

**Transcript for Interview 4 (Chapter 7) of**  
***Describing Inner Experience?***  
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Text printed in black appears word for word in both the interviews and in the book. Text printed in gray occurred in the interviews, but was deleted from the book for the reasons of economy of space. Text printed in green did not appear in the original interviews but was added for intelligibility.

**Discussion between Russ, Eric, and Melanie before first beep**  
[\[The audio is available at \[http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner\\\_experience\]\(http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner\_experience\)\]](http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience)

Melanie: ...I turned it [the beeper] back on again and it didn't work – I didn't hear anything. And I kept trying on and off the rest of the night and it stopped working, so I only got four different samples, and I have to admit I didn't try again this morning, but I'm a little concerned.

Russ: Well, why don't we look at the four samples. We don't need to have Eric wasting his nickel while I'm diagnosing the beeper here, so let's look at the four samples, which is probably enough. We haven't gotten to talk about six samples yet, I don't think, and....

Melanie: Okay.

Eric: Right, we're kind of long winded. [laughs; Melanie laughs]

Russ: And I would also say, Eric, and this is the other conversation that we need to have, and that is that last time I went high-tech but not... but not redundant in the recording of this conversation, and lost it.

Eric: Uh!

Russ: I recorded it on a digital tape recorder, and when a digital tape recorder goes bad it goes bad.

Eric: Right.

Russ: It doesn't degrade, it disappears.

Eric: Right.

Russ: So it's disappeared. So today I'm low tech, back into my hand-held cassette recorder, and hopefully that will be alright. Low tech but not redundant as well.

[1:00]

Eric: Okay, alright.

Russ: But what that does mean is that I... whatever we might have said explicitly last time is gone except in our recollections.

Eric: Right. Yeah, we had a fairly long discussion about the awareness...

Russ: Right, meta-awareness and whether...

Eric: Right.

Russ: whether... and the terminology of exp... awareness and experience. And I was sorry to have lost that because I wanted to go back and listen to exactly what it was that you said, but it doesn't matter because it's gone.

Eric: Right. Okay.

Russ: So, are we ready to go for beep 1?

Melanie: Sure.

#### **Beep 4.1**

[The audio is available at [http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner\\_experience](http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience)]

Russ: Beep 1.

Melanie: Okay. I was having a conversation with my boyfriend over dinner regarding extreme sports, and

Eric: I'm sorry, what?

Melanie: Extreme sports. I'm kind of... sports in general. I'm a really big scuba diver – it's one of my main hobbies and I absolutely adore doing it. And right at the... before the beep went off, my boyfriend was saying something about how there are some sports that you can play them in a rough and difficult way, but they don't wind up being life threatening, while there are other sports that you can play them or do them in a life-threatening manner. And so right at the moment of the beep, I was thinking about the

comparison...well, just the notion of scuba diving and the possibility of **its** being life threatening. And what I was feeling was just this intense yearning and desire to go diving, because I miss it and I love it so much, and as well as this feeling of being in the water, you know, where you're kind of bobbing at the top or the surface of the lake or the ocean or something like that and you can feel the wave pick you up and drop you down, pick you up and drop you down.

[1:00]

Russ: So is that like two different sensations, there's the yearning to go and ....

Melanie: One's very emotional, and one's more physical.

Russ: Okay. And are those... is one of those more central to your experience or awareness or whatever it is that we want to call that? Or are they sort of equal? Or....

Melanie: They're pretty much equal.

Russ: Okay, then let's start with one of them, and when we get done with that we'll move to the other one. So the emotional part. What...

Melanie: Just this desire to go, like this craving to go diving.

Russ: And what's that like?

Melanie: I just... I feel it pretty much all over. It's just... It's really difficult to describe, because it doesn't feel like there's a location. It's just this incredible want, and... just to have the experience of going diving and going through the motions. I guess I...I can't pinpoint it to a location.

[2:00]

Russ: And is this a bodily thing – can you pinpoint it to your body? Or is it outside your body as well? Or in your head as well? Or...?

Melanie: It's in my head as well.

Russ: And in the room as well? Or...?

Melanie: No. It seems located just... It's in me, but I... there's... it doesn't feel localized in any **a** particular place. Like when I was worrying [Beep 3.2] I said I could feel it especially behind my eyes and around my brow. This isn't like that. This is all-encompassing.

Russ: Okay. And when you say it's in your head as well as in your body, is it in your head in the same way as it is in the rest of your body? Or are you meaning to say that there was some more cognitive or mental or whatever aspect to it that's in your head?

Melanie: Probably more cognitive I would think, because I knew what it was that I was feeling. [See Box 7.1 for concerns about this answer.]

Russ: Okay. Then the feeling part, the bodily part, it's all over in your body, and it's hard to describe – I'm totally in agreement with that. But can we do somewhat more... be somewhat more descriptive? Is it like a pressure, pain, heat feeling? A twisting, turning...?

[3:00]

Melanie: I guess twisting is actually pretty good. It kind of feels like just my entire body is being really twisted, in a way, kind of tense, with this craving. [See Box 7.2 for a note on subjunctifiers.]

Russ: And when you said... when I said, and you bought into “twisting” as the alternative, and you sort of twisted with your hands, is this like one twist, like somebody has grabbed your ankles and turned you one way and grabbed your shoulders and turned the other...

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...as opposed to a whole series of little twists?

Melanie: Yeah, it's not like the feeling, you know, when your esophagus is clumping down or anything like that, but it's just one general twist in your entire body.

Russ: And when we're talking about “one general twist of your entire body,” is that like a metaphor? Or does it actually feel sort of like your body is twisted physically?

Melanie: Probably more of a metaphor to explain the kind of tension that I feel.

[4:00]

Russ: So there's a tension, and to say that your body is tense, that would not be metaphorical...

Melanie: No.

Russ: ...you're actually experiencing a tension in your body.

Melanie: Yes, definitely.

Russ: And... But that tension is not...it doesn't feel twisty in the sense that your feet are going to the right and your shoulders are going to the left, or clockwise and counterclockwise...

Melanie: No. But there's that kind of feeling all wrapped up about something and tense about something is there.

Russ: Okay. And, and is there any other way to describe the tension? From the inside out or from the outside in, or... [See Box 7.3 for discussion of whether Russ is creating too much pressure to be specific here.]

Melanie: Yes. Inside out, in a way, almost feels like trying to...like there's something inside me trying to reach out for something.

Russ: And you're aiming forward with your hand...

Melanie: Yes. It would be out, away from my body. And it would be in a forwards direction, not backwards, not out to the side. It felt very forward.

Russ: So like your body is going forward.

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: And you're indicating it from your chest, sort of, but...

[5:00]

Melanie: It was more all over, you know, even like the knees... my knees and my toes and everything like that.

Russ: Okay. So like your whole body is trying to, trying to go forward. It feels like it's going forward.

Melanie: Yeah, reaching out.

Russ: And is that a metaphorical thing like the twisting thing, or is that more...

Melanie: No. That's more it.

Russ: So this is more descriptive of what the sensation actually feels like...

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...and the twisting is more...

Melanie: A metaphor.

Russ: ...a way of trying to describe the degree of tension, or something like that.

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: Eric, do you want to ask more about that, or shall I press on to the other half of it?

Eric: [laughs] Boy, it's so hard to know what to make of all this. It's such a funny description. I'm not saying that, I mean...

Russ: What's funny about it? And we're not taking it personally or critically or whatever, but what is it about it that you find hard or funny or whatever?

[6:00]

Eric: Hm. It's... I guess it feels to me like... I guess my inclination is to read it as pretty metaphorical, even that stuff that **what** Melanie is saying is less metaphorical. Umm. Like your toes reaching forward, and...I don't know, I guess....

Russ: She didn't actually say that her toes were reaching forward. [Russ is mistaken about that.] What she was that it's over her whole body and her chest and as far down as her knees were reaching forward. So I'm not.... I'm not saying that she denied that her toes were reaching forward, but I don't think she actually said that.

Eric: I thought I heard toes, but I could be....

Russ: Knees, I think she said.

Eric: Okay. I don't know, it's just....

Russ: And if you take the whole thing as being metaphorical, what do you make of Melanie's seemingly confident distinction between twisting as being metaphorical and reaching forward as being not metaphorical?

[7:00]

Eric: You know I'm not sure what to make of it. I, uh, yeah, I don't know. I'm not sure what to make of all that. [See Box 7.4 for a discussion of whether people are mostly alike.]

Russ: Okay. Well, I've got more experience in asking these kinds of questions and hearing these kinds of responses than you do. What I would say is that when somebody reports feelings, it's very often very or moderately difficult to describe what the feeling feels like...

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...and so Melanie has been that way just about all the time. She knows what she's feeling but it's sort of hard to say.... "Well, yeah, there's something behind my eyes but it's not just behind my eyes...." That kind of a deal...

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...so this is not at all unusual. This is the way descriptions of feelings are. My own sense of the metaphoricality of the, of the expression, is that probably all feeling

descriptions are metaphorical. In fact, probably all descriptions are metaphorical. So it's not like we have two categories here, metaphorical and not metaphorical.

[8:00]

Eric: What do you mean by all descriptions are metaphorical? You mean even non-feeling ones?

Russ: Yeah. Like "that stop sign is red." Well, you know, that's pretty non metaphorical, but what do you really mean by red – there's some imprecision in there which is metaphorical at its lowest level, at its least metaphorical level.

Eric: Uh huh.

Russ: But it's not...we're never reporting, you know, neurons that are recognizing red, or whatever. We're always trying to do the best we can to say something about our experience of something.

Eric: Right. Yeah.

Russ: And so I think our words are always more or less tightly – which also implies more or less loosely – attached to the experience that we're trying to report.

[9:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: And what we call metaphor is when we get at the looser end of that spectrum.

Eric: Right. Yeah. I guess it feels to me like some of it is so loose it's hard to know how much to put on it or how much credence to give it or what to make of it.

Russ: Well, I'm with you there. **But** let's be concrete with **Melanie** here, who is saying it's like her body is reaching forwards. And that is a description of the sensations in her body, not a metaphor. So a metaphor...A metaphor could use exactly the same words. She could say, "It's like my whole body is reaching forward." What that really means is "I want something and I want it bad, and I'm trying to convey to you that I want it bad and I'm using these words that don't have anything to do with the experience. It's like my whole body wants it."

[10:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: **But** that, I think, is what she's not trying to say here. What she is trying to say is that there's something about her body that leads her to say in as descriptive a way as she can say, "my body is reaching forward."

Melanie: [nods].

Eric: Right.

Russ: She has assented to all of that.

Eric: [laughs] Yeah. How much, how much of this did you note at the time that you were making your notes after the beep versus..., Melanie? And how much of this is stuff – phrases or words – that you’re only generating now?

Melanie: Umm, most of it I’m probably generating now. [See Box 7.5 for a concern about this.]

Eric: And are you generating it, do you think, on the basis of a sharp memory of the emotional experience? Or are you kind of recreating the emotional experience now and then kind of observing it now as you’re reporting? How would you describe that process?

[11:00]

Melanie: Remembering the way it feels like. Because the way I took my notes was to engage my memory to think about the experience...

Eric: Uh huh.

Melanie: ..and I guess the way I’m trying to do that is to put myself...to remember the exact situation and exactly how it felt.

Eric: Right, although it’s interesting that you... that there’s an incomplete sentence there, which is “you put yourself...” You might say that there are two ways of remembering. One is a kind of abstract remembering that doesn’t involve kind of imaginatively putting yourself back in the situation you were previously in, and the other involves kind of putting yourself in the situation in imagination, and then kind of provoking some of the old reactions. Like I remember at one point when we were talking about an image, when you... you said something like that you were reconstructing the image now as you spoke to us about it [see Beep 2.1; Box 5.4].

[12:00]

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: That’s a kind of way of remembering by actually doing something now that you know to be similar to what happened in the past, and then reporting on what’s going on now.

Melanie: That’s not what I’m doing now.

Eric: That’s not what you’re doing in this case.

Melanie: Unh uh [no].

Russ: So if I'm understanding your description... your distinction here, Eric, it would be something like, we could say to Melanie, "Melanie, let's imagine... why don't you imagine that you were really wanting to go scuba diving, and then report what that's like." That would be a reconstruction that would be sort of in parallel to this experience. [13:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: And then the other thing is, "Melanie, can you remember what was happening at the moment of the beep at 8:57 last night (or whenever it was)?"

Eric: Right.

Russ: And when somebody responds to the beep, it's possible that they can sort of adopt that first strategy, even though I didn't ask them to do that.

Eric: Right.

Russ: But the fact of the matter is that I specifically asked them not to do that.

Eric: Right.

Russ: Whether or not they actually do that is another deal, but...

Eric: Right. And I'm kind of inclined to think that memory is often partly reconstruction, even when one is not aware that one is doing that. [See Box 7.6 on recalling and reconstructing.]

Russ: And I'm totally in agreement with that.

Eric: Right. So...

Russ: And I'm totally in sympathy with the position that Melanie this morning in saying what it is that she has said has probably misrepresented some detail of this experience. So for example when she says it goes all the way down to her knees, maybe it really only got all the way down to her thighs or something like that, because she's to some degree recreating that experience. [14:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: But I think what the method... what we try to do in the method is to minimize that. I don't think we wipe it out altogether, but.... I think we are successful in reducing that,

by comparison to almost all psychological methods, and perhaps philosophical methods for that matter.

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: But it's not black and white, it's 20% or 60% or 94% or...

Eric: Right. I wonder to what extent prodding subjects to try to characterize the emotion in these kinds of ways is creating a kind of demand that.... You know, the subject's gotta say something! You present a long list and they've gotta choose something. And that's kind of creating an artifact of some sort. I'm not saying that's all that's going on.

[15:00]

Russ: Well, and I'm thinking that that goes on. How much that goes on I think is an interesting and possibly explorable question.

Eric: Right.

Russ: I did, I think, a pretty good job of conveying to Melanie when I asked that question a little bit ago that it would have been okay for her to have said – to have denied the answer that you said she that couldn't deny, "Well, it's none of those things." I think that she... If it hadn't been any of those things, she would have felt free to say it's none of those things. And, if she picks one of them, so for example, she picked "twisting," when I presented the list she went for "twisting," I undermined her answer of "twisting," which is part of my technique: "Do you really mean twisting as an experience or did you mean that as a metaphor?"

[16:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: So I believe that I'm sensitive to that distinction, and I believe I work towards minimizing that distinction. I don't believe that I wipe it out altogether, but I think I do a lot better job of minimizing it than most psychological investigators.

Eric: I guess I'm inclined to wonder about whether Melanie didn't at the time of the...that the time she was recalling the experience at the moment, that if she didn't think particularly about whether it was kind of twisty, or pay attention to what parts of her body were occupied or whatever – if she didn't kind of flag it at the time – then I'm not sure I entirely trust her memory of the experience. It seems to me that this kind of... these kinds of aspects of one's experience kind of evaporate pretty quickly if you don't specifically note and label them in particular ways as soon as they've happened. That's part of the concern, also.

[17:00]

Russ: Well, it seems to me there's two possibilities there, and the question is, What is it that evaporates? I'm quite sure that we have trained Melanie to pay attention to her

emotional experience (among other kinds of experiences) in ways which she hadn't done before we embarked on this endeavor. So I think she does now at the moment of the beep pay more careful attention to her emotional experience than she did before.

[18:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: But whether she... whether that paying attention goes into the ... What I gathered from your comment is that we must have turned up some categories here – well, there's the physicality and the twisting and the whatever – so that the paying attention is somehow “Procrusteanized” into those categories as opposed to just remembering the experience and then having that experience more or less available at the moment of this conversation the next day.

Eric: Right. I guess I don't mean to be saying that we've imposed particular categories on it. I guess my concern is that the memory may be so indistinct and the demand to kind of create some specific description sufficiently high that it invites a kind of invention.

[19:00]

Russ: Well, I think that's true of almost all psychological investigations, but I don't think it's true of me. And I don't... And I'm not trying to be, what's the word here, megalomaniacal or whatever, but I think most psychological investigators don't take that distinction seriously. And then they ask questions which are... for which they expect to get answers. They'll say things like, “Well, what was your image at that time?” not knowing whether there was an image or not. And when they ask a question like that, that does have a big demand to it, and subjects will say, “Well, I was imaging whatever.”

[20:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: But I think it is possible, and I think I do it moderately or better well, to say, “I'm interested in what your experience was, whatever it was, including nothing, and including ‘Well I don't really know’ and including ‘it was so fuzzy that I can't really tell you about it.’ I'm happy to get any of those responses. And if there was an image, then tell me about an image. And if there was a feeling, then tell me about a feeling. And if there was words, then tell me about words. And if there were none of those things, then tell me about none of those things.” And I think that's essential to good investigation. I think psychology, and I hesitate to criticize philosophy because I don't know that much about it, but I think most investigation doesn't take that seriously enough.

[21:00]

Eric: Right. But there's also... there's one kind **type** of answer that you haven't particularly laid space for, and that I haven't heard Melanie say. I don't know if she said it at all, or certainly not very much. That kind of answer is, “I can't remember it to that level of detail.” But you would think that there would be.... If you're not reporting on a reconstruction of the experience, then... and especially if you took only pretty sketchy

notes at the time, **you'd think** that there would be a level of detail that it would be kind of... the memory would have a kind of crudeness or approximation to it **you wouldn't get**. You wouldn't be able to remember all the details exactly right. So then an accurate report would involve recognizing that you didn't remember one thing or another, and an inaccurate report might involve filling in some aspect of the experience that you don't actually actively, accurately remember.

[22:00]

Russ: Yeah. [to Melanie] Would you feel comfortable in saying, "I don't remember?"

Melanie: Yes. In fact I think I have.

Russ: I think you have too, actually. [See Box 7.7 for a discussion of whether Melanie admits ignorance.]

Melanie: Especially **in on** the second session **day** when I had a lot of mental images [Beeps 2.1 and 2.2]. I remember there were a couple times, and I think it was mainly you, Eric, who were asking the questions, when I several times said I wasn't sure, or I didn't know. Oh! For example, when I had that scene in that book in my head, when there were people standing on a road talking, and one of the characters was dressed in an army uniform...

Eric: Right.

Melanie: ...but I couldn't tell you what shoes he was wearing.

Eric: Right.

Melanie: And I remember saying I didn't remember or I didn't see that.

Eric: Right. But there's a difference between those two. And maybe you did say you don't remember for some things – I don't want to say you didn't [laughs] say it ever. But there certainly is a difference between saying that, "I don't remember whether I saw, or had an image of, one particular shoe or another," and "I remember that the image did not specify what type of shoe he was wearing." [See Box 7.8 for discussion of this point.]

[23:00]

Russ: Yeah. I think it's part of my expectation that not remembering is okay, and I think I convey that to people that I work with. And I think, maybe not perfectly, but I think I convey that pretty well. You may have a different **version about view of** that, Eric, but I think there's the implication by the hesitancy of the way I ask questions, if nothing else, that "I don't remember" is okay.

[24:00]

Eric: Yeah. [But see Box 7.3 for a concern.]

Russ: But The fact of the matter is, I think Melanie does not remember some things, and fills in the blanks “on the fly” as we talk. I think that’s the way it is. And I don’t believe Melanie can possibly have access to that, and I... because that would require her having a veridical recollection of the scene and being... comparing **the two recollections** [Eric laughs], which I think is just not possible. So I think that Melanie is doing the best that she can, and I think that she’s less than perfect, and if she is perfect then she’ll be walking across the fountain on the way out of here. But I doubt that she is.

Eric: [laughs] Right.

Russ: So it’s a matter, I think, of keeping the imperfections at a manageable level, and so I... by “manageable” I mean a minimal level. So I think Melanie, for example, when she says, “My whole body is reaching forward,” well, the fact of the matter is that at that particular moment it probably wasn’t her whole body. Maybe there was a quarter of a square inch on her left hipbone that wasn’t going forwards, or something. And so to say “My whole body was yearning forwards” is an oversimplification of the fact **of her experience**. But from my point of view, everything we ever say about anything is an oversimplification of the fact, and the object is to have it be a non-substantially-misleading oversimplification of the fact.

[25:00]

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: In fact, it would probably be more accurate for Melanie to say, “My whole body was leaning forward” than it would be her to say, “My whole body was leaning forward except for this square... quarter of a square inch **centimeter** on my left hip which I wasn’t really noticing at the time” because that wasn’t what she was doing at the moment. It wasn’t like she was putting a sheet of graph paper over her body and counting off the square centimeters that were leaning forward or going forward. She was into the scuba thing. and....[See Box 7.9 for Russ’s elaboration of these ways of speaking]

[26:00]

Eric: Uh huh.

Russ: And so if the... I think we’re in total agreement that Melanie’s reports are less than perfect. We might be in some disagreement about [the extent of the imperfection] – I might give her somewhat more credit as being mostly on the target than you do. I’m not 100% sure about that.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And it would surprise me, for example, if at the moment of the beep if it would be... if it would be possible in some alternate universe to take a look at Melanie without a beeper – we have this alternate universes going on, Melanie, one with a beeper and one without, and you could look at Melanie without the beeper at the same moment... the same instant, I think you’d find Melanie yearning to go scuba diving, and that that

yearning would be experienced, at least in large part, as her body leaning, reaching forwards. I'd be quite surprised if that were not true. And you'd be somewhat skeptical, I guess.

[27:00]

Eric: Yeah, I'm not sure. I'm not saying it's not true. I guess I'm...

Russ: What I... To be candid, what I think happens here is that most psychological investigations are very bad about this. I think, you know, people [investigators] set out, "Well let's explore images." And so they ask people, "Tell me about the image that's going on right now." "Tell me about the image that's going on right now." "Tell me about the image that's going on right now," when it may very well be that people [subjects], some of their people, never have images, and if they do they don't have them all the time. But they ask about them all the time.

[28:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: And so I think those studies are highly, toxically demanding.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And, I can't remember right now, you might have done some of those studies!

Eric: [laughs] No, but I've criticized them for similar reasons.

Russ: But I think it's possible to be much less demanding. Not perfectly undemanding, but far less demanding.

Eric: Right. Yeah. I mean I do like the way that you have open-ended questions, and lots of alternatives, and undermine yourself, and stuff like that. That does seem very desirable.... And it may be partly that in my own reporting [of his own sampling], when I reported emotions, which wasn't very common, they were so... they didn't have – at least in my report, as far as I could recall – this level of specificity and bodily....

[29:00]

Russ: Right.

Eric: It was kind of just pretty vague for me even in the most general way.

Russ: But as my mother told me a thousand times as I was growing up, "Don't judge others by yourself!"

Eric: [laughs] Right. I might be more inclined to do that than you are.

Russ: I was well trained in that department.

Eric: [laughs] I do tend to feel like people are probably pretty similar in basic ways of experiencing the world. I know you see them as pretty dissimilar, though so...

[30:00]

Russ: And I'm guessing that if you yourself had a couple of experiences of emotional clarity as Melanie is describing it here, you probably wouldn't be asking the questions that you're asking.

Eric: Yeah. I'd probably be more... I'd probably find it easier to accept and wouldn't push on it so much. Yes, that's probably true.

Russ: Right. Or, alternatively, if you had listened to a lot of people and asked the kind of questions that we're asking of Melanie to a lot of different kinds of people. So, for example, I myself, because I have systematically avoided sampling myself for the last twenty years, I myself don't know for sure whether I have the kind of clear emotional responses that Melanie is describing here. But I know that some people have them and some people don't, as best that as I can get to in the careful questioning.. the questioning as careful as I can make it.

[31:00]

Eric: Right. I guess I have some inclination to wonder whether the difference between people who describe themselves **their emotions** one way or another might have something... be a difference as much in reporting as in the actual experience. I'm not sure how you settle that kind of thing. It would be interesting to see if there were some other kind of measurable difference **right** – a total fantasy, but some kind of physiological measure of what's going on in the emotion that differs between the people, or some kind of... if you could do some kind of cognitive test that might reveal things one way or the other **a difference**.

Russ: Right.

Eric: What you were thinking **talking** about with the... okay it was imagery and reading, if you can... **for example** [see Box 5.3]. I guess I have some... I just have a general tendency to be somewhat skeptical about verbal reports without some kind of other something to back them up.

[32:00]

Russ: Right. And I can appreciate that. But I think that the skepticism comes from ... the skepticism is justified particularly because psychology has done such a **shitty poor** job of asking for verbal reports.

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: If we had done a better job, then maybe you wouldn't have to be such a card-carrying skeptic.

Eric: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. You know, it's based on... it's not a skepticism that I think most people find natural. It's a skepticism that's grounded in reading history of psychology and reports about experience, and seeing vast differences that aren't... don't seem to be very plausible and that aren't backed up well by other kinds of evidence in a way that makes me doubt the veracity of the reports.

[33:00]

Russ: Right.

Eric: Right. So it's kind of **partly** that experience that makes me nervous about reports in general. But that experience has been informed by methodologies that are different than the one that you are using and that have faults that you avoid or seem to be at least partly avoiding.

Russ: Right.

Eric: That's true.

Russ: So, what I think has happened is that you and I have gone down rather similar roads in our skeptical apprehension of the history of inner experience reporting. The road that I've taken is, "I think it might be possible to do it better."

Eric: Right.

Russ: So the skepticism has led me to this method, actually, basically.

Eric: Right. Well, [laughs] we haven't even finished this first beep!

[34:00]

Russ: [laughs] No, we haven't! Have we even finished the first half of this beep?!?

Eric: [laughs] Yeah. We should at least do the first beep, although it has been an hour already!

Russ: No, I've got a 90-minute tape in here and we haven't gotten to the first side yet.

Eric: Oh, okay. Good. My clock might be running a little fast.

Russ: Well, I think... We're at 44:42.

Eric: I don't feel the kind of exhausted way that I often feel after an hour. My body clock is saying it's not that long. I was just looking at the clock on the wall.

Russ: I think these conversations are good. I'm hoping like hell that the tape recorder has recorded them.

Eric: [laughs] Yeah. That would be a good one. I'm sorry we missed the one on [inaudible]. I thought that was pretty interesting, too.

Russ: Yeah. I'm sorry about that myself. It's possible that I can get some of it back with a fair amount of work, but ....

Eric: Well anyway, there was one other thing about the emotional experience that I wanted to ask you Melanie.

[35:00]

Melanie: Okay.

Eric: [to Melanie] I hope my skepticism isn't too dispiriting or discouraging or something like that.

Melanie: Nope.

Eric: You seem to be pretty... You seem to have a skin of Teflon about it, so that's good.

Russ: [humorously] She doesn't believe a word you're saying, Eric! [all laugh] [See Box 7.10 for Russ's comment on the reaction to skepticism.]

Eric: Well, that's good! So you said something about the emotional experience being through your whole body but also in your head.

Melanie: Yes.

Eric: The aspect in the **your** head was more cognitive.

Melanie: Right.

Eric: I'm wondering if you could say a little more about that.

Melanie: Well, there isn't very much to it. The only way... The reason that I say it was more cognitive is that I could recognize the feeling as being that of yearning and of wanting, and that was the cognitive part that was involved.

[36:00]

Eric: Right. And why do you say that the cognitive part was in your head?

Melanie: Because I didn't think that recognition occurred anywhere else. It wasn't as though, I don't know, my chest recognized it as wanting. It was my head that recognized it as that.

Eric: Uh huh. I'm inclined to reflect that in classical China and in classical Greece, people thought that the heart was the organ of thinking.

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: And so I wonder if you'd had had the same experience in classical China or in classical Greece, you'd have said that the cognitive aspect was in your chest. Whether there's something about our culture that inclines us to kind of locate the experience of cognition as in the head because we know that the brain is so central to it and the brain is in the head. And, I don't know, maybe that does effect where we experience thinking as being, you know, what our real experience of thinking is, right. But, I don't know, I find it... In a way it's kind of... I suspect that there's something culturally specific, at least, about saying that the thinking, the cognitive aspect of the emotion, would be located in the head as opposed to somewhere else like the chest.

[37:00]

Russ: We could have a very interesting conversation about that, too, for another 45 minutes. Did you mean to say that it's "in your head" or "in your mind" or "a mental thing"? Or are all those things interchangeable? Or none of the above?

Melanie: Well, there wasn't any aspect of, "Oh, I heard a voice in my head," or "I saw words running through my head." There wasn't any of that at all. It wasn't inner speech, or anything like that. So... But it felt upwards, you know, upwards in my body, it felt like it was in my head, or in my mind. I find it difficult to make the distinction there.

[38:00]

Russ: So this recognizing that this is "yearning" seems to be physically located in your head...

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...not.... So you meant to be saying... you meant to be giving a physical, "headly" description here...

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...as opposed to a metaphysical, "mentally" description.

Melanie: Yeah. It wasn't... There wasn't... I wasn't reaching for the metaphysical there. That's where I felt it was located. But there wasn't anything more to it than that.

Russ: Okay. And when you first said, in answer to Eric's question "Why did you say this was in your head?" or whatever that question was, that you "could recognize" it, and then later you said you "recognized" it, that is, one subjunctive and one descriptive, what...

[39:00]

Melanie: I knew before the beep happened that it was yearning. It wasn't looking back on it after the beep saying, "Oh! I was feeling a craving there!" No. I knew before the beep happened that it was wanting.

Russ: So there was a mental knowing that...

Melanie: Of what I was feeling.

Russ: ...that was happening independent of the beep.

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: That in our alternate reality [in which there was an identical Melanie without the beeper], that at the same time Melanie would have known that she was yearning. [See Box 7.11 for a comment on self-awareness.]

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And that that knowing seemed somehow to take place in your head.

Melanie: Um hmm.

Russ: As an aside, Eric, some of my subjects are very explicit about where things are, and some aren't.

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: And so when people say "It's in the back of my mind," a lot of people mean that quite descriptively, that this was, you know, an inch inside the posterior portion of my cranium. And other people mean they just weren't thinking about it much.

[40:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: But the fact of the matter is that most people who use that locution "it was in the back of my mind" mean it descriptively, as being, "I sense this to be taking place in the back of my skull." And when they're doing it, they're looking at me quizzically, like, "Hm! I never really thought about that before, but that's where it seems to be!"

Eric: Huh. Yeah. That's interesting.

Russ: And my guess is that the reason that there might be a cultural distinction between where thinking takes place might very well be a difference between what is actually meant by "thinking,"...

[41:00]

Eric: Um hmm.

Russ: ...because the deepest of thoughts are experienced by my subjects ... I take that back, because I don't mean the "deepest of thoughts." The deepest of personal apprehensions are experienced by my subjects as taking place in the heart.

Eric: Uh huh.

Russ: And if that is what is meant by [a few seconds of audio is lost while the tape was flipped; here is a reconstruction of what was lost: "thinking" in classical China and in classical Greece, then my DES subjects would agree. That is, they would agree that the heart feels like the organ of the deepest of personal apprehensions. Chris Heavey and] I made the comment in the paper that that I think you've seen – you've seen one of my papers about... we don't differentiate very well about what we mean by "thinking." I think that comes from what we learned at our mother's knee – that people use the word "think" to mean whatever it is that's happening inside me that somebody else can't see directly. For some people that's a cognitive thing, and for other people that's an emotional thing, and for some people it's an image, and for some people it's words, and they all use the term "think" for it.

Eric: Right.

Russ: But I'm pretty ignorant about the details of the history of the word "thinking" in the Greek or the Eastern cultures.

[42:00]

Eric: Right. Yeah, well what you say jibes pretty well with what I know about the ancient Chinese use, where thinking and feeling are not clearly distinguished. A kind of sense of the apprehension of important things is really what they're after.

Russ: Right. And I think they worked at it harder than we do. They worked at trying to get at important things, or at least those people who were writing about it, more than our culture does.

Eric: Right. I don't know as much about the ancient Greek tradition, but my sense is that at least some of the people, like Plato famously, had a sort of a sharp split for him between reason and emotion. Now I don't know whether Plato specifically located reason in one place or another.

[43:00]

Russ: I forget about that....

Eric: I don't know as much about that tradition. But yeah, anyway, it's...

Russ: So did you buy Melanie's notion or whatever this was seemed to be in her head as a physicality thing?

Eric: [laughs] Well, I had similar apprehensions to what we were discussing earlier, but bracketing those, it doesn't seem implausible to me.

Russ: I think we have conveyed to Melanie pretty adequately that it would be okay for this kind of thinking to take place in her head or outside her head or in front of her head or in her left toe if that's where it seemed to be. [See Box 7.12 on whether people experience thought as in their heads.]

[44:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: And I think you and I have conveyed it by means of our conversation, and when I'm doing it on my own I have the conversation with myself basically to try to raise the skeptical bar.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And I also feel a little bit compelled to say that I've felt like I've been trying... been being a little **personal about**, saying "I'm doing this" and "I did that." I don't mean to imply in any way that I'm the only person who might do that. What I do mean to say is that I think it's possible to do it pretty well. I think I as one individual can do it pretty well. There might very well be many other people who could do it pretty well. But there also could be a lot of people who would say, "I do the Descriptive Experience Sampling method" don't do it very well. I don't think there's anything inherent about the method that guarantees that the practitioner of the method would be able to do it...

[45:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...because the method at its heart, at its core, involves seriously bracketing presuppositions and carefully listening to what people are saying and undermining yourself and all that stuff which I've been working at for a long time and I think I've gotten to some level of artisanship, and....

Eric: Right. No, that seems right to me. It feels to me like you are pretty careful in those respects. But someone could think that they were practicing the same method and import all kinds of demands and preconceptions without realizing it. [See Box 7.13 on bracketing presuppositions.]

Russ: Absolutely. So the result of that is that I end up having to say, "I'm doing it this way," and that seems a little egocentric, but I haven't figured out a better way to do it.

[46:00]

Eric: Right, no, I mean I understand.

Russ: Okay. So the other half... Are we done with the emotional half here, 56 minutes into the discussion?

Eric: [laughs] Yeah.

Russ: The other half...I've forgotten what it was. It was something...

Melanie: Feeling of bobbing in water.

Russ: Oh, the feeling of bobbing in water. Right! And do you mean to say that your body was...or...what do you mean to say?

Melanie: Well, I wasn't physically, in actuality, bouncing up and down. But that's what it kind of felt like. I could imagine the waves picking me up and dropping me off, and picking me up and dropping me down, like that.

Russ: And when you say you "could imagine" that, there's another subjunctive...

[47:00]

Melanie: It is a subjunctive, because it's not like I felt the water. I felt the motion, not the actual water [quizzical tone]. I don't know if that makes sense.

Russ: So, are you saying that in some way your body is imagining itself going up and down and you're experiencing that up-and-downnessing?

Melanie: Yes. And it's the motion. It's not... I'm not thinking... It wasn't a thought about the water or anything like that. And it wasn't feeling the water kind of, you know, hitting the swimsuit or lapping away or making a noise or anything like that. It was directly the motion of bobbing up and down.

Russ: And is that motion in your body?

Melanie: It felt more like my upper body, because you know when you... if you're bobbing at the surface like a cork the lower half of you're body is under water, so you don't really feel that. [See Box 7.14 for some worries about this statement.]

[48:00]

Russ: Okay.

Melanie: So it was mainly just, I don't know, maybe from about my ribcage up.

Russ: And with your hands you're gesturing up. Do you mean to say that at the moment of the beep you're going up? Or are you going up and down, or down...?

Melanie: I couldn't narrow it down that specifically.

Russ: So there's something about the upper portion of your body...

Melanie: Yes, that's feeling an up-and-down motion.

Russ: ...that's feeling an up-and-down motion and, and it's impossible to say which of those motions, which phase, is going on at the moment of the beep.

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: Okay. And... [pause] So without trying to be too personal here, when we're talking about the upper body, you're hands are like under your breasts. Are you talking about the surface of your body being lifted?

[49:00]

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: So it's not like you're whole body going up? It's like your breasts being...

Melanie: Oh no, no, no. It would be the whole upper body.

Russ: Inside and outside?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: Okay. So your whole torso, your whole upper torso...

Melanie: Is being lifted and then being dropped down.

Russ: Okay. [pause] I guess your witness. [See Box 7.15 on the believability of the report and Box 7.16 for an aspect of the experience we may have left out.]

Eric: Umm, gosh, I don't know, I'm not sure that I have more to ask about this. It feels like you're pretty clear about what you're saying here.

[50:00]

Russ: [pause] So the main issue, I guess, that we've been talking about today, is, At 8:47 or whenever this beep was last night, did Melanie have the experience of her upper body being lifted and lowered? Isn't that sort of the core of what we're trying to get at here?

Eric: Right.

Russ: [pause] And I don't... I'm a pretty skeptical guy, but my skeptical receptors are pretty happy, pretty quiet at the moment.

[51:00]

Eric: Right. Yeah, I would say that with respect to this aspect, that unless one wants to pretty radically challenge the method, my inclination would be to accept it. Unless, barring some kind of really general skepticism about these sorts of reports in general, and whether you can really remember these things, or subjects make this stuff up, which I wouldn't absolutely totally rule out...

Russ: Yeah.

Eric: ...but barring that kind of radical criticism, my skepticism is pretty muted on this one too.

Russ: I guess actually I'm slightly more skeptical of this aspect than I am of the other aspect, and the reason I think probably comes from my own inadequacy in asking the questions, not trying to be too personal, not trying to be not personal enough. I'm not sure I am capable of asking the questions with equal dispassion as I asked the other questions.

[52:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: And therefore I think it's likely that, and there may very well be similar things on Melanie's side as well, so the, you know, we may just not communicate as accurately about this as we do about some other things.

Eric: [laughs] Right.

Russ: And so from my point of view what that does is that moves the vernier a little bit down the slide rule a little bit, saying, "Well, you know, we're not perfect here, but the chances are good she experienced her body as going up and down. Whether we've got the anatomy exactly correct, maybe we do and maybe we don't."

[53:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: So, we're at 63 [minutes into this interview]. Do we want to look at one more beep or do we think this is enough?

Eric: It seems a shame to only do one. What do you think, Melanie?

Melanie: I'm all right.

Russ: I'm good.

Eric: Okay, why don't we do one more then?

## **Beep 4.2**

[The audio is available at [http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner\\_experience](http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience)]

Russ: Number 2.

Melanie: All right. I was reading a book, and when the beep went off I was reading this portion where a character... one of the characters in the book always steals the joker from a pack of... from decks of cards. And the reason why he does his is because he really identifies with the joker, the character of a joker. And so I had a mental image in my head of a playing card with a joker on it that was from, you know, the card maker Bicycle cards. So in this mental image was a picture of a joker, who was kind of dressed in a Harlequin costume with like the jester hat and the pointy shoes and the stockings, or the jumpsuit that has the colorful triangles on them that the Harlequin normally wears, as well as the big bicycle wheel.

[1:00]

Russ: And this is a mental image?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And I gather there's the card in the... there's a card in your image?

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: And is the bicycle wheel, I didn't quite understand that, is the bicycle wheel part of the card?

Melanie: Yes. There's a picture on the card, kind of the center of the card, and it has this figure of a joker who's leaning against this bicycle tire.

Russ: Ah hah. And so is there anything else in your image other than this card?

Melanie: There's a white background behind it.

Eric: That's on the card or that's behind the card?

Melanie: Both.

Russ: Same color white? Same kind of white?

Melanie: No. You can tell that the card is separate from the background, almost as if it were kind of edged in black, or maybe it's standing up on the top of a deck of cards so that there's a shadow that shows that it's raised from the background.

[2:00]

Russ: And does it appear that you're looking down at this card, or does it appear that you're looking over at this card, or does that make sense?

Melanie: Looking straight at it.

Russ: As if the card was being suspended vertically, like it was stuck to the wall or out in the...?

Melanie: Yes. Um hm. Exactly.

Russ: And how do you now that you're looking at it in that respect? I mean, what's... You could be looking at it sitting on a table looking straight down at it, or you could have it on the wall looking at it from.... What is it that leads you to [pause]. [to Eric] I've stumped her.

Eric: [laughs]

Melanie: Looking back on it, which is again the only way I can kind of answer the question, I was bent over the book, but not like facing straight down, but more my head was kind of at a diagonal, and I felt like the card was up here.

[3:00]

Russ: And she's indicating sort of in front of her, kind of higher than her eyes.

Melanie: Yeah, out from my forehead as opposed to directly in front of my eyes.

Russ: So she's looking slightly down, but the card is even with her forehead, which would be... is even with her eyes but you'd have to look up to see it.

Eric: Uh huh.

Russ: And in the image, is it just one card?

Melanie: Yep.

Russ: So there's not a deck of cards with just one card exposed? This is like an image of a single card.

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And in color?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And as far as you know is this an accurate portrayal of a Bicycle joker?

Melanie: I have no idea.

Russ: In my image of a Bicycle joker, there's no bicycle wheel.

Melanie: Yes. I have no idea.

Russ: But in your image there is a bicycle wheel.

[The actual Bicycle joker has a king with a crown riding a bicycle. The clothes that the king is wearing do not have the triangles or diamonds that Melanie referred to.]

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: And you say the joker is leaning on the bicycle wheel?

Melanie: Um hm. It's like he's half standing, half sitting against it, so he's leaning against it with one hip...

[4:00]

Russ: Which hip?

Melanie: Ah, the, you're facing him and he's facing you, it would be, looks like the right hand side.

Russ: His right hand?

Melanie: His left.

Russ: His left. So it ... I had it going the other way, and now I've got to reverse it!  
[laughs]

Melanie: [laughs]

Russ: So it's like his left hip and elbow are leaning on the bicycle wheel. Is that right?

Melanie: Not elbow. Just the hip. The top half of his body is straight. His legs kind of go from the upper right to the lower left-hand corner so...

Russ: Okay. And is the bicycle wheel attached to a bicycle? Or is it...

Melanie: Just the wheel.

Russ: Just the wheel. So you don't see the frame of the bicycle. There's a bicycle wheel with this guy leaning on it.

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: Okay. And I presume that there's other things going on in the reading other than the joker. This is about jokers, but it's also about the guy and it's about...

[5:00]

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: But you don't have any images about that.

Melanie: Nope. It's just purely of the joker itself.

Russ: [to Eric] Your turn.

Eric: Were you having other experiences as well? Just the image, there wasn't the experience of the words on the page or anything like that?

Melanie: No. After the beep occurred, and I looked back at it, I was aware of the emotions I was feeling at that time. But they weren't in my direct awareness at the moment of the beep.

Russ: And so there were emotions in your body at that moment?

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: Like what?

Melanie: They were kind of diminishing from an earlier moment when I had felt something pretty strongly...

Russ: And that was...?

Melanie: Concern and resentment.

Russ: So the concern and resentment was still in your body but your...

[6:00]

Melanie: I wasn't paying any attention to it.

Russ: ...your awareness or experience or whatever had moved on. But when the beep came and you looked around to see what was there...

Melanie: Yeah. And it was then, "Okay, I'm feeling concern and resentment, and I have this mental image of this joker."

Russ: Okay. But the mental image of the joker is in your experience at the moment of the beep...?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...unlike the concern and resentment which...

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...which are in your body but not in your awareness.

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: [to Eric] So that's what I would call a "feeling fact of body":...

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: ...the concern is somehow there but not in your awareness.

Eric: Right. So it's not that you were having a feeling of concern kind of experientially somehow in your experience or in your consciousness and you just weren't paying attention to it, it's just, in fact it wasn't in your conscious experience – that feeling – even if your body might have been, say, tense in some way.

Melanie: Right.

[7:00]

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: I have a hard time with that question...

Melanie: I think I know what you're asking more than I understand the words.

Eric: Uh huh. Right.

Russ: ...because that gives, that sort of gives the impression that it would be possible to have something in your consciousness but you're not aware of it, it's not in your experience.

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: And I try to be systematically agnostic about that. I don't know whether it's possible to have something in your consciousness and not be aware of it. Maybe it is, but I've never seen it because you can't see it, and you can never get a direct report about it, and so I sort of systematically stay agnostic, is the best way that I can say about it.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And so somewhere... what I think is fair to say is that somewhere in Melanie is a diminishing concern/resentment. Whether that's in her body or in her consciousness or both, I don't really know. And I guess I shouldn't, I guess I really shouldn't call it "feeling fact of body," I should call it "feeling fact of Melanie" ....

[8:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...except most of the time people are telling me that it's somehow bodily. It's better to say "feeling fact of body," because they're noticing that their fingers are clenched, or their stomach is painful, or whatever.

Eric: Right. Yeah, I guess I still have some concerns about using the word "awareness" – so I like "consciousness" better. But, yeah, so we talked about this quite a bit last time which is why Melanie understood the question I was asking. [laughs]

[9:00]

Russ: Right.

Eric: It's awfully hard to talk clearly about these things.

Russ: So in my sense, a Bicycle card doesn't have a bicycle wheel on it. That doesn't bother you one way or the other?

Melanie: No.

Russ: She doesn't seem to care whether her imaged Bicycle card actually corresponds to a real Bicycle card.

Melanie: I actually wondered that question myself after the beep interrupted me, but, for instance I have a deck of cards in my drawer... in my desk drawer, and I didn't go and look, but the idea fleetingly did occur to me later.

Russ: Yeah. And I'm not by any means sure. I'm not much of a card player, actually. So I guess the reason that that might be interesting is that she doesn't care.

Eric: Right.

Melanie: Well, that and also that in the book I was reading there was no description of the joker, so I wasn't basing this mental image on a joker, it was just what popped into my mind upon seeing the word "joker."

[10:00]

Eric: Right. Did you see the back of the card at the same time as you see the front?

Melanie: No. Just the front.

Eric: Do you see... A lot of bicycle tires have spokes. Were there spokes in your image?

Melanie: Yes. You can see the spokes radiating out from the center, and it also has like a black tire on it as well, so it's not just the wheel frame that I saw.

Eric: Would your... How about the little inflater? You know, a lot of bicycles have those little black things that pop up, the nozzle that you inflate the tire with?

Melanie: No. That I can't see. Or that wasn't there, I don't know, whichever.

Eric: Right. So there's a distinction between knowing that the image didn't have one of those things in it, and not being sure whether it did or not.

[11:00]

Melanie: It's kind of hard to make because it wasn't a blown up picture. I mean if I had to guess the image was 3 to 4 inches tall...

Russ: Card size?

Melanie: Yeah. And two inches across. It wasn't a very close picture so there wasn't a lot of detail to it.

Eric: Um hm.

Melanie: So I really can't answer that question, because I don't know if from that distance you could see that little nozzle.

Eric: So, you're saying the image was, like, card size. Do you have a sense of how far away from you it was, then? Because card size could obviously be large if it's right against your eyes or very tiny if it's 20 feet away.

Melanie: This is probably the worst question to ask me. I have no sense of distance whatever.

[12:00]

Russ: Within arm's length?

Melanie: Yeah. A little bit shorter than arm's length, but almost arm's length.

Russ: Um hm. And does the card actually seem to be there, I mean, that far away, as if you're looking at it?

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: So it's sort of as if you're holding the card up and looking at it.

Melanie: Right, but in the mental image there are no pictures... fingers, no sense of it being held by anybody.

Eric: So what color... You said that the card had colors. What colors? What was the color scheme?

Melanie: Well, it's kind of mixed up because it was that kind of multicolored that you have in the harlequin outfit.

Eric: Um hm.

Melanie: So you have black from the bicycle tire and stuff like that and the spokes and everything were in black.

Eric: Um hm.

Melanie: Then you have this multicolored outfit, which was red, white, green, and blue. [13:00]

Eric: Um hm. And you said it was covered with triangles?

Melanie: Um, diamonds.

Eric: Diamonds, I mean, yeah. And so were the diamonds each one of those four colors, then?

Melanie: Yes.

Eric: So was there a clear pattern to them? Or was it just random.

Melanie: Probably random, I didn't really concentrate on it.

Eric: Um hm. [pause]

Melanie: For instance, if you asked what color the diamond was on his left knee, I couldn't tell you that.

Eric: Um hm. Okay.

Russ: That's an interesting phenomenon in itself. It's almost always the way it is, and I don't know exactly what to make of it. People can have a very clear image but they can't answer that kind of question.

[14:00]

Eric: Right. So, it seems like there are two possibilities, at least, here. One is that in the image itself there was definitely, say, a red diamond on his left knee, and you just, you can't remember it with that level of specificity because you didn't note that particular thing at the time of the beep when you were checking it, at the time after the beep when you were thinking about what the image had been. Or, it could be that somehow you had an image and the image somehow specified that there are all these triangles that had these particular colors but it didn't specify exactly which colors were where. Do you have a sense, Melanie, of which of those...

Melanie: No, I have no... I couldn't tell you, no.

Russ: My guess is that there's a third option which is that what is reported as quote "having an image" unquote is not really having an image but it's a seeing...  
[15:00]

Eric: Uh huh.

Russ: ...and I'm not exactly sure how to articulate this, but the seeing doesn't necessarily produce all of the details, even though the seeing is apprehended as being clear.

Eric: Um hm. Right.

Russ: Just like in this room. I can look at... I can see clearly and yet I couldn't tell you what all the details are.

Eric: Right.

Russ: I have the advantage in the room of being able to say, "If you point me in some particular direction I can tell you exactly what the details are."...  
[16:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: I don't think people like Melanie in this particular case, has that luxury in her image. It's not like the image is a fixed thing separate from the seeing like the room is a fixed thing separate from my seeing.

Eric: Right. Yeah. Kind of... I think that was essentially what I was attempting to convey with the second of my possibilities, although, right, there is another possibility which is that it's kind of represented as being blurry or indistinct, as well as kind of not specifying where all the diamonds are.

Russ: Yeah. I'm...I'd bet pretty much of the ranch that the whole notion of representation is a misleading deal...

Eric: [laughs] yeah...

Russ: ...because it implies a reality of the image separate from the seeing that is probably not really there. Like somehow the card is represented and then you're looking at it. And I just don't think that's the way it is.

[17:00]

Eric: Yeah. The word "representation" does, I think, carry things with it that you might not want to buy hook, line, and sinker. I certainly agree with that. Yeah.

Russ: So any other questions or comments or details of this beep?

Eric: Nope.