about capital / not capital, color / not color, I'm very confident that I'm seeing defined specific letters. [RTH: Okay.] Well, I can't say exactly how many As.

43:52 RTH: Okay. And, and so the, in, in its most basic sense, does the word "see" have the same meaning here as it did with Aspasia?

44:03 Olivia: Yeah. Yep.

44:04 RTH: So there's a, there's a visual seeing of Aspasia and there's a visual seeing of the letters. The letters are more crystalline or, unambiguous or, or whatever than Aspasia was, but they're, but they're both in the realm of, *I am visual-imagining something*.

44:26 Olivia: Yep.

44:27 RTH: Okay. And then I'm also hearing "Whaa." Is that right? [Olivia: Mm hmm (affirmative).] Unless, Alek, did you have more questions about the seeing aspect? [AK: No.] Okay. The, then I'm hearing, I'm hearing this. What, what, what does that mean?

44:51 Olivia: I mean, I'm, I'm hearing my voice in an exaggerated vaguely comical way saying "whaaa!" But I'm hearing my voice, my internal version of my voice, not my external version of my voice.

45:10 RTH: And this is a *hearing* phenomenon, as opposed to a *speaking* phenomenon? [Olivia: Yes.] I don't experience myself as *saying* "Whaa," I experience it, as in the speaking into the tape recorder, this is, this is my inner tape recorder playing back to me "Whaaa"? Is that right?

45:26 Olivia: Yeah. Yep.

45:30 RTH: And it sounds like my voice. There's no question about that?

45:34 Olivia: Yeah. As I said, a sort of exaggerated comical performative, "whaaat"? But yes, my, my,

45:43 RTH: But I, but I, I could speak that aloud. I could hear myself speaking that aloud in some kind of a situation.

45:50 Olivia: Yeah.

45:51 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good.

45:57 AK: Me too. Yeah. Is there one more, did you say five?

46:03 Olivia: I have got five. Um, I do have, I've got a meeting at 10:30 that I probably need to spend a bit of time preparing for. Um, oh, I've also look for five. I've just written reading and I think I was reading something and, y'know, absorbing visual words in a way that I didn't, yeah, feel like there was much else going on.

46:31 AK: Well, and it sounds like maybe we don't have time to dive into it.

46:35 Olivia: Yeah. I think I might need to leave it here for today if that's alright. [RTH: Okay.]

46:39 AK: Oh yeah. I didn't realize we were at an hour. It's all good.

46:43 RTH: Okay.