

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY

Tristan

Tristan Interview 5

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February 10 interview with Tristan that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/s1KgNzam8cE>. 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

AG = Amber Goto

Tristan = Tristan

0:00 Tristan: Hello.

0:02 RTH: Good morning everyone.

0:04 Tristan: Morning. Sorry I missed a week.

0:06 RTH: No problem. Recording okay with everybody?

0:09 Tristan: Yes.

0:09 AG: Yes.

0:12 RTH: Alrighty. So we threw away last week's beeps and started off with today's beeps. Is that right?

0:21 Tristan: Yeah, that's right.

0:22 RTH: And these are these beeps from today or yesterday?

0:25 Tristan: They are from this morning.

0:28 RTH: Excellent. So this is gonna be Tristan's day 5, is that right?

0:36 Tristan: Um.

0:36 RTH: I think that's right.

0:37 AG: That's, yes, that's correct, 5.

0:38 RTH: And anything we should be talking about before we launch into the beeps?

0:46 Tristan: I think we should start up.

0:48 RTH: It's okay with me, number 1.

SAMPLE 5.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

0:51 Tristan: Alright. Number1. I'm reading the words. Uh, "our most significant event." I am, uh, presenting the words "significant event" to myself internally. Um, there's something of a speech quality to that, um, but not especially prominent.

1:25 Um, another component is I'm feeling anxiety, um, a general anxiety, um, uh, and then if I were trying to, um... [pause] Yeah, so, so maybe I'll just say I'm feeling a general anxiety that is, um, that. [pause] Now this is where I'm, might need to get some advice from you about how to present this, but, talking about the bodily component of anxiety. So I'm feeling this anxiety and then I feel that it's somehow bodily. And then if you ask me why it feels somehow bodily, I would explain that it's cuz I'm also feeling pain at that moment. I'm feeling stomach pain and pain everywhere. And it seems to me that the anxiety and pain are somehow linked, but the pain is not in my immediate consciousness. It's in my bodily somatic feeling, but it's not in my mental intuition. But, um, but I feel it's somehow related to the anxiety. So that's something that comes up in a lot of my samples that I don't really know how to describe.

1:25 Russ comments: There is no question that Tristan is motivated to describe his experience. But there are substantial questions about what he is directly apprehending at the moment of this beep: Does the anxiety have a bodily component? If so, where in the body? Or is that the wrong question? Is the pain part of the anxiety? Is the pain directly apprehended at the moment of the beep? And why are those questions hard?

2:51 RTH: So I, I think, I think we had one, uh, had an example like that last time as well. And, uh, and I think it'll be interesting to try to sort that out. I don't know that, I don't, I don't, know that I can give any general advice so far, but let's see what happens.

3:04 Tristan: Okay.

3:04 RTH: So is that the whole, the whole description there, that's the?

3:10 Tristan: Yeah, that's it.

3:12 RTH: Okay. And is, and is one aspect of that *more* prominent than the other? The, the reading, the somehow presenting, the feeling anxiety, and the bodily presence / stomach ache?

3:26 Tristan: I think the, the reading and the words are probably most prominent, maybe 60-40, and then the 40 is just the anxiety.

3:38 RTH: Okay. [Tristan: And the.] Well, let's start with the reading. Let's start with the reading of the words and work towards the anxiety. So I am reading and, and I didn't understand it, it's the first word are, a-r-e our, o-u-r?

3:53 Tristan: Uh, o-u-r.

3:55 RTH: Okay. "Our most significant event." And is that like a headline or a part of a sentence or part of a text or the middle of a sentence?

4:02 Tristan: That's something that's something I wrote that I'm reading over.

4:08 RTH: So on written, written on the computer screen or on real...?

4:13 Tristan: On the computer screen on a Word doc, let's say.

4:17 RTH: Okay. And, and at the same time as I'm reading that phrase, "our most significant event," I am somehow presenting just *portion* of that "significant event" to myself?

4:34 Tristan: Right.

4:35 RTH: Can you describe those two aspects? How they're the same or different or?

4:42 Tristan: So the reading is the, I'm seeing and comprehending that part. Um, um, and then the, uh, the other part is that even while I'm reading this phrase, I'm latching on to "significant event," and I am, uh, sort of innerly voicing that to myself. And that has more of a speech quality than a simply listening quality. But there's no, there's no actual speech or there's no actual imagining I'm speaking or visual imagery of the sort.

5:26 RTH: Okay. So let's, let's start with the, "our most significant event." I'm, I'm *reading* that. And are we talking about a fact of the universe here? This is the sentence that, that I am reading "our most significant event?" Or is it somehow I have, I'm articulating that to myself in some... *articulating* might be a little bit strong. What I'm trying to figure out is what's the difference? I, I still haven't figured out what's the difference between the reading of "our most significant event" and just "significant event." Is that like context and presentation or is it like two presentations?

6:07 Tristan: Y'know. [pause] Hmm. Maybe, maybe we should just go with the, the "significant event" part and, and ditch the, "our, our most significant event" part.

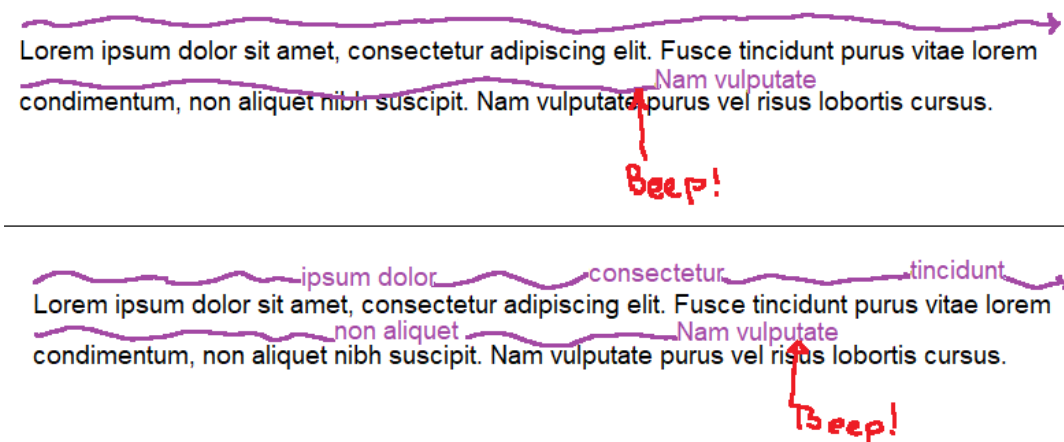
6:30 RTH: So does that, is that to say something like, I'm accepting that my eyeballs are reading this sentence that has in it the words "our significant event"?

6:39 Tristan: Yeah.

6:40 RTH: But I'm not really paying attention to that aspect *directly*. What's directly in my presen, in my experience is, "significant event." I'm not trying to talk you into that. I'm just trying to understand what we're talking about.

6:56 Tristan: Um, I really should've, I really should've made the distinction between these two at the time [RTH: Okay.] because I can't really disentangle it now.

- 7:07 RTH: Okay, fair enough. And, and I would emphasize, which I think I've said several times, but I'm gonna say it again, that's part of what this process is about. We don't really know (neither of us, none of us) know what it is that we need to focus on or understand or whatever. As we go, we have, we have to work that out.
- 7:25 Tristan: Yeah.
- 7:25 RTH: And so it, it seems like, well, maybe there's something like two aspects here that maybe the, maybe the, this reading, the first part of the reading is just context or maybe there's something about it to know. We'll have to keep that as a sort of a live possibility going forwards. But, but I would say let's *not* be too *critical* of ourselves for having not done it.
- 7:25 Russ comments: The heart of any attempt at fidelity, and the heart of the iterative method, is to cultivate the willingness (nearly the eagerness) to live in the realm of ignorance until ignorance has been naturally (artlessly, genuinely, sincerely) eliminated (if that ever happens).
- 7:49 Tristan: Yeah.
- 7:49 RTH: That's, that's the way this process goes. We have to learn how to, we have to learn what we're, what we're trying to do here. So the, let's, so let's set the "our significant event" aside and go to the "significant event." And that is somehow *latched onto*, as if that is extracted out of the stream that is being read. Is that what we're saying here?
- 7:49 Russ comments: The question here (and at samples 5.2 and 5.3, and on day 4 at 2:26, and day 3 from 23:48 to the comment at 38:30) can be schematized in this figure, where what Tristan is reading is schematized in black and Tristan's experience is schematized in purple:



The upper panel schematizes that Tristan's experience is something like riding along what he is reading until the beep occurs, at which time he tries to "freeze" what he is experiencing and finds it was "Nam vulputate."

The lower panel schematizes that as Tristan naturally (“pristinely”) reads, he latches onto a phrase (“ipsum dolor”) and then latches onto another phrase (“consectetur”) and then latches onto another phrase (“tincidunt”), and so on: that his reading is naturally experienced as a series of latching-ontos, and the beep happens to occur at the latching onto “Nam vulputate.”

The two panels intend to schematize two very different experiences: in the upper panel, reading is experienced as a naturally receptive smooth influx of meaning; in the lower panel, reading is experienced as an actively generated saltatory series of fairly arbitrarily created word blocks.

Teasing apart those two possibilities is difficult, because (a) language is imprecise: in both cases Tristan can legitimately report “At the moment of the beep I was reading the words ‘Nam vulputate’.” Furthermore, (b) presuppositions about reading abound. And further-furthermore, (c) the experience that is directly apprehended may not at all be related to the neural processing and/or meaning-making that goes on outside of Tristan’s pristine (directly apprehended) inner experience.

We’re working on it, and perhaps the iterative process will help us to resolve it. (See the comment at 36:16).

8:15 Tristan: Yeah.

8:18 RTH: And so it’s not like “significant event” is just at the moment of the beep it happens to be significant event; and one microsecond or half a second or whatever before that it would’ve been “our”? It’s that somehow I have pulled out the “significant event” piece of it. Is that right?

8:41 Tristan: Yeah.

8:41 RTH: And that is, I present that to myself in something that resembles speech?

8:51 Tristan: Right.

8:54 RTH: Okay. And then there was the word *actual*. You said “it’s not actual speech,” and I wanna make sure that I understand what *actual* means. So *actual* sometimes means it is not *external* speech—there’s no words coming outta my mouth. I’m accepting that! The question is whether it seems like speech innerly, seems like I’m speaking these words even though I’m not *actually* speaking those words. That’s one, one definition of *actual*. But then another definition of actual would be something like, well, it’s not even that I’m innerly speaking those. It’s less, it’s different, it’s different from that.

9:29 Tristan: It’s, there’s, there’s a component of speech to it.

9:35 RTH: An *experienced* component of speech?

9:38 Tristan: Um, there’s something, there’s something speech-like in that when I’m imagining the words.

9:45 RTH: Okay.

9:45 Tristan: There's something almost speech-like about, about how I present that to myself.

9:57 RTH: Okay. And the *almost* portion. So does that include a voice? Is there experience of a voice? My voice? Somebody else's voice? No voice?

10:11 Tristan: Um, [pause] uh.

10:21 RTH: Or maybe that's a bad question to ask. So lemme ask it. Lemme ask a *different* question and we'll see which one of these questions is better, if either. Is there like a production to it? Like I, I feel like I am producing these words. I am somehow articulating these words.

10:35 Tristan: I, yeah. I feel like I am somehow articulating them.

10:41 RTH: Okay. So I'm *articulating* them *rather* than *hearing* them being articulated by something or someone or somebody else. Is that right?

10:49 Tristan: Right, right.

10:49 RTH: So it's, so I'm doing it, I'm the creator of these latched words. I experienced myself as being the creator of these words. Is that right?

11:03 Tristan: Yes.

11:04 RTH: Okay. And *then* the part about whether I create them in a voice: that's harder. I'm not sure about that.

11:15 Tristan: Yes. I don't, there's nothing especially, there's maybe... It's hard to say. I can't, I can't answer whether or not there's a voice.

11:30 RTH: Fair enough. And how about, how about rhythm or sequence or temporal quality? Like is it the case that "significant" comes before "event"? This "significant event" is taking, taking place over elapsed time, in in a sense? As opposed to...

11:51 Tristan: Yeah that's right.

11:52 RTH: So it's not like, it's not like this concept "significant event" is there all at once at one particular moment. They, it unfolds over time.

12:01 Tristan: Yeah.

12:02 RTH: Or, and, and, *and* I unfold it over time or, or I articulate it over time in some way?

12:08 Tristan: Yeah.

12:09 RTH: Mm hmm. Then I think I'm good about that portion. Amber, have any additional questions? Or Tristan?

12:20 AG: No, um I think I got it. I just wanna make sure I sum up what we've had here. So I take it that at the moment of the beep, I am somehow innerly articulating uh, "significant event." I can't yet disentangle if the reading part is a fact-of-the-universe context or if I was really, that was really part of my experience and this experience kind of unfolds over time. Am I getting all of that right?

12:53 RTH: There's one more piece to it. All that is right, I think.

12:56 AG: Okay.

12:56 RTH: But there's one more piece and that is that "significant event" is somehow extracted from the flow.

13:03 AG: Yes!

13:03 RTH: It's not just, it's not just the flow is going by and here's this part of the flow and then this part of the flow and this part of the flow and this part of the flow. But somehow I pull out, latch onto, these particular words.

13:18 AG: Yup, got it.

13:21 RTH: Does that all sound right to you, Tristan?

13:21 Russ comments: It appears that we are agreeing that the lower-panel of the 7:49 figure is the appropriate schematic for this experience.

13:23 Tristan: Yeah.

13:24 RTH: Alright, then let's move on to the feeling / bodily sensations or whatever. And I think I'd like to start with the stomachache. So is the stomachache directly present in your experience at the moment of the beep? Or is the stomachache something that's understood to be ongoing in my body even though I'm not paying attention to it at this particular moment? Or does that question make sense at all?

13:53 Tristan: Well, the stomach ache is a fact of the universe something that I'm feeling at that moment, um, perceptually. Um, but it's something I'm feeling at that moment in my body and not in my, um, and not in my *mental* experience. Now, I guess it's in my conscious bodily experience, but when I've been doing these beeps, I've mostly been describing my conscious *mental* experience. So should I, maybe I should start describing my conscious bodily experience more.

14:42 RTH: So that's, that's what makes this work interesting! Trying to sort that stuff out. So let's talk about the word **conscious** first. So that's a very problematic word for *me*. And so I would prefer that we talk about *directly apprehended*. So if something bodily is directly apprehended *bodily*, but that means before the footlights of my consciousness directly apprehended, I, I feel this stomachache present to me, then yes! We should be talking about that.

15:13 Tristan: Mm hmm.

15:13 RTH: So even though there's no...[pause] Well, well lemme, lemme retract that. So yes: if there's some, if there is some bodily presentment, something bodily presents itself to me directly, then that's fair game for DES. We're not *just* interested in mental stuff. [Tristan: Right.] We're in, what we're interested in is whatever it is that presents itself.

15:46 So like right now, I, I'm sitting and my leg is underneath my desk, and the, and the, and it sorta presses into my, the corner of my desk drawer presses into my leg. And that, when I'm talking about it right now, it's un, in this, in the realm of painful, not *very* painful, but it's a, a sharp corner being pushed into my leg. But two minutes ago and four minutes ago and six minutes ago, my leg was doubtless in the same position with the same corpuscles doing the same thing. But I wasn't paying attention to that. I was trying to sort through what "significant event," how that, and, and so that, that bodily process was un, no doubt *ongoing* in my leg and whatever part of my brain processes my leg pain. But it wasn't directly, I wasn't directly apprehending that cuz I was focused on Tristan and this linguistic stuff.

16:49 Tristan: But, [RTH: So.] the directly apprehended part seems to have some aspect of, of something *mental* involved in it.

17:00 RTH: Well, the word *mental* is problematic for me, too. So [pause] I don't, I don't think, I don't... what..... The, the question is whether it is before the footlights of my consciousness or before the footlights of my mentality, if you like, if you like that.

17:24 Tristan: Mm hmm.

17:25 RTH: But there, but, but there's, in, in my world, there's lots of stuff that is all going on at this time. Like there's the hum of the air conditioner and there's the sound of the refrigerator being opened in the next room and all, all that stuff. I could pay, I could pay attention to that, that *could be* part of my directly apprehended stuff. But most of the time I'm not paying attention to any or much of that.

17:48 Tristan: Mm hmm.

17:48 RTH: And that's what I would prefer to call "directly apprehended" rather than mental, because mental makes it sound, sound like I'm analyzing it, which I'm not. But sometimes it presents itself and sometimes it doesn't. Like right now I'm guessing your feet are on the floor. Is that right? Your feet are on the floor?

18:11 Tristan: They're in the air.

18:12 RTH: They're in the air. Well, let's let, let's pick, then let's pick your backside. So your backside is on the chair that you're sitting on.

18:19 Tristan: Mm hmm.

- 18:20 RTH: And I can call your attention to your butt as it impacts the chair. And when we *do* that, we can make the aspects of how that presents itself. We can directly apprehend that. But I'm guessing that for the last 15 minutes, you haven't been occupied with directly apprehending your butt experience.
- 18:45 Tristan: Mm hmm.
- 18:47 RTH: It's been there, you haven't fallen off the chair. So you've been intelligently, skillfully processing what is coming through your input devices on your backside. But there hasn't been (I'm guessing!) there hasn't been before the footlights of your consciousness much content like, well, I gotta switch to my right side because my left side is getting a little bit, my right cheek is, my right cheek is too, too squashed. And so I should switch to my left cheek or something that. You, your body has been doing that but not directly apprehended, I think. Is that true?
- 18:47 Russ comments: On reviewing the video, I think RTH has missed the important part of Tristan's (16:49) "But the directly apprehended part seems to have some aspect of, of something *mental* involved in it." I suspect now that Tristan's question was more about whether it is possible for a physical sensation to directly present itself (and if so, is that fair game for DES description), or does that sensation have to be cognized (made mental) in some what for it to be part of pristine experience. But that is not what we discussed. DES is a performance art, and RTH may have missed an opportunity. The good news is that if the distinction is important, it will arise again, either later in conversation about this sample, or about some later sample.
- 19:26 Tristan: Yeah, I, I, I understand your distinction, and I'm just trying to see how the pain aspect, whether, how it fits into this or not. I'm trying to, it's, it's just incredibly difficult for me to try to understand how this, this pain, because it's not in, it's not in the footlights directly as pain. I'm not thinking, *oh! I, I'm feeling pain right now!* But I'm feeling *anxiety* right now. And when I look into what exactly this anxiety is, I feel that the anxiety is somehow tied to this pain that I'm feeling all over.
- 20:16 RTH: So, so the, the fact that you're trying to work it out is excellent! That's exactly what we're trying to do here! And my goal is, our goal I think should be to try to get better at it.
- 20:29 Tristan: Mm hmm.
- 20:29 RTH: Not necessarily to figure it out today. Let's, we'll do the best we can today, but we're not gonna **necessarily** answer this question today (or *ever* for that matter). We're gonna try to figure it out. But, so, but, so lemme, lemme ask about what you just said. You, you said "it's like my anxiety is somehow tied to (I forget exactly the verb you used), somehow tied to my pain."
- 20:54 Tristan: Mm hmm

- 20:56 RTH: Does that mean that the pain seems to be part of the anxiety? Or does it seem like there's a bodily thing going on and I am anxious and these things are somehow related to each other, but not part of, part of each other?
- 21:16 Tristan: Hmm. Um. [pause]
- 21:37 RTH: So lemme let me ask that question in a different way. Unless, unless you wanna say something before I do that?
- 21:44 Tristan: Mm hmm. Yeah
- 21:47 RTH: So the mo, at the moment of this beep, does it seem like I'm feeling anxiety? And that would be the sorta the straightforward way of describing what presents itself in this aspect. We've got the words going on, but in, in this aspect, it's like I feel anxiety. And **then** when I'm asked how to describe the characteristics of anxiety, I can say, "well, I feel a stomachache. And that seems to be a part of the anxiety and uh, but it's not all of it. I feel an, anxiety that *includes* the stomach ache." Or does it seem like, "well, when Russ asks me to focus on my anxiety, I can feel a stomachache as well, which I wasn't really much paying attention to at the moment of the beep, but looking back on it, I can say, well, it was *probably* there. And whether it was there, what I wanna know really is whether it's there as part of the anxiety or whether it's there as a bodily experience, which can be construed to be part of the anxiety or whether it seems to be inherently a part of the anxiety.
- 21:47 Russ comments: This is the penalty being paid for not answering Tristan's earlier question (see the comment at 18:47). Had we clarified things there, the 21:47 questioning would have been easier.
- 23:07 Tristan: I think it's that the anxiety feels bodily and it feels bodily because I feel it throughout my body, including in the pain that I'm feeling. [pause] Which doesn't help. Lemme, lemme try to, it's difficult because the pain is, the pain may not be in before the footlights of my, y'know, consciousness or thought process. But it's, it's more strong than simply an automatic, um, y'know, than, than simply the, my, my sensation of, of the chair or, or my body in space for example. It's, it's, there's something more prominent to it. It's, it's almost manifesting itself through the anxiety and feeling. I, I, I don't think that's concrete enough for you so.
- 24:19 RTH: So I, I wanna, I wanna be a hundred percent clear here. It, it is *not* the case that I have a theory of anxiety or a theory of bodily processing or whatever, and I'm trying to fit you into some category about that. That is *not* true. (I don't think there *are* such things actually.) So I'm, what I, what I'm trying to do is to get inside Tristan and experience the world the way Tristan does so. And help us put that into words that feel right to Tristan and feel intelligible to me, which is from my point of view, an entirely egalitarian thing. It's not like I'm the expert and I'm trying to impose an expertise. It's, uh, I do have some practice in putting things into words, but that doesn't necessarily mean that that's gonna be helpful to, to the Russ, Tristan, Amber trio.

25:28 Tristan: Mm hmm.

25:28 RTH: Maybe it will be, maybe it won't.

25:33 Tristan: I think, I think here's how, here's how I would describe it, if I were doing it. I would say, um, I am feeling bodily pain, especially in my stomach, although I am not consciously thinking about it. And then separately, I would have the component, I am experiencing anxiety, um, about such and such, and when, and this anxiety seems somehow bodily to me.

26:06 RTH: So I'm, I'm feeling before the footlights of my consciousness, bodily pain, stomach-achy pain. *And* I am feeling anxious before the footlights of my consciousness at the same time. *And* somehow it seems like the stomachach-y pain is related to the anxiety.

26:29 Tristan: Yes.

26:34 RTH: But *not* a direct manifestation of the anxiety. That is the, the stomach ache (what I'm understanding and I'm trying to figure out whether I'm understanding it correctly), the bodily stomachache is a bodily sensation, more or less in the realm of pressure on my backside, and maybe stronger than that. But, but in, in the [Tristan: Right.] bodily sensation realm.

27:04 Tristan: Right.

27:05 RTH: And the anxiety is in the feelings realm.

27:08 Tristan: Right.

27:09 RTH: And those realms are not the same thing. The realm, the feeling realm in the bodily realm are not necessarily the same thing.

27:15 Tristan: Right.

27:17 RTH: But in this particular case, it seems like the bodily realm and the feeling realm somehow overlap each other.

27:26 Tristan: Right. Yes. That seems accurate to me. Or, or are directly tied to each other in some, well, that may be seem related, they seem related.

27:50 RTH: So the distinction that I guess I'm trying to work through here is that *some* people, when they describe their anxiety, *they* would say, y'know, "I, I'm feeling, I'm feeling anxious and that *includes* a knot in my stomach."

28:08 Tristan: Hmm.

28:08 RTH: And those folks (that, the people that I have in my imagination now, which is not Tristan, but [Tristan: Right.] somebody else) would say, "it's not like I had a bodily

sensation of a knot in my stomach that existed separate from the anxiety. It's that the anxiety has *as in one of its features* a stomach knot."

28:30 Tristan: Right.

28:32 RTH: But I gather that you're saying something that's somewhat different from that.

28:35 Tristan: Right.

28:36 RTH: You're saying" the stomach knot is its own physical thing,

28:41 Tristan: Mm hmm .

28:43 RTH: ...separate from the anxiety,

28:46 Tristan: Yes.

28:47 RTH: ...but not entirely divorced from the anxiety either. The anxiety, the stomach knot applies both as a physical sensation and as a part of the anxiety.

29:00 Tristan: Yeah.

29:02 RTH: Okay. And I would point out that we've been at this for half an hour now, and that is not, I'm not being critical of this. What I'm trying to, I'm gonna demonstrate with this part of the conversation is: these things are hard. This is right to, to separate experiential aspects out in ways that seem faithful to your experience and, and also in a way that I can articulate them, or I, I can grasp, I can, I think, so that I can get in a position where I think I understand what you're saying, basically. It takes work.

29:51 Tristan: It does. Luckily a lot of the other samples are quite similar.

29:56 RTH: Quite *similar* or *simple*?

29:59 Tristan: Similar.

30:00 RTH: Okay. Well, well that maybe, maybe we should move on to the, to another one. Maybe we'll get a different, a different [Tristan: Right.] or better triangulation, which is, so we ready to move on? Amber, you ready?

30:11 AG: Yup.

30:11 Tristan: Yup.

30:11 RTH: So we're gonna move onto sample number 2, which is going to be Amber's.

30:18 AG: Yup, beep 2.

SAMPLE 5.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

30:21 Tristan: Okay. So I am articulating the words “won’t be” to myself. Um, there’s something, uh, there’s something speech-like about it, but very, but only, but vaguely. Um, I am engaged in general unsymbolized thinking about whether, um, uh, about the logistics of booking a room. Um, there are no specific words attached to that, but uh, if we wanted, there’d be something, y’know, I’m thinking about if a room will be available, when can I book with space, can I book in, et cetera. Um, I am feeling anxiety, um, at that moment is another component. And I’m also, I’m feeling pain at that moment um.

31:36 AG: Is, is that everything?

31:37 Tristan: Yeah, the pain is in the, mostly in the chest and head.

31:42 AG: Okay. Um, so I hear there’s quite a few things going on here. If we had to, for salience purposes, put numbers to it, what would we say these things are in terms of prominence in your experience?

32:03 Tristan: We’ll go with the words “won’t be” as the most prominent.

32:05 AG: Okay.

32:05 Tristan: Um, and then the room availability and anxiety are next, most prominent.

32:14 AG: Okay.

32:14 Tristan: The pain is the least prominent.

32:21 AG: Okay. So if again, now if we had to put numbers to that, would that be like, well, if my math will serve me like 60-35, like 5 or something like that? Or?

32:42 Tristan: Um, well, uh

32:44 RTH: I heard 40, 40-25-25-10.

32:44 Russ comments: Mostly I don’t care about the numbers, but I was concerned that AG’s giving a “5” to the pain (by comparison to 60) was too extreme. So RTH here was trying to de-extreme-ize the pain.

32:47 AG: Yeah, I’m not really sure yeah.

32:50 Tristan: Sure, sure. That sounds, that sounds good.

32:53 AG: Which one?

32:54 Tristan: Oh, the second. 40-25-25-10.

32:58 AG: Okay. Got it. Okay. So we'll start with the articulating the "won't be." So could you tell me a little bit more about what's going on here? I hear that I'm articulating it, it's speech-like, but it's vague? I think I'm just not really understanding what that means.

33:22 Tristan: Oh, okay. Um, it's, um, I'm articulating it to myself. Should I just leave things that I just, I'm articulating it to myself for these?

33:35 AG: Uh, well, I guess articulating could mean many different things. So what I'm trying to get a sense of is I hear that there's a speech-like quality to it, but it's vague. That's I think where I'm stuck here.

33:49 Tristan: Okay. So, um, if I'm trying to describe how I'm articulating it to myself, I would say there's something speech-like about it, something, it's more speech-like than as if I'm hearing it.

34:09 AG: Okay. So I take that to mean *more* speech-like than hearing it, but not entirely speech-like?

34:16 Tristan: Yes.

34:16 AG: Or not entirely of speaking it?

34:18 Tristan: Yes.

34:20 AG: Okay.

34:22 RTH: So is this similar to or different from the beep, first beep, where there was a speech, like of "significant event?"

34:29 Tristan: It's similar.

34:30 RTH: Exactly the same?

34:34 Tristan: Yeah.

34:36 RTH: This one, I think you said something about *vague* and you didn't necessarily use that word, but is that just?

34:42 Tristan: Oh, actually yes. There's something slightly less prominent about the speech-like quality.

34:51 AG: And is that to say that, because there's all these other things where we have a 40%, there's all the other things happening, so it's just not as like salient? Or is it something like, it's not as speech-y as?

35:06 Tristan: It's, it's not as speech-y. So I, I, I lied when I said they were the same. [laughs] It's not as speech-y.

35:17 AG: But still more speech-y than hear-y.

35:20 Tristan: Yes.

35:21 AG: Hmm. Okay.

35:24 RTH: And does less speech-y mean not as prominent? Or does it?

35:30 Tristan: Yes. It's not quite as prominent.

35:33 RTH: It's not like there's some aspect that's missing here that was there before, but, but everything is just not quite so central.

35:41 AG: Yeah.

35:45 RTH: Okay. And, and in the first be there, were there was something that you were reading, are you reading something here or?

35:54 Tristan: Yes, I am reading something.

35:57 RTH: And is that something include the words "won't be?"

36:00 Tristan: Yes.

36:04 RTH: And is "won't be" *latched onto* in the sense, same sense that "significant event" was latched on to.

36:15 Tristan: Um, yes.

36:16 RTH: And what I mean by that is it's not just that the sentence was something like, "the room won't be available until five o'clock," and the minute before or second before I would've latched on to "the room," and now I'm latching on to "won't be," and the next would, I would've latched on to "available," or whatever. But somehow I've pulled "won't be" out of it?

36:16 Russ comments: See the comment at 7:49.

36:34 Tristan: Yes.

36:45 RTH: Then I'm happy with that portion.

36:48 AG: Okay. Now let's go to the logistics of booking the room piece.

36:54 Tristan: Mm hmm.

36:55 AG: So I heard you saying that this is unsymbolized thinking, but I wanna set that aside to describe the experience, um, [Tristan: Mm hmm.] as it occurred. So I hear that there's

something going on about booking a room. How does that, how is that present to you in the moment?

36:55 Russ comments: AG does not presume that Tristan's definition / understanding of unsymbolized thinking is the same as hers or mine. Good!

But "something going on about" is ambiguous about whether it refers to a process or an experience. Being clear about that distinction is central to DES.

37:15 Tristan: Um, well I'm looking over, um, as a matter of fact, I'm looking over, um, a schedule with, um, no, actually I'm not, I'm reading at that time. [pause] So, um, I'm, I'm sorta considering my options of if things are, um, uh, I'm thinking about what space we would book if something's not available. I'm thinking about, um, if, if where we should book another room. Um, but at the moment of the beep, these things are sort of going on in my mind, but I'm not thinking about any one in particular. I'm just sort of thinking about all of this together.

38:24 AG: Okay. And are there any words present in these thoughts?

38:24 Russ comments: DES has repeatedly established that "thought" is a hugely ambiguous term. It is best simply to avoid referring to thoughts if possible. Here it would have been better had AG asked "And are there any words present at that moment?"

38:32 Tristan: No, no.

38:33 AG: No? And any images?

38:36 Tristan: No.

38:37 AG: No, okay. And, um, okay, so I take it, this is all this, what space should we get? Where should we book? And it's all just falls into the, this booking a room, booking a space. And there was one more question I had. Shoot. Oh! Is this a purely cognitive experience or an affective experience? I hear that there's an anxiety, but I take it that that's separate from this. Am I getting that right?

38:37 Russ comments: AG's question still does not adequately distinguish between directly apprehended experience and some ongoing but not experienced process.

39:14 Tristan: Well, the anxiety is, is about what I'm gonna, whether I'm gonna book a room or not.

39:28 AG: So I guess what I'm trying to figure out is like this process as it's described [Tristan: Mm hmm.] sounds very cognitive-analytical, but I don't wanna exclude the possibility that this, that there's some type of affective-y thing to it or feeling thing to this. And I don't wanna talk you in or out of it. I just wanna make sure that I'm fully leaving that possibility open for us, if that may be the case or if not.

39:28 Russ comments: AG's question still does not adequately distinguish between directly apprehended experience and some ongoing but not experienced process.

40:02 Tristan: Right. Um, I think, um, I'm, I think I'm generally feeling anxiety throughout the whole flow of thoughts that I'm feeling.

40:02 Russ comments: The penalty that is paid by AG's ambiguity about process vs. experience is that Tristan responds ambiguously: "generally feeling anxiety throughout" may (probably does) refer to process rather than experience.

40:12 AG: Mm hmm.

40:13 Tristan: Um, and in this particular moment, the anxiety and the thinking about the booking a room, room are related.

40:25 AG: Related but separable?

40:29 Tristan: Um.

40:41 AG: Or not?

40:47 Tristan: Um.

40:51 RTH: So lemme, lemme see whether I can ask question, which I think Amber's is a good question, but let, lemme ask a little bit of a different way.

40:57 AG: Cool.

40:57 RTH: So does it seem like I have a thought process going on which involves a bunch of stuff about whether I should book this, whether I should, what, what it would do, should I book two rooms, whatever all that stuff could be said to be cognitive. [Tristan: Hmm.] And at the same time in parallel there is an anxiety about this whole thing? Or does it seem like there's sort of a swirly mix mixing together of should I buy this? Should I, should I order this? And at the same time as I feel anxiety, this just seems like one thing about which I could say, well, there's a anxiety component and there's a cognitive analytical kind of component. Or doesn't that question even make sense?

40:57 Russ comments: RTH's question (like AG's before it) still does not adequately distinguish between directly apprehended experience and some ongoing but not experienced process.

41:51 Tristan: Um, it's hard for me to disentangle the anxiety from the, from the booking a room. So I think, I think they're all wrapped up into one [RTH: Okay.] in that moment.

42:07 RTH: Okay. So I am anxiously thinking about, you might say, I'm anxiously considering the al, alternatives. Is that right? Or I'm with anxiety, considering the alternative? That seems like the sorta the same thing to me.

42:35 Tristan: [pause] Um, yes.

42:41 RTH: [pause] Mm hmm. So I'm good about that aspect, I think.

42:41 Russ comments: For the reasons I have described and others, I think the interviewing about this aspect was not of high quality.

42:56 AG: Okay. Now, um, I'll move into the pain in the chesty head or the chest/head pain going on. Um, I guess is this.... So I hear that this is the least bit of the experience, 10% [Tristan: Mm hmm.] if even, um, so how is that present?

43:36 Tristan: Hmm. [long pause] Um, that's present in mostly a bodily way. And I'm not consciously thinking about the pain, but it's, um, but I'm still noticing a, a strong pain, um, or I'm, I'm feeling a strong pain in my chest and in my head.

44:32 AG: And I'm, I'm noticing that at the moment of the beep?

44:38 Tristan: Um, well, I would say I'm *feeling* it at the moment of the, the beep.

44:43 AG: Okay. And directly, directly present?

44:47 Tristan: Yes.

44:49 AG: Okay. And this pain I take it is like a separable ongoing sensation. Like I feel pain, I feel pain, I feel pain, I feel pain, I feel pain, and the beep comes and I'm still feeling the pain.

45:10 Tristan: Yes.

45:10 AG: Okay. And um, unlike the other beep, like beep one we had, the pain was tied to the anxiety, but here I'm understanding that the pain is separate from this. I'm, I'm anxiously thinking rather than a pain anxiety. Am I getting that right?

45:45 RTH: Lemme ask that same question without, with a little less leadingness to it.

45:49 AG: Okay.

45:49 RTH: So the question that Amber is want, wants to know here is: does this chest pain seem part of the anxiety? Or does it seem like a, its own bodily pain?

46:04 Tristan: Um, I think for the purposes of description it's its own bodily pain.

46:08 RTH: And that makes it somewhat different than, from the stomach sensation of the previous beep.

46:16 Tristan: Um, no, it's like the previous beep. They seem oh, oh, they do seem related. I think that's what we ended up on. We, we ended up saying that I'm feeling pain and it somehow seems related.

46:26 RTH: Right.

46:26 Tristan: Yeah.

46:29 RTH: That was beep 1. So beep 2, are we saying that the chest and, and headache don't seem related or do they seem?

46:40 Tristan: Um, they do, they do seem related.

46:43 RTH: Okay. So it is the same as beep 1?

46:47 Tristan: Right, yes.

46:47 RTH: Different part of the body, but.

46:50 Tristan: Right.

46:51 RTH: Okay. And what I understand about *both* of those is that I'm directly apprehending the, what you guess could call the bodily sens, sensation aspects of this[Tristan: Hmm.] first beep it was stomach and the second beep was chest and head. But somehow those also seem like they're in the *feeling* realm or they're significant for the feeling realm.

47:16 Tristan: Right.

47:17 RTH: The, the affective realm.

47:18 Tristan: Yeah.

47:21 RTH: Okay. And then the, the chest and head pain, is that one pain in the head and the chest or do I have a chest pain and a head pain?

47:31 Tristan: Um, it doesn't make sense for me to distinguish between the two.

47:39 RTH: Because I can't remember or because it seems like they're the same thing.

47:44 Tristan: Well, it seems like I, I have pain cuz I have pain in other parts of my body. I have pain. As a matter of fact, you would ask me to say I, I would say I have pain in the, the chest, the back, the fingers, the, the head and the, the, y'know, and the neck leading up to the head. So it all seems like the, the same pain. Um, but where I'm feeling it most prominently at the moment of the beep is in the chest and the head.

48:16 RTH: So does that mean that I understand my body to have pain more or less throughout the body or much of the body, [Tristan: Mm hmm.] but at the moment of the beep, I am most directly apprehending the chest and head aspect of it.

48:32 Tristan: Yeah.

48:39 RTH: [coughs] Excuse me. So does that mean that I am directly apprehending the rest of those pains, but just not as strongly? Or does that mean I'm not apprehending them

at all, but I understand them to be ongoing even though at this moment I'm not apprehending them?

49:00 Tristan: Uh, at the moment of, of the beep, I'm not apprehending them.

49:03 RTH: Okay. So at the moment of the beep, I am apprehending a chest and head pain, which I understand to be a portion of the rest of the body pain, but the rest of the body pain isn't directly apprehended?

49:16 Tristan: Yup.

49:16 Tristan: *And* I apprehend the chest and head pain and maybe the rest of the body, we haven't talked about that as being part of the anxiety.

49:30 Tristan: Um, or not as being *part*, as being *related* to the anxiety, [pause] because I think it's just as, just as much that the pain is sort of feeding into the anxiety, as in the anxiety is the cause of the pain.

50:05 RTH: So does the, does the, in this beep, does the chest and head pain seem to be a part of the anxiety? Or does it seem to be related in some way to the anxiety?

50:18 Tristan: Seems to be related in some way.

50:25 RTH: Okay. And I guess that is what we said about the first beep, that the [Tristan: Yeah.] stomach, the stomach knot was somehow part, somehow related to it, but we haven't figured out what that is. Alright. I'm good.

50:47 AG: Um, me too.

50:47 RTH: I would say let's go on to beep number 3.

SAMPLE 5.3 DISCUSSIONS STARTS HERE

50:52 Tristan: Okay. So this beep seems to be *not* similar. I am reading the words "just in case." Uh, and I am, uh, [pause] and I am articulating those words to myself. Um, and I am feeling anxiety about, uh, and that anxiety is, I'm also, that anxiety is part of thinking about things going wrong, um, and about scheduling things. Um, so I'm thinking about those things, but my thought is unsymbolized, not in words or language.

51:58 RTH: Okay. So I am gathering that what you're calling *unsymbolized* means there is a bunch of non-articulated cognitive aspects.

52:18 Tristan: Yeah.

52:19 RTH: Is that right?

52:21 Tristan: Yeah.

52:23 RTH: Okay. And are those directly present at the moment of this beep? So I'm feeling anxious *and* there are a bunch of cognitive [inaudible]?

52:36 Tristan: Yes.

52:37 RTH: Okay. Okay. And so lemme go back to the, the, I'm reading "just in case,"

52:51 Tristan: Mm hmm.

52:54 RTH: And, and is that part of a, a longer text? The beep happens to catch me...?

53:01 Tristan: Uh, yeah, that's part of a longer text that I've picked out those specific words.

53:05 RTH: Okay. And is, do those specific words "just in case" seem latched onto in the sense that we have used that term sort of as a technical term for about your experience? That, that it's *not* just that I am attending to the stream of words that are going by, but somehow I am actively extracting just these words out of the mix?

53:29 Tristan: Yeah, that's correct.

53:29 Russ comments: RTH has been trying to lead the distinction between the two options described in the comment at 7:49. They seem to be agreeing that the experience is as described in the lower panel of the 7:49 figure.

53:31 RTH: Okay. And I think you said you were articulating them to yourself. Is that what we've been calling, I guess speech-like?

53:49 Tristan: There's the speech-like qualities are less prominent here.

53:57 RTH: So the latching is equally prominent, but the speech-like aspects is less prominent?

54:03 Tristan: Yes.

54:10 RTH: Okay. Okay. And then there's anxiety.

54:16 Tristan: Mm hmm.

54:17 RTH: And tell me about that. How does the anxiety present itself to you?

54:23 Tristan: The anxiety is, um, it seems somehow bodily.

54:35 RTH: In what way?

54:41 Tristan: Well, no, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not directly apprehending my pain at that moment.

54:51 RTH: So my anxiety seems bodily, but it does not involve the pain, which I understand to be sort of omnipresently there, but I'm not experiencing it at this particular moment?

55:05 Tristan: Right.

55:06 RTH: Okay. And so, and so what does it mean to say that the, "I experienced the anxiety as being bodily"? And I'm not doubting you, I just, I'm just trying to understand.

55:23 Tristan: I think we can just say I'm feeling anxiety. Just keep it more simple.

55:31 RTH: Okay. And what I would say about *that* is that some people experience anxiety and they can say, well, y'know, my theory tells me it's gotta be bodily, but I don't actually feel it in my body [Tristan: Hmm.], but I'm feeling it. There's no question about it. I'm feeling anxiety, but I, it doesn't have any specific bodily manifestations at this moment, but it must be bodily cuz all anxiety's gotta be bodily. That's one, one way of thinking. And then other people would say, well, I feel it in my body. And they can specifically say, well, it's in my chest or my stomach or whatever. So....

56:07 Tristan: If, if you asked me to pinpoint at that moment what the, what the anxiety, how it felt like I would talk about my body I guess, but I'm not, yeah. So I guess it does feel bodily and related to the pain I'm feeling in that way.

56:29 RTH: Bodily. Bodily. Did you say bodily *and* related to the pain I'm feeling or bodily and *unrelated* to the pain?

56:35 Tristan: And related to the pain.

56:36 RTH: Related to?

56:38 Tristan: Yeah.

56:44 RTH: But we started out by saying that the pain was not directly apprehended.

56:49 Tristan: That's true, um,

56:51 RTH: And I'm not, I'm not, I'm not being at the slightest bit critical here. I'm trying to understand why it is that we would use *why*, why we would say these things. I'm not even trying to understand *why*. I'm just trying to clarify what we mean by that.

57:07 Tristan: Right. Um.

57:11 RTH: So one way of understanding would be, I think, I think (*Tristan* thinks) that all feeling has to be bodily. Therefore it must be in this bodily pain realm. Or it could be that there's some faint presentation of bodiliness to my anxiety. And other people would say, well, y'know, I, there's, I'm, I'm totally feeling anxiety, there's no question about tha, but I don't feel any an even faint bodily aspect of it. Obviously it's taking place in my body, but I don't feel it. That'd be fine too.

57:59 Tristan: I would say I am, uh, also feeling the bodily pain, but it's very, the aspect that's presenting it to myself is fairly slight.

58:08 RTH: Mm hmm.

58:10 Tristan: And the aspect that's presenting this, the anxiety is fairly strong.

58:18 RTH: Not sure I understood that. The, so the anxiety is fairly strong, but the bodily aspect of it is *not* strong. Is that, what, is that what you said?

58:28 Tristan: Um, well, the anxiety is, is more present to my consciousness.

58:39 RTH: The anxiety as a feeling separate from any particular bodily manifestation.

58:47 Tristan: Um, yes.

58:59 RTH: Okay. Okay. And, uh, I think I'm good. And we are at, we're at an hour and I'm thinking we've been working pretty hard. We should, assuming we wanna do this again, we should do it again, but rather, rather than go on to another beep at this moment. Yeah.

59:13 Tristan: Yeah. I agree.

59:15 RTH: *And*, and I would say I, I appreciate the struggle. The, the, I, I think it is a struggle.

59:23 Tristan: Yeah.

59:24 RTH: I think it's a *worthwhile* struggle, but that doesn't make it any less a struggle.

59:29 Tristan: Yeah.

59:29 RTH: And, uh, and word, the what makes it, what makes thing, what makes DES a struggle is that words in general seem like they have edges in categories. Like, this is a word that means this, and that's a word that means that, and that's a word that means that, that's a word means that.

59:42 Tristan: Right.

59:42 RTH: But, but I don't think that's actually true even in regular everyday word. But it's, but it's problematic, most problematic, and maybe about inner speech [he misspeaks here; he intended "inner experience."]. So we, we've gotta work at it. And, uh.

59:56 Tristan: It's hard to get at the ineffable, but.

1:00:00 RTH: I'm not, I'm not sure. I'm not sure I would go with "ineffable," but I, the, I think it's, I think it is fair to say that a lot of experience does *not* easily divide itself along linguistic lines. Let's put it that way.

1:00:15 Tristan: Right. Right.

1:00:15 RTH: And that doesn't make it *ineffable* necessarily, *might* be, but it makes it hard to describe.

1:00:21 Tristan: Right.

1:00:23 RTH: So when should we do this again?

[They match calendars]

1:01:06 RTH: Okay. That sounds good to me.

1:01:12 Tristan: That's perfect.

1:01:16 RTH: Alright. Thank you all very much.

1:01:17 AG: Thank you.

1:01:18 RTH: I think, I think we're, I think we're doing what we need to be doing. I think it's difficult, interesting.

1:01:25 Tristan: Excellent.

1:01:25 RTH: Challenging, unsatisfying, satisfying, all that stuff. That's, so that's what makes it interesting.

1:01:32 Tristan: We're moving along.

1:01:32 RTH: Yeah.

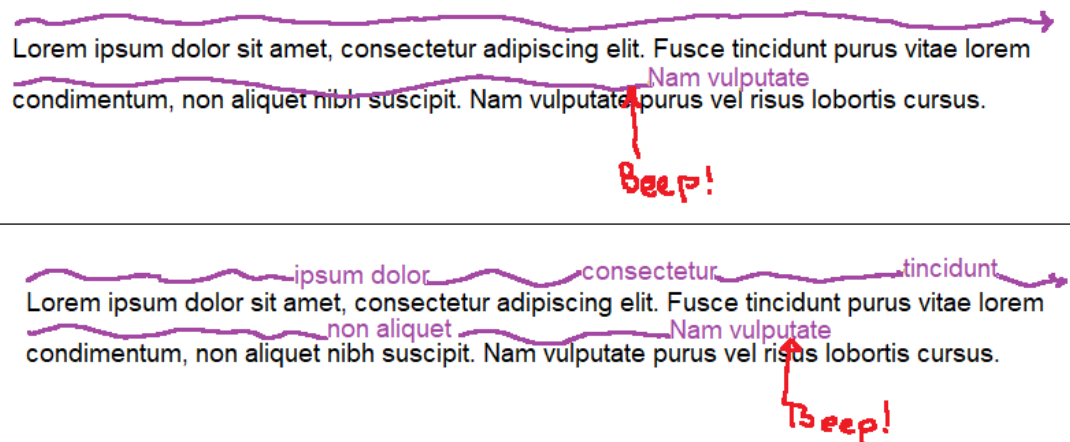
1:01:32 Tristan: Thanks.

1:01:35 RTH: Alright. Thank you very much.

A few days after sampling day 5 (and before day 6), Russ wrote to Tristan:

Hi Tristan—

We have had several conversations (e.g., samples 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 4.1, 3.2) where we have been discussing your experience of reading. The question has been whether your experience of reading is more like the top panel or the bottom panel of this figure, where what you are reading is schematized in black and your experience is schematized in purple:



The upper panel schematizes that your experience is something like smoothly riding along what you're reading until the beep occurs, at which time you try to "freeze" what you are experiencing, and in doing so you pull out "Nam vulputate."

The lower panel schematizes that as you naturally ("pristinely") read, you latch onto a phrase ("ipsum dolor") and then latch onto another phrase ("consectetur"), and then latch onto another phrase ("tincidunt"), and so on: that your reading is naturally experienced as a series of latching-ontos, and the beep happens to occur at the latching onto "Nam vulputate."

The two panels intend to schematize two very different experiences: in the upper panel, reading is experienced as a naturally receptive smooth influx of meaning; in the lower panel, reading is experienced as an actively generated saltatory series of fairly arbitrarily created word blocks.

Teasing apart those two possibilities is difficult, because (a) language is imprecise: in both cases you can legitimately report "At the moment of the beep I was reading the words 'Nam vulputate'." Furthermore, (b) presuppositions about reading abound. And further-furthermore, (c) the experience that is directly apprehended may not at all be related to the neural processing and/or meaning-making that goes on outside of Tristan's pristine (directly apprehended) inner experience.

The questions I am asking now are: (1) Do you understand the distinction that I am making here to be the same distinction that I was making in the DES interviews? (2) In the interviews, did you intend to be saying that your experience was more adequately characterized by the lower panel than the upper panel? (3) And if so, does the figure's lower panel seem adequately to characterize your experience (perhaps you could improve this figure)? If not, do you have a better characterization?

A few days later, Tristan responded by email:

"This is about how I understood it in our discussions, I would say I am option 2 (lower panel)."