

Evan 2
Evan Sampling Day 2

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the July 17 sampling interview 2 with Evan that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/njQw0F4wOCQ>. In green are Russ's comments, and in blue are Gualtierio's comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process inserted after the interview. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

GP = Gualtierio Piccinini

Evan = Evan Mcgloughlin

- 0:02 RTH: So I am now recording, and this is going to be Evan's second crack, I believe. Is that right?
- 0:11 Evan: Yes.
- 0:11 RTH: Sec. Second crack at this.
- 0:13 Evan: Hopefully more successful. It'll be hard to be less successful.
- 0:16 RTH: I don't, I don't, I don't, I'm not sure that's true, but we'll, we'll, we'll see. So, uh, these beeps are from yesterday, I think you said in an email to me, and, uh,
- 0:29 Evan: Yes. Yeah.
- 0:30 RTH: And anything we should be talking about before we zoom into it.
- 0:35 Evan: Just that I've, I really tried to keep in mind what you said at our last call, which is you don't really care where I am. You don't really care what I'm doing, as long as it's affecting my experience. So I really tried to hone down on experiential aspects for this. And if I did that to any level of success is, is a different degree, but just I really tried to hone down on experience rather than just, you know, telling you I was watching cycling or something, which I, I'm pretty sure you don't care about by now, [laughs].
- 0:35 Russ comments: RE "You don't really care what I'm doing, as long as it's affecting my experience."
Actually, I "don't really care what [Evan is] doing" *period*. I don't really care whether or not it is affecting Evan's experience.
- 1:07 RTH: Okay. So I think, I think all, all that is, all that is right, except that, that I only would've objected to one word that you said, and it's not, it's not, you used the word "affecting," I think, and I don't really care whether it's affecting, I just care what

happens. What, what, what's in your experience? No doubt it is affected by watching cycling or whatever.

1:26 Evan: Right.

1:29 RTH: But the, but the in, but the interest in, but my interest is in, is in what, what your bag of bones makes of all the possibilities that *could have been* affecting you, I think because I think the, the problem with the word affecting is that I think there's *multiple* things that are affecting you, and there's no possible way that we can make a list of that.

1:50 Evan: Right. Yeah. Agreed.

1:52 RTH: So I don't, I don't try, and I don't presume that anybody, anybody at, at the current state of the art can do it.

2:02 Evan: Right. Agreed.

2:06 RTH: So, beep number 1, we ready?

2:08 Evan: Yep.

2:09 RTH: All right. Let's do it.

SAMPLE 2.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

2:12 Evan: So: tired body, heavy eyes. I was reading words on a computer screen in my head. And then I had a physical sensation of a metal comb on my face going through my beard. And I also noticed I had a slightly, slight blur of my visual field, which was my laptop in front of me. So the main, the main experience sort of was an overall tired body, heavy sensation of the body. Um, the physical sensation of the comb, and then like a slight blurring of my visual field.

2:53 RTH: And in that second go around, you didn't mention the words at all. So is it the word you are trying to read words, but they're not penetrating? Is that the,

3:00 Evan: So, so, yeah, I, I would say I was reading words, but it wasn't a prominent aspect of my experience.

3:05 RTH: Okay. And then the tired, the tired body and the heavy eyes. Tho those *were* directly apprehended in your experience, is that right? So it's not just that my body is tired (physically, we can no doubt measure that with some machine or other), but that I experience my bodily tiredness?

3:25 Evan: Right. It was, it was noticeable for sure. It was, it was a prominent part of really the whole like four hours that I was wearing the beepers that I felt consciously tired in my body and eyes. [RTH: Okay.] And I was noticing; I was, it was in my awareness,

3:39 RTH: So not just noticeable, [Evan: Yeah.] but I was noticing my [Evan: Yes.] bodily tiredness. And that was the prominent aspect of my experience, I gather.

3:49 Evan: I, I would say the, the prominent aspect was probably the, the metal comb combing through my beard. So that was at the moment of the beep, that was the most prominent experience.

4:00 RTH: Okay. And then, so that's number one. And then number two is...?

4:05 Evan: Number. What do you mean by number two? The,

4:08 RTH: Well, I'm, I'm, I'm trying to get the sort of the land, oh,

4:11 Evan: Sorry. Okay.

4:12 RTH: The lay of the land here.

4:14 Evan: I, I would say number two is tired body.

4:17 RTH: Okay. And then number three is the blur?

4:21 Evan: Um, yeah, between blur of visual field and heavy eyes, it's hard to, hard to really compare them. [RTH: Okay.] Um, yeah.

4:32 RTH: So the heavy eyes is more about the, well at least partially about the blurriness as opposed to just the bodily heaviness.

4:43 Evan: I would say it's more about the bodily heaviness than it is about the, the blurriness. So the blurriness is also related to the tiredness, cuz it. [RTH: Okay.] Yeah.

4:53 RTH: So the sense, so let's start with the sensation. [Evan: Yeah.] Um, and so the, so is it a fact of the universe that I am moving a comb through my beard? Or is that, is this imaginary?

5:06 Evan: No part, the physical, the physical touch and the, the sensation of the metal on my skin. So I can notice a slight coldness, a slight sharpness. And so it's, it's not a, it's not an awareness *that* I'm combing, but it's the physical, more about the physical actual sensation of, of the comb going through my, my skin and my beard.

5:29 RTH: Okay. And, and so this, this is happening in reality. I am in fact moving this comb through my hair, through my beard?

5:36 Evan: Yes. Okay.

5:37 RTH: And, but, but it's not so much that I'm *doing* it, it's that I'm *feeling it being done to me*, even though I'm doing it, it's the, I'm the ...

5:46 Evan: Well, what's in my experience is like the actual comb itself touching the touching the skin.

5:51 RTH: Okay. So this is a *face* experience, not a *hand* experience,

5:55 Evan: Face experience, yeah.

5:56 RTH: Got it.

5:57 Evan: Prominently a face experience.

5:58 RTH: And so I am aware what I'm, what we're saying here is that what, what is getting into my experiential realm is the feeling on my face and beard of the cold comb against my skin.

6:18 Evan: Yes. And there's a sharpness in between that is, is noticeable.

6:23 RTH: Okay. And these are physical sensations, as far as my experience is concerned?

6:31 Evan: Yes. It's, I would say moderately pleasurable in a way that, in a way that I can't really describe or like it's pleasing.

6:39 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good with that. Gualtieri, you got more questions about that aspect?

6:51 GP: No, thanks.

6:52 RTH: Okay.

6:53 Evan: I find it funny that you had to confirm that I was actually combing my beard rather than I was having an experience of someone combing my beard, but there wasn't an actual comb. And you, you know, I thought that was a funny distinction that you had to make, that I could have just been completely hallucinating the comb going down my, my face.

7:11 RTH: Yeah. I, I wouldn't call it *hallucinating*. I would, I would call it *imagining*. [Evan: Right.] So I think just, *just as* it is possible to have a visual image, I think it's possible to have a physical [Evan: For sure.] sensation image. And, uh,

7:25 Evan: It's probably just a distinction that only ...

7:27 GP: One more clarification.

7:28 Evan: Say again, please.

7:31 GP: Um, did you say that you also felt the, the, the metallic, so like a sensation of contact with metal? [Evan: Yeah.] The fact that it was metal was part of the experience. It wasn't just a, you knew the comb was metal.

7:51 Evan: Yeah, I, yeah, it was a, it, it was the distinctive touch between the, the object and the face that I, that was metal. But I wouldn't say that I was thinking like, there wasn't aware, it wasn't part of my cognitive awareness if that it was metal, but that just, that it's a distinctive touch interaction between the comb and my face, I guess.

8:14 GP: Yeah. Right.

8:14 Russ comments: Evan's opening salvo (2:12) had been "a physical sensation of a metal comb...", so GP's (7:31) question about whether the metal was part of the experience is warranted. It appears that GP understands Evan's (7:51) answer to indicate that Evan's experience was indeed of the metal, but I think that answer is ambiguous—I think it may well indicate that Evan had not understood GP's question. That is, I am skeptical that the huge (in my view) distinction between metal-ness as a directly apprehended experience and metal-ness as a fact of the universe was adequately differentiated.

This distinction is difficult but important. I don't think that there is one best way to ask GP's (7:31) question, but here's an alternative that makes adequately clear the distinction between directly apprehended experience and fact of the universe:

I understand that you felt the metal comb against your skin. My question is whether the metal-ness is a directly apprehended aspect of that experience. That is, would it have been just as good to have said, "I felt the comb against my skin; and the comb happens to be, as a fact of the universe, metal?" Or would it be better to say, "I felt the metal-ness of the comb against my skin?"

8:15 RTH: And is, is that different from the sharpness? Or is the sharpness and the mental-ness two ways of saying the same thing?

8:23 Evan: No, I would say they, they're distinct.

8:27 RTH: Okay. So there's something about the me, mental-ness of the comb that I am apprehending, even though I'm not commenting or whatever.

8:37 Evan: Yeah.

8:38 RTH: Okay. All right. Then onward to the body portion. So my body feels tired.

8:47 Evan: Yeah.

8:51 RTH: Some particular aspect of my body? Whole body? Arms?

8:55 Evan: I am, I've been doing a lot, like, I, I would say like my legs in general, um, just feel tired. My back. [straightens his back] Mostly legs.

8:55 Russ comments: RTH notices the slight straightening of Evan's back, which causes him to say:

9:08 RTH: So I'm *not* asking you to survey your body *now* and [Evan: Yeah, I know...] *infer* back to the beep. [Evan: Yeah.] Well, what I'm asking you is when I'm noticing what, so what I gathered is at the moment of the beep, I'm noticing my bodily, a bodily tiredness. [Evan: Yes.] And what I'm asking now is, is that localized to a particular portion of my body? My legs are tired or my back is tired, or my arms are tired, or my...

9:33 Evan: Definitely legs, prominently.

9:34 RTH: ...my eyes are tired.

9:37 Evan: Legs prominently.

9:38 RTH: Okay. And, and is there anything more to say about the legs' tiredness?

9:46 Evan: I am, I don't think so. I was kind of struggling to find words to describe it other than just "legs tired." I wasn't sure if you would be satisfied with that explanation. I didn't know what other words to use other than the, the, my legs felt tired, really.

10:04 RTH: Okay. And, and, and leg legs are sort of big things. Are we talking about the whole legs, upper legs, thighs, calves, the whole..."

10:12 Evan: Quads and calves? I'd say mostly.

10:15 RTH: Okay. Both legs.

10:17 Evan: Yeah.

10:17 Russ comments: Exercise for GP (others my profit from trying to take GP's perspective during this exercise): BEFORE YOU READ FURTHER, watch the video (<https://youtu.be/njQw0F4wOCQ>) from here to 11:40. Pay attention to how you felt—what was passing through your experience during those minutes. It is *not* good enough to read the transcript—you have to watch and listen. The aim is to try to recall what GP experienced while he asked and Evan answered these questions. I will provide a commentary below.

10:19 RTH: Okay. And then I'm good with that portion. Gualtiero? And, and then the, the, there's eyelid heavy, there's heavy eyes. I guess I, my word is *eyelids*, your eyes, your word was heavy eyes, which is part of the bodily tiredness.

10:40 Evan: Yeah.

10:43 RTH: Anything more to say about that?

10:47 Evan: I would say obviously related to the bodily tiredness, but I, it, in my awareness in that moment, I think it was a noticeable that it, like I, it was noticeable enough that I wanted to also write it down rather than just my whole body was tired, that my eyes or eyelids felt heavy, felt tired as well. [RTH: Okay.]

11:07 GP: So it felt like they were two different, even though they were related, they were, you felt two different experiences. One the heavy eyes, one the tired body.

11:07 Russ comments: In this comment I am going to give a very advanced lecture about how to ask questions. It is triggered by my understanding of GP's question; I may have misunderstood GP's motives for this particular question, but I think the principle that I will describe is in general true.

Here's my guess at GP's process. He thought (with warrant) that RTH's 10:19 "which is part of" may have unfairly leaned toward one bodily thing with two aspects (legs and eyes) rather than two rather separate bodily experiences. And he thought that Evan's 10:47 was probably an attempt to lean Russ back to understanding the separateness of the body and eye experiences. All that may well be (and if I had to bet, probably is) true. GP attempted (11:07) to validate that understanding, and this little lecture is aimed at that attempt.

Here's the general rule: if something could be *A* (here, two separate experiences) or *B* (here, one experience with two aspects), and you think it is *A*, it is *not* a good idea to ask "is it *A*?" That is a validation question, which is inherently vulnerable to confirmation bias. The problem is that if Evan says *Yes*, you will not be able to disentangle whether he actually thinks *A* or is simply acquiescing to the implied bias of your question.

A better question has the form: "Are you saying *A* <and here insert a description of *A* and its ramifications that is either unbiased or slightly biased against believing *A*> or *B* <here insert a description of *B* and its ramifications that is slightly biased in favor of *B*>? That is, the aim is to ask a question that *genuinely leads away from your predisposition*. The object is to set up a situation where for Evan to say *A*, he has to swim upstream against your favored position, so that if he *does say A*, then you have some good evidence that he actually intends to say *A*.

The problem is that Evan is a smart guy and a nice guy—he'd like to make GP happy. In this situation, making GP happy is to confirm GP's suspicion. So if GP asks a confirmation-bias-oriented question, Evan (being a smart guy) will detect (knowingly or not) that bias and give a confirmational response. That is what I call collusion, and it is problematic because the detected bias is immediately present in the shared reality of the interview, whereas Evan's experience at the moment of the beep is relatively remote and available only to Evan. Bias : experience :: two : one—it's not a fair fight.

So if one is interested in fidelity to experience, one has to figure out how to inquire in a way that helps Evan cleave to his experience without pushing him in some not-Evan's-experience direction. It's a skill which requires practice.

My suggested question at 8:14 is an example of this general principle.

RE my "(and if I had to bet, probably is)" from five paragraphs above:

The aim of DES is to avoid having to do such betting—the aim is to help participants get into a position where they can describe experience without ambiguity, so that no one has to bet or speculate.

11:19 Evan: Yeah. Probably a very, like a similar experience, obviously related. Um, but yeah, distinct in, [GP: Yeah.] in some way in my awareness in that moment. [GP: Mm-hmm.] [GP nods affirmatively throughout this turn.]

11:19 Russ comments: (continuing the previous comment) What actually happened here, to my ear, is that Evan gave response that was “Sort of A”; which GP heard as “Absolutely A” (as evidenced, to my ear/eye, by GP’s “Yeah”, Mm-hmm” and perhaps especially, by his affirmative nodding throughout.

Evan’s experience may well have been A (probably was, if I were a betting man), but the minor tragedy is that, in my view, we have squandered the opportunity to find out whether it really is A. What we have is either Evan saying A, or GP and Evan collusively saying A. Those are two very different things.

It’s actually worse than that from an iterative perspective. To the extent that it is collusive, then that will have torpedoed the effort to exist/endure in the ambiguity so that we can possibly do better next time. See the comment at 13:12.

Russ responds to the 10:17 exercise for GP: My guess is that you felt something like *I was right* (and I will proceed as if my guess is in the ballpark of correct. But I am no mind-reader. If I am off the mark, I apologize). My aim was to encourage you to focus on how that “I was right” feels, to “bottle” that feeling—to become sensitive to that feeling so that you can sniff it at its very beginnings. If you want to hear Evan (or anyone else) with fidelity, you have to cultivate the recognition that the feeling of *I was right* suggests that you are *on the wrong track*. Here’s why. If you really are right, unqualifiedly, unambiguously, unquestionably right, *it will not occur to you to feel that you are right*. When you awoke this morning, it did not occur to you to feel *Oh! I’m going to walk on the floor again today, rather than on the ceiling*. You just walked on the floor without feeling that that was the right thing. The feeling of *I was right* is your body/soul/heart recognizing the possibility of collusion, or recognizing the possibility of a narrow view of reality.

Here’s the same moral from a different perspective: In the real world of grasping Evan’s experience, the best that we can possibly attain is fidelity—to be pretty darn good and not systematically misleading. That is, we will *never* be *right*. Therefore, a feeling of *I am right* has to be on the wrong track. The best you can do is to cultivate the sensitivity for ways that you can be wrong, and work at reducing those ways, and work again at reducing those ways, and so on.

Said from yet another perspective: If there is ambiguity, *don’t try to figure it out*. Try to help Evan get in a position to tell you (next time!) something that is not ambiguous.

11:35 RTH: Okay. And then there was something about the blur....

11:44 Evan: Yeah,

11:45 RTH: But I wasn’t, I

11:47 Evan: Also noticed that just my, the visual acuity of my, my, what I was looking at in front of me, my laptop, was just slightly blurred. Again, also just from the tiredness, maybe 10% blurry is what I have kind of in my mind that it just wasn’t as high resolution as my normal vision is.

- 12:05 RTH: So the question is about that is, am I noticing at the moment of the beep that my eyes are blurry? Or is it when I retrospect, one second or couple seconds after the beep, then I notice that my eyes are blurry as well. So the, the question is, is the blurriness directly apprehended as what I would be noticing at the moment of the beep in the same way that the bodily tiredness and the comb, comb-against-skin?
- 12:41 Evan: I would, it's one of those things that I would say yes, but with a high degree of uncertainty. Like the hardest part for this is, for me: it beeped what was happening in the last, just that exact moment or what was actually happening in five seconds. And then my memory, you know, I, I think kind of superposes them a bit, but then I'm really trying to focus on that second. So I would say yes, but with a, with a degree of uncertainty, cuz it's, it's hard to know if it happens one second ago or two seconds ago, you know? [RTH: Fair, fair.] [inaudible] I wear it. [laughs]
- 13:12 RTH: Fair, fair enough. [Evan: Yeah.] And so, so I think as a general rule, I would say that it's probably impossible to do that perfectly. [Evan: Yeah.] Maybe as, maybe as we get more practice at it, it'll be, we'll, we'll be able to refine it to, to, to some degree. But we're, we're shooting for fidelity, not perfection. And, uh, those are two different things.
- 13:12 Russ comments: (see the comment at 11:19). RTH's 12:05 question is of the *A* or *B* type without any suggestion that RTH prefers one alternative or the other. The result of that is that Evan chooses at 12:41 to "exist/endure in the ambiguity," as Russ put it in the 11:19 comment. Good. That is the heart of the iterative process.
- 13:32 Evan: It's definitely the part that's definitely the part that's, that's hardest.
- 13:37 RTH: So what I'm gathering about this particular beep is there are physical sensations of two different kinds. One comb-y and one bodily-tired-y. [Evan: Yes.] And then maybe there's another perceptual, physical, whatever, blurriness that might or might not be there.
- 13:37 Russ comments: This summary may undersell the two different bodily process (legs and eyes).
- 14:02 Evan: Yes.
- 14:03 RTH: And, and that's it. As far as my experience is concerned. My eyes are process, my eyes are aimed at this reading that I'm supposed to be doing, [Evan: Yes.] but I am not, it is not part of my direct experience at [snaps fingers] this particular moment.
- 14:18 Evan: That's right. Yeah. I would say that I was reading or...Yeah, yeah, exactly. I was staring at words, but it wasn't a prominent aspect of, of that experience in that moment.
- 14:28 RTH: Okay. Then I'm good about that. Gualtiero? [GP: I'm good.] On, on to number two.

SAMPLE 2.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

14:40 Evan: It's funny, I swear I don't eat fuet that often, but it seems like we, [they laugh] it seems I do eat fuet when [laughs], when I do experience sampling, they're highly correlated, even though I don't eat that much fuet. Anyway. Um, so in that moment I had a, a taste of fuet at the, of the tip of my tongue and I was noticing the attractiveness of a woman on my laptop screen looking at her face and noticing her eyes.

14:40 Russ comments: Fuet is a Catalan sausage similar to salami.

15:13 RTH: So two aspects: taste and seeing?

15:18 Evan: Yeah.

15:19 RTH: One of those more prominent than the other? Don't have to be, they could both be a hundred percent as far as I'm concerned, but

15:30 Evan: I'd say it's half, half roughly. But again, kind of hard to know in my, in my memory is, is roughly half / half.

15:36 RTH: Okay. So let's start with the sweat. So I am tasting sweat at the...

15:42 Evan: Fuet! Not sweat! [they laugh]

15:43 RTH: Tasting, sweat,

15:45 Evan: Fuet. I hope I'm not tasting sweat!

15:49 RTH: Tasting fuet. Doesn't mean anything to me. I don't know anything about it. [laughs]. [Evan: Okay. (laughs)] So tasting fuet, [Evan: Yeah.] and, uh, and you said on the tip of your tongue, so do I experience this taste as being on the tip of my tongue? Or is that a, I, I know my taste receptors are there and so therefore I must have been,

16:09 Evan: I think I was sort of playing with the meat in my mouth and it was at the, happened to me at the tip of my tongue, all of the, the juice coming from the meat at the point of the beep. [RTH: Okay.] So for some reason, in my experience, it was localized to the front of my mouth, kind of tip of my tongue. [RTH: Okay.] And not that I have incredible taste [laughs] reception.

16:27 RTH: So, so, so that's in, in the, in the world. What I, what I would like us to keep in mind is that, that I'm interested in, in the world of your experience, regardless of whether it has anything to do with the physics of the receptors that, and how there are arrayed on your tongue. [Evan: Yes.] If it feels like I'm tasting it on the tip of my tongue, that's [Evan: what's relevant] what I'm interested in, regardless of whether that's, whether that's neurologically possible.

16:53 Evan: Yes. Yeah, I know, I understand.

16:55 RTH: Okay. And so the tip of my tongue-ness is part of it; I, I taste it there. *And* is this a taste phenomenon as opposed to a, a chewing / swirling sensation?

17:09 Evan: Taste is, taste is prominent. Yeah.

17:11 RTH: Okay. So it's a fact of the universe that I am playing with this food and, and, but the, but as far as my experience is concerned, it's of the taste of it.

17:20 Evan: Yeah.

17:21 RTH: Okay. And, and is there anything more to say about the taste of it?

17:30 Evan: I don't think so. You're probably, some of that experience is also the, the, the physical touch of the, the meat on the tongue as well, now that I'm thinking about it, but it's, it's definitely less prominent.

17:41 RTH: Okay.

17:42 Evan: The taste, I'd say, is 90% of that experience.

17:46 RTH: Okay. And, and does it seem to me that I'm tasting fuet the way it is? I'm not making, making this up or adding salt or whatever? I'm just tasting the tasting it as it as it is?

18:00 Evan: I would say I'm tasting it as it is. Yeah.

18:05 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good about that. Gualtiero, you good?

18:12 GP: Good.

18:13 RTH: And then I am seeing an attractive woman on my laptop.

18:18 Evan: Yeah.

18:19 RTH: And, uh, and what, and how does that, what, what if that is in my experience?

18:25 GP: Sorry, can I ask one? Can I ask a couple clarifications about the taste, though? [RTH: Sure.] [Evan: Yeah.] Now that I think about it. Number one is, is the taste of the fuet specific and, and, and recognized in the experience?

18:42 Evan: Yeah.

18:43 GP: Meaning this is like the specific experience of the taste of the, of the fuet? [Evan: Yeah.] And, and then is the, is the sensation of the, of the, the, the taste slash flavor of the fuet localized at the tip of the tongue itself, or more like diffuse in the mouth? Or anywhere else?

18:43 Russ comments: RE "like the specific experience of the taste of the, of the fuet? [Evan: Yeah.]

(This comment is a continuation of the *A* vs. *B* comment at 11:07 and 11:19.) GP 18:43 is an “Is it *A*?” question, where it is likely that Evan does not fully understand the question as GP intends it, and therefore GP unwarrantedly understands Evan’s “Yeah” as being a confirmation. This is what I consider a form of collusion: GP and Evan have tacitly agreed to confirm without really knowing what they are confirming. The interview returns below (19:39) to try to clarify this question.

19:09 Evan: Prominently at the tip of my tongue, but, you know, diffuse to some extent, of course, because the juices [GP: Okay.] and the saliva obviously spreads. [GP nods affirmatively throughout this answer.] So like, I would say concentrated at the tip is how I remember it. But then of course, [GP: Yeah.] I am diffuse. [GP: Yeah. Good.]

19:09 Russ comments: RE (GP 18:43) “Is the sensation of the...taste slash flavor of the fuet localized at the tip of the tongue itself, or more like diffuse in the mouth?”

This (18:43) is, to my antennae, a risky question—my antennae jangled because it sounded to me like a confirmation-bias question: sensory science knows that the taste buds are distributed across the tongue (and the rest of the mouth as well), so the question invites Evan to align his answer with the science. My antennae jangled particularly because Evan has already said pretty definitively (16:09) that he tastes it at the tip: “So for some reason, in my experience, it was localized to the front of my mouth, kind of tip of my tongue.”

As I have said repeatedly (e.g., my comments at Evan interview 1 at 35:41 and 39:19), one should judge a question by the answer—that is, Russ’s jangly antennae are not the final judges of question quality. So let’s consider Evan’s (19:09) response, which I schematize as: *tip, obviously spread out, tip, of course spread out*. To my ear, that is a battle between experience (tip) and GP’s desire/science (spread out). Ergo: bad question. If I had to mind-read (which I don’t), I would say that Evan’s answer reflects a process something like: *I already said it was at the tip, so that must not be Gualtiero’s preferred answer, and I’d of course like to please Gualtiero (and of course I know something about sensation science, so I’ll honor my experience by saying “tip” and I’ll make Gualtiero happy by saying “spread out.”* (See the comment at 11:07.)

I don’t want to be in a position to mind read, and I don’t want Evan to be in a position where he might feel pressured in one direction or another. So I might ask the question more or less like this:

I understand you said the experience was at the tip of your tongue, and I’m totally happy with that, because I know that experience often does not conform to physical reality. So I want to encourage you to stay with that answer if that reflects your experience. But at the same time, I want to be responsive to some critic who might say that I didn’t give you an adequate opportunity to say that the taste was elsewhere in the mouth. So: regardless of what we might think about the distribution of taste buds, could you tell me where you experienced this taste?

I think that the water is already over the dam for this topic, so there is reason for skepticism about any answer that goes beyond Evan’s initial pretty confident “tip.” That is, this question should mostly be thought of as iterative training for day 3 and beyond. But I think my question leans somewhat *against* GP’s bias, pushes Evan somewhat in the direction of saying “tip.” *Then*, if Evan says “spread out,” there might

be some reason to think that perhaps it was spread out (subject to the skepticism already described).

Also, I report that my confirmation-bias? antennae jangled pretty hard at GP's affirmational responses during Evan's (19:09) turn. (See my comment at 11:19.)

19:27 RTH: So the, the "of course" is the, is the phrase that I want to, I want us to be particularly worried about, I guess I would say.

19:35 Evan: Okay. Alright. I'm being too logical again.

19:36 RTH: That's right. That's right.

19:38 Evan: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

19:39 RTH: And I, and I'm a, I don't think I entirely understood your first question, Gualtiero. Would you run that by me again so that I could understand?

19:49 GP: My first question?

19:50 RTH: Yeah. This, of this, you asked two questions about the fuet.

19:53 GP: Oh, just, yeah, just if, y'know, if there, if it was part of the experience that it was a *fuet taste* as opposed to something maybe more generic like sausage-y kind of taste, you know, um, yeah, I've never tasted fuet specifically, I don't think, but um, you know, yeah, it might have like a very specific taste compared to other types of sausage, let's say, that Evan can maybe experience *as such*, y'know, and, and as you say, you know, directly apprehended as opposed to, you know, I know it's sweat, but I, I'm tasting something kind of meaty or so sausage-y or something like that. That was the question.

20:39 RTH: [to Evan] And what was your answer to that question? (Now that I understand the question.)

20:43 Evan: [GP laughs] I would say that I was recognizing the taste as fuet, as specifically fuet.

20:53 RTH: So that, that's the kind of thing that I would like us to, I would like us to clarify. So Gualtiero's question, it seems to me, overlays some kind of a cognitive differentiation—it's fuet and not summer sausage or whatever. And I wanna, I don't, I don't, [pause] I don't, I don't want to. So, [pause] And, and, and I gather that I, I I'm *certain* in the real world there's a difference between the taste of fuet and other kinds of sausage. And, and I am also confident that Evan would know the difference that he's tasting fuet and not some other kind of Farmer John's sausage or whatever. But that doesn't mean, that doesn't mean that *in his experience* he is experiencing a differentiated this is fuet and not Farmer John's or summer sausage or head cheese or whatever.

22:00 Evan: Right.

22:06 RTH: So the question, the, the question that I think is the legitimate question in here is: are you at the moment of this beep somehow differentiating this particular taste from other tastes? *Or* are you tasting this, which of course is in the real world differentiated from other tastes, and in my experiential *history* experience differentiated from other tastes, but at the moment I'm just tasting what's there. So first off, is that your question, Gualtieri? [GP: Yeah.]

22:40 Evan: [Evan: Okay.] I'm getting a little bit more confused by this as time has gone on. [RTH: Okay.] I am...

22:49 RTH: Good! That's the, that was the object. [they laugh] So the, what, what I, what I wanted, what I want us to do is to sort of learn how to differentiate between what is experienced at the moment of the beep and what we could say in some logical way about it: [Evan: Right.] it belongs to this class and not that class; it was the result of the chewing and not of the swirling; or whatever we could, we could say about it. There are a lot of, there are a lot of things I think we *could legitimately say in the real world* about this experience.

22:49 Russ comments: RE "Good! That's [Evan: 'I'm getting a little bit more confused by this as time has gone on'] the, that was the object."
It is *not* that my aim is to confuse Evan; quite the contrary. However, what is good is that we are willing to acknowledge confusion, not be afraid of confusion, while at the same time trying to clarify things.

23:25 Evan: Yes. Yeah, I understand

23:27 RTH: Sort of in back and back of this experience. And I would like us to hone in on what actually presented itself at the moment.

23:41 Evan: I think I was.. So prominently tasting saltiness and meatiness, and there was a connection or an association with fuet. I would say. I wasn't thinking about fuet at the time, but it was, the taste is distinctive enough that that was an, maybe part of that experience, that it was a unique enough thing. I don't eat a lot of things that are similar to it. So it was prominently unique if, if that's what you were asking, kind of unsure.

24:18 GP: Yeah. I mean, to me it sounds like you're saying part of the exper, you know, the flavor experience was the fuet-ness of the flavor, so to speak, as opposed to something more generic.

24:18 Russ comments: I think I did not clarify the distinction here, so let's try it in the realm of color, which may be easier to grasp than taste. Suppose my eyeballs fall on a Stop sign; here are two possible experiences: (1) I am drawn to the red; I see the red, and it doesn't matter a bit where that red came from—the red occupies my experience. (2) I am drawn to the stop-sign red; the stop-sign red occupies my experience. In (1) the stop sign is largely (perhaps entirely) irrelevant context of my experience; in (2), the stop sign is (for whatever reason) somehow constitutive of my experience.

The same logic applies to the taste of sample 2.2. It is possible that (1) Evan is drawn to the taste, and it doesn't matter a bit where that taste came from—the taste occupies his experience; or (2) Evan is drawn to the fuet-taste—the fuet occupies his experience. In (1) the fuet is largely (perhaps entirely) irrelevant context; in (2), the fuet is (for whatever reason) somehow constitutive.

I think we did not make that distinction adequately clear, probably because of an inadequate epoché: *of course* the taste came from the fuet, and we didn't adequately bracket that, to allow the possibility that the fuet-ness was not experientially important.

See the comment at 29:24.

- 24:34 Evan: Yeah, I'd say that's, that's, I would say that's true.
- 24:39 RTH: And I'm worried about that, that, that we have crossed the line into inference rather than experience. Certainly we, I, I certainly, I think we all would agree he is tasting something that is fuet-y.
- 24:55 GP: Yeah.
- 24:56 RTH: And if that's all we mean by this conversation,
- 24:59 Evan: Yeah, I Good. I think so
- 25:02 GP: That's what I mean. Okay.
- 25:10 Evan: This is gonna be a marketing campaign for fuet by the end of it! [they laugh]
- 25:15 RTH: I'm gonna have to try some of this stuff! [Evan laughs]
- 25:19 RTH: The, uh, so then there's the pretty girl.
- 25:22 Evan: Yeah.
- 25:23 RTH: And what is your, what's your experience with that?
- 25:27 Evan: I... That is a good question. I get, I was just noticing that she was attractive, I guess, drawn to her face and eyes and noticing that she was attractive. And I don't know if there's any other element of the experience in that. It was mainly just the, the awareness that that is an attractive woman.
- 25:48 RTH: So it's more about the attractiveness than about the eyes? Is that true?
- 25:53 Evan: General attractiveness. Yes.
- 25:58 RTH: So I am seeing an attractive woman on the screen. On the screen. [Evan: Yeah.] Is that what we're on the screen? [Evan: Yeah.] And when asked to specify what, if I'm seeing, I say, well, I'm seeing her eyes and face and whatever, but it's more about the attractiveness that comes to me.

26:18 Evan: Yeah.

26:20 GP: Okay.

26:24 RTH: Then I think I'm good about that. Gualtiero?

26:24 Russ comments: I think that the attractiveness questioning was not very complete, but on reviewing the video, still I don't have a better idea of how to pursue this.

26:27 GP: Yeah.

26:31 RTH: All right. Number 3.

SAMPLE 2.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

26:34 Evan: So this one was a bit of a surprise to me. So all I felt was the metal top of the comb on my lip. And I think I was just staring blankly at the screen, which is not something that I ever thought I did, but I think I had an extremely minimal experience of this beep. Like, I, I don't, I didn't really register anything at this beep. I think I was so tired that I was just staring at the screen, and all I remembered was a, a small sensation of the, the metal top of the comb resting on my lip as I kind of stared blankly into the abyss.

27:13 RTH: So does, so is that to say that I, that if my, if, if my usual consciousness range or whatever is 100%, I'm, my whole, my whole consciousness is only 20 or 30 or 15 or whatever percent. And that is only on my comb, on my lip, and the rest of it is just nothing.

27:33 Evan: Yeah. It was, it was an empty beep.

27:38 RTH: Okay. But not a hundred percent empty because the, I have a comb on my lip. Or is it a hundred percent empty? And when I look back at it, I can say, well, the comb was on my lip.

27:51 Evan: No, I think, I think I noticed the, the comb on my lip. [RTH: Okay.] I think something in general I'm noticing is that I seem to be aware of my body and the, the contact my body makes with other things is probably the, the, the peak of my awareness, from what I'm noticing

28:09 RTH: So far. I would, I would agree.

28:10 Evan: So far we'll see.

28:13 RTH: Yes. And, and so let me, so, so is there any difference or the similarity or whatever so that we got a comb in your beard in a previous beep? This is on my lip. That was on my cheek, I gathered.

28:29 Evan: Yeah.

28:29 RTH: Other than that, is this sort of the same sensation?

28:32 Evan: I would say quite different, actually. It was there, there wasn't any sharpness or any metallic nature. It was, it was mainly just the object touching my lips. So it was, I would say less differentiated. It was, it was literally just a knowing that something is touching me, but that the physical characteristics of the touch and everything was just less defined.

28:56 RTH: Okay. And it's on my lip, not on my mustache?

28:59 Evan: Lip. Yeah. Lower,

29:00 RTH: Lower lip. [[Evan: Lower lip. Yeah.] So I'm feeling an object on my lower lip.

29:06 Evan: Yeah.

29:06 RTH: That object happens to be a comb, [Evan: Yeah.] happens to be metal, but that is not part of my experience. [Evan: No.] My experiences of something, some *thing*, touching my lip.

29:20 Evan: Yeah.

29:21 RTH: And this is a *lip* sensation.

29:23 Evan: Yeah.

29:24 RTH: I'm apprehending with my lip receptors, whatever those are, the, some object.

29:24 Russ comments: This example seems relevant to the discussion commented at 24:18. Here, the metal-ness and the comb-ness are irrelevant contexts; Evan's experience is *not of a metal comb* on his lip, but of *something* on his lip.

29:31 Evan: Yeah.

29:33 RTH: And I'm not really very strongly into that. I am minorly into that and the rest of it is blank.

29:41 Evan: Yeah. Just faded off. Yeah. [RTH: Okay.] It was a, it was a strange one, but blank.

29:48 RTH: Okay. Gualtiero?

29:52 GP: You did say you were, you had this sensation of *staring* blankly. [Evan: Yeah.] So there was this element of staring. [Evan: Yeah.] Was, so was that a visual experience? Was there, was there an intentional aspect to it? Like you were aiming at some, something that you were trying to see on the screen, but just not really experiencing anything?

29:52 Russ comments: RE "You did say you were, you had this sensation of *staring* blankly."

No, he never said that he had any sensation of staring. At 26:34 (his opening salvo) he said “And I think I was just staring blankly at the screen... I was just staring at the screen.” In that locution, “staring blankly” could be straightforwardly understood as an action that he was undertaking without that action’s being experienced. I accept that “staring blankly” *might* be experienced, that there *might* be a sensation of staring, and therefore that it would be warranted to *inquire whether there was* such a sensation. But that inquiry should be couched in the leading-slightly-away-from manner that I described in the comment at 11:07.

So when Evan says “Yeah,” I think there is no reason to believe him—that this is likely (or at least possibly) some collusive conversation. That does *not* mean that Evan’s “Yeah” is not correct—it means that the question was sufficiently leading that the answer cannot be credited.

- 30:19 Evan: I’d say in my *prior* experience to that moment, I was obviously working and reading off the screen. And then in that moment I just happened to be looking in that direction, but not registering any words on the screen or reading any of the words. And again, blurred and sort of just kind of staring, faded off.
- 30:41 RTH: Yeah. So what, so <inaudible> what I would say about that is that the word *staring* is a, you took it as being an *experiential* word, but it’s actually pretty ambiguous, I think. *Staring could be* experiential and it could, and it could be a physical fact. [GP: True.] [Evan: Yep.] My eyeballs are aimed at, I have been, I have been training at that. That is what *staring can mean*. And it sounds like that was probably what it *did* mean in this particular situation. My, uh, my eyeballs we’re entrained on the screen, but I, I don’t think he said he had the *experience* of staring. He said he was *staring*.
- 31:25 Evan: Yeah.
- 31:25 RTH: Those are two very different things from my point of view.
- 31:29 Evan: Yeah. I don’t think it was, in my experience at all. The lack of experience at this beep was really the surprising thing.
- 31:37 GP: Thing. Okay. So you were not experiencing the staring, you were not even experiencing anything visual.
- 31:47 Evan: I think the heavily blurred visual field is
- 31:50 GP: Heavily blurred.
- 31:51 Evan: But, but again, I, but I wouldn’t say it was part of the experience. I wasn’t consciously aware of it really. It was, it was just, it was just the metal or the comb touching the lip, *I think*.
- 32:09 GP: Yeah. Okay. So you were experiencing the, the metal on the lip, and you *knew* you were trying to know, aiming your eyes at the screen, but you did not experience anything from that.

32:24 Evan: Yeah.

32:27 RTH: And by *knew* I would say a fact of the universe, it was his eyes were aimed at the screen.

32:33 Evan: Yeah. I wasn't cognitively noticing it at that time, at that moment.

32:38 GP: Yeah, yeah. But I mean, y'know, your brain contained that information, but, and you can remember from maybe previous times and subsequent times that that's what was happening, but it was, yeah, nothing from that was experienced at that moment.

32:38 Russ comments: I agree that his brain contained that information, but I think it is *not fair to say that* unless you also say: his brain contained the information that $E = mc^2$; and his brain contained the information that Trump is in his second term as president; and his brain contained the information that Montana is west of Iowa; and his brain contained the information that the treaty that ended World War I was signed in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne, France; and....

If you *say* his brain contained that information, and you *don't say* all those other things (which is of course impossible, because that list is approximately infinite) then you are implying that there is something special about that brain information. That may be true, but you have no phenomenal warrant for holding that it's true. You may have some theory about that, which is well and good, but if we aim to try to grasp phenomena, I think we need to firewall any theory away from the phenomenal warrant.

32:56 Evan: Right.

32:59 RTH: So from my point of view, I've, I've been saying "it, it's not quite, quite what you're saying, Gualtiero." It's not what you're saying now. I'm saying it now, I'm about to say, "well, it's a little bit more than that." So I'm not, I'm not saying that, that Evan can, can definitively say, my eyes were aimed at the screen and there was *absolutely nothing about that*. What I think he can say is, my eyes were aimed at the screen, and *if there was anything that was in the weeds*, and there was, that's the, that's the limits of, that's the limits of what we can do. [GP: Right.] And so, and, and so the, the, the art of descriptive experience sampling is not to make *more* of it, which is to say *I was experiencing myself as staring*. That's *too much*, I think. And it's not to make *less* of it, which is to say, well, *there was absolutely nothing*. What there was, was pretty darn little, if anything. [Evan: Yeah.] Probably closer to the *nothing* end than there was to the *something* end. But that's the, that's the, that's the limitations of the, the limits of the method. I'm, I'm 100% in agreement that his brain cells are processing all kinds of crap about that, that are coming in through his eyes and what he read two minutes ago and already went five minutes ago. And what's happening in the political system and everywhere his brain is chewing on that stuff somehow.

34:19 Evan: Yeah.

34:26 RTH: We good about number 3?

34:28 GP: Yeah.

34:29 RTH: Number 4.

SAMPLE 2.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

34:35 Evan: So I was having an auditory experience watching a video, but focusing my attention on the music. I could sense the tempo of the heartbeat, tempo of my heartbeat, as I focused on the tempo of the music.

35:01 RTH: So I'm not sure that I got the right word. Are we talking heartbeat as in heart, heartbeat [points to chest] or a harp as in a harp instrument [mimes strumming a harp] on the

35:08 Evan: No, heart, heartbeat, heartbeat.

35:11 RTH: Heart. So I'm, I am noticing my physical sensation [Evan: Yeah.] while I am listening to the music.

35:18 Evan: Yes.

35:19 RTH: And is my experience more of my physical body? Or more of the music? Or equal? Or this, that question doesn't make sense?

35:26 Evan: It was more, it was more, the *tempo* of the music. It was even more, it, it was really, in that moment, it was the, the *tempo* and the *cadence* of the music. That was the prominent experience that I was trying to drill down on. [RTH: Okay.] And then I also noticed that the tempo of my heart,

35:44 RTH: And, and by the primary thing, do we mean like 60—40 or 90—10 or something like that? Or, or isn't that the right metric?

35:55 Evan: Let's say 80—20 seems about right. It was, it was, or maybe 90—10.

36:01 RTH: So a lot more, a *lot* more about the music than about my heart, but my heart is not gone.

36:06 Evan: Yeah.

36:07 RTH: Like in the last beep, we could say, well, the visual field was down below 20. It was closer to zero than it was to 20 probably, [Evan: Yeah.] in the previous beep. But *now* we're saying the heart is *there*, closer to 20 [Evan: Yes.] than it is to zero.

36:23 Evan: Yeah.

36:24 RTH: But not nearly as prominent as the, as the rhythm of the music, the tempo of the music.

36:31 Evan: Yes. Yeah.

36:33 RTH: And by the tempo, I wanna make sure I understand what you mean by that. I'm listening, I'm hearing the tempo of the music.

36:40 Evan: So the, the cadence of the beat, d,d,d,d,d,d, [imitates the rhythm track of music]

36:46 RTH: So the rhythmic repetitiveness or whatever of

36:49 Evan: The beats per minute of the, of the, of the, of the sound would be, yeah.

36:52 RTH: Say that again.

36:54 Evan: The beats per minute of the sound. Like you, when you're downloading a music track, you get 120 BPM of the, of the backtrack in video editing and such. So it's high beat just means that it's boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, not boom, boom, boom, boom. So the rhythm,

37:11 RTH: So you, you mean temp, when you say *tempo*, you *mean* tempo. You, [Evan: Yeah.] you don't mean the, the rhythmic of the snare drums and the hi-hat and the bass and the way and, and the whatever the pattern that it's making. You're talking about the actual number of beats per minute of this.

37:28 Evan: Yes.

37:30 RTH: Of this music, So I am noticing the rate, tempo and rate are pretty similar, I think. I'm noticing the rate that the music beat has.

37:41 Evan: Yeah.

37:42 RTH: Okay.

37:43 Evan: Yeah.

37:44 RTH: And the, and this is of a video that's on the screen.

37:48 Evan: Yeah.

37:49 RTH: And my eyes are aimed at the video, I presume?

37:54 Evan: Yes. But I remember very prominently what I was focused on was the tempo of the music because I thought the tempo was too fast. So I was limiting my attention to the tempo of the music and not focusing on the video at all.

38:07 RTH: Okay. And at the mo, and no, I wanna get the verb, verb tense correct. Is, at the moment of the beep is am, am I focused on the too-fast-tempo? Or am I focusing on the tempo, which in the surrounding times I could see was too fast. But at the moment I'm just into the tempo.

38:33 Evan: I'm not sure I understand that question.

38:36 RTH: So you said, at one time, I, well, for the, for the, for the first part of this, I, I was into the tempo. I was hearing the tempo. And we, we defined what tempo was. And then in the last portion you said, well, I had noticed that the tempo was *too fast*.

38:46 Evan: Yes. Yeah.

38:47 RTH: And so what I want to know, is the too-fastness a part of the experience at the moment of the beep? Or is that the fact that it was too fast? What gets me focused, I guess I, you might say [Evan: Yeah.] on a tempo, but at the moment it's just, I'm, I'm processing the tempo. I am, I am hearing the tempo.

39:09 Evan: I think, I think it's a good distinction. I think there's some level of awareness that it's too fast. But in that moment, the primary experience was just detecting the tempo itself. There was some cognitive awareness of it being too quick, but I don't, it wasn't the prominent aspect of that experience *in that moment*.

39:31 RTH: Okay. So what I'm gathering so far about this aspect is: I have somehow abstracted out or filtered out or something the tempo out of the, out of this complicated thing that's going on, there's a video with music and whatever, I'm focused particularly on the tempo.

39:52 Evan: Yeah.

39:54 RTH: And *maybe* the too-fastness of the tempo, but mostly the tempo.

40:00 Evan: Yeah,

40:02 RTH: Okay.

40:03 Evan: There's a very specific reason for that. But I think you told me that you don't really care about the reason, so I won't...

40:07 RTH: Prob probably I don't care. [Evan laughs] And, and, and Gualtieri, you want ask more questions about that? Or should we go to the heart?

40:17 GP: No, no. I want to hear about the heart.

40:19 RTH: Me too. So about the heart, what, what, what about the heart?

40:25 Evan: So I just have some, some experience there of the heart beating in my chest, and having awareness of that. And it, I don't think in that moment it was either, it was faster, but it was the awareness of it, of it there that I noticed kind of beating in my chest.

40:44 RTH: So this is not about the *tempo* of my heart, this is about *feeling* my heart.

- 40:50 Evan: Yeah. I would say that's, and again, maybe there was some cognitive awareness that it was beating faster than usual, but I'd say the prominent moment, the prominent *experience* was that I could feel it beating in my chest. [RTH: Okay.] It's hard to tease apart, like, you know, you have awareness of a thing after, but was the cognitive awareness in that moment, it's kind of, again, sort of uncertain.
- 41:15 RTH: Right? I, I don't, I don't, I, I certainly don't wanna undersell the difficulty of that. I think that's quite difficult. [Evan: Yeah.] But what I, what I, what does seem in my understanding, and I'm ask, I'm asking whether this is, whether this is right, that of the, of the *musical* aspect, I was specifically interested in the *tempo*, the beat of the music, *speed* of the music
- 41:38 Evan: Almost exclusively, rather than the content of the music or the genre of the music. Yeah.
- 41:43 RTH: And, but by contrast, in my understanding, and this is what I'm trying to figure out, whether it's right: about my heart, it's mostly I am feeling my heart. [Evan: Yeah.] And maybe there is some tempo aspect to it, but that's the minor portion.
- 42:00 Evan: Yeah. Yeah.
- 42:00 RTH: So the tempo is the *major* portion of the outside deal and a *minor* portion of the, if at all, of the, of the bodily sensation.
- 42:10 Evan: Yeah. Yeah. That's accurate.
- 42:12 RTH: So, so as far as my heart is concerned, *mostly* I am *feeling* my heartbeat.
- 42:18 Evan: Yeah. And thum[, kind of in my chest. So it feels, so there is a sensation that it's, I guess thumping more than usual.
- 42:34 RTH: Okay. And that's a bodily sensation, not a, it's not like I *hear* my heartbeat. It's, I hear even in my imagination, I hear my heart. It's *not that*. It's that I feel bodily. I feel my heart pumping maybe somewhat more than usual than in my chest.
- 42:55 Evan: Yes. Yeah.
- 42:58 RTH: And I'm gathering that the this-is-more-than-usual aspect is more retrospectively cognitive than at the moment. [Evan: Correct.] It's not like in the moment I am noticing the more-than-usualness of my heart at the moment. I am noticing my heart and I can, looking back, I can say, well, that might be more than usual.
- 43:25 Evan: Yeah. Yeah. It's, it's again, very hard to know. But yeah, it could be, it could be either. Could be.
- 43:32 RTH: So I'm not trying to talk you out of, out of one or into...

- 43:35 Evan: No, I get you. I, I don't have, I i I don't have, um, sort of strong confidence one way or the other. It *could have been* noticing that it was faster than usual or *just noticing it* or both [RTH: Okay.] in some ratio.
- 43:51 RTH: And *faster* than usual is somehow different from *stronger* than usual thumpy-er than usual.
- 44:03 Evan: Um, [pause]
- 44:07 RTH: So I'm noticing it, I guess I, I guess what we're arriving at, I'm noticing my heart and maybe it's somewhat thumpy-er and maybe it's somewhat faster or whatever, but that is not the primary experiential aspect. The primary experiential aspect is I'm feeling it.
- 44:20 Evan: Yes. Yeah, that's correct.
- 44:22 RTH: And that is sort of 20 percent-ish by comparison to the 80 percent-ish, which is the tempo of the music.
- 44:30 Evan: Yes. Yeah, that's right.
- 44:32 RTH: Okay.
- 44:37 GP: Did you say there was a, a relatedness between the heartbeat and the tempo of the music?
- 44:45 Evan: For sure. Um, I would guess that when you're focusing on rhythm and tempo, that the heart would become more prominent as the, as the tempo pacemaker in your body. So I, yeah, def definitely related.
- 44:45 Russ comments: RE "Um, I would guess that when you're focusing on..."
I take that as meaning: Theoretically they are (*of course*) related. Experientially not.
- 45:03 GP: Yeah. And, and so you, would you say that part of the experience was the relatedness or the, the difference between the rhythm of the heart and or that rhythm of the music? Or not? Not that, maybe not just the rhythm.
- 45:19 Evan: No, I don't think I was, I don't think I was making any awareness, um, comparison between the two. I think Russ is gonna have an issue with this question! [laughs].
- 45:29 RTH: It's, it's tricky. They're tricky.
- 45:32 Evan: I wouldn't say I was comparing them. Just aware of, of both.

INTERLUDE: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- 45:36 GP: Yeah. Um, is it too early for me to make any general observations? [Evan laughs]

- 45:46 RTH: I, I think you should feel free to make general observations, and then I might feel free to under undermine anything. [GP laughs] But, uh, go for it.
- 45:54 Evan: Go for it! [laughs].
- 45:56 GP: Um, yeah, and I just noticed that there's a lot of sensory aspects to Evan's experiences compared to mine. Like, it seems like it's, so far, mostly sensory experiences and, um, and maybe, maybe the proportion is less, less biased towards vision than my sensory experiences. But in *my* experiences there was a lot of *thought* experiences, thoughty experiences, and then a lot of *visual* experiences, and some non-visual sensory, but not, not as, as much. Whereas for Evan it's a lot of, um, [Evan: So what I'm excited...] with different senses. And, and so far no inner speech yet, right?
- 46:56 Evan: No, no inner. So, so what I want to do next week for sure is I wanna vary up the experiences, because I think I didn't do the first week right, as Russ correctly predicted. So this week I was like, okay, just put myself in an environment where it's kind of nice and controlled and I'm just working for four hours. Now for the next week. I want to go out and do I wanna go for a walk, I want to do other things and try to get a few beeps doing different things. I feel like that's when the more varied inner-monologue thinking type stuff comes in. Because I have been, of course in the last two weeks I've been, I, I think a lot more aware of my experience even when I'm not wearing the beeper. And I'm definitely catching myself debating versus other people. I'm excited for us to interrogate this. But [laughs], um, yeah, like I, I think, I think they're less thought-y processes when I'm sitting at my desk and working for sure. And, and, and a lot of bodily sensations noticing that the sort of tactile feeling the air from the fan or whatever on the body. Yeah. Curious to see if we'll hold throughout the weeks.
- 47:58 RTH: So what I would, what I would say about that is I'm delighted to have you try it in different situations, but I would make, I would call them different *situations* rather than different *experiences* because I, I, what I would like us to do is to be agnostic, what I call *bracketing*, any expectation that we might have about whether it's gonna be different or the same. [Evan: Yeah.] And that, that what we, that we, what we should be cultivating here would be that it would be *just as interesting* to find that it's the *same* as, it would be interesting to find that it's *different*.
- 48:30 Evan: Yes.
- 48:31 RTH: And I for sure, I, I think that's true. It would be *for me* anyway, it would be just as interesting to find that [Evan: For me as well.] it's the same and, and I think we need to call, we, we need to cultivate that.
- 48:40 Evan: Yeah.
- 48:41 RTH: And the other, the other thing I would say about Gualtiero's, general, generalization is that, that Gualtiero had a quite a bit of bodily experience, more, more than the average guy that I sample with. And Evan's got more than more than that. But, but

that's the, that's the nature of sort of the random selection of people, I think. And, uh, but I, but I definitely agree that so far I don't think we've had any, anything that's really sort of remotely cognitive in Evan's experience. We can *impose* a cognition, but it's not part of his direct experience. His cognition is underground or I'm presuming that he's sitting at his computer, he is thinking about *something*, but it doesn't make its way into his direct experience.

49:33 Evan: Yeah. Interesting.

49:36 RTH: And that is, what's that, that is what's interesting about it. Onward or is there more to say about that, Gualtiero? Okay, number 5.

49:50 Evan: So I have,

49:52 RTH: [interrupts] And, and, and, but I guess I would, I would say about, so Gualtiero felt a little bad about generalizing something about that. I, I don't have any objection to generalizing as long as the generalization is in the service of improving the ability to attend to experience. [Evan: Yeah.] So we, we can make a generalization and, and then *marvel* at it and, and, and accept that, well, you know, we're, we're talking about the same thing here. We agree with each other about what we're talking about here. And, and, but then marvel at it. And by *marvel* at it, I, I mean not try to, uh, validate some theory about the way consciousness is are or something.

50:39 Evan: There is one experiment I'm really curious on doing that. Just, it happened in my podcast there. We were speaking about, uh, mental maths, and I've always been pretty good at mental arithmetic, but he asked me how I do it, like what's the actual phenomenology? And I had no idea. So at one point, I wanna do that just outta curiosity. Like when I'm multiplying large numbers or something in my head, I have no idea what process I do or what's in my head or what if I visualize in geometry. So that is, that's just a curiosity experiment that maybe in a few weeks, once I'm actually any good at this, I'll, I'll try, out of curiosity.

51:11 RTH: So I'm delighted with that on both counts. Both on let's get good at it first. [Evan: Yes.] and then it'll be, it would be interesting to do that. [Evan: Yeah.] And we can, and we can figure out how to do some kind of an experiment. Like Gualtiero has, had an interest sort of in along the lines of, *I got a personal interest* or whatever. His, it was into sleep. So we're, we, were, we modified the technique so that we could explore sleep. I'm totally in favor of doing that kind of, that kind of thing. But...

51:35 Evan: It was waking you up.

51:37 RTH: Yeah, the beeper woke him up.

51:38 Evan: Not sure if I'm a fan of that to be... I like my eight hours clean. Sorry, I, I have too much triathlon to recover from then [laughs], I'd love the, I'd love the, I'd love the results, but I just, I think damaging my, hurting the sleep would be too big for me.

51:52 RTH: So that's not *your* interest. [laughs] But it was, it was Gualtiero's.

- 51:56 Evan: I'm waking up so many times through the night here in, in Spain in the summer anyway, that it probably wouldn't even fractionate my sleep more than it is already. So may, maybe we'll try it, cuz I am very curious.
- 52:07 RTH: But I, I, I wasn't trying to push the sleep study by any means. What I was trying, what I was trying to say is I'm totally happy to extend the method of in into whatever people's interest is. [Evan: Cool.] And, uh, but I would like us to be, I, I would like us to be good at sort of the method *in the wild* before we end aim it at some specific thing.
- 52:28 Evan: For sure. Can you have the beeper do the, the latter four hours of my sleep rather than the first four hours? Can you program it that I can turn that on and it only starts beeping after four hours?
- 52:40 RTH: We, Yeah, we could figure out how to do that. It wouldn't be okay. It, it wouldn't be in the, in the, with the beeper, but it would be in different kind of form.
- 52:48 Evan: Okay. That would be more interesting to me because then I'm catching, capturing dreams. Anyway, we're getting sidetracked a little bit.
- 52:55 RTH: Yeah. We ready to move on to number 5?

SAMPLE 2.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 52:58 Evan: Yes. So I was reading a message on WhatsApp on my laptop and again, have some awareness and experience of reading. And then I was feeling the physical air current and the right side of my body from the bottom of my back to the top of my shoulder. So the fan again shooting air at me and I could feel that physical air current, um, while I was reading a message.
- 53:29 RTH: And does "could feel" the air current mean I "was feeling" the air current? [Evan: Yes.] That was part of my, [Evan: Yes.] it's not, when I go back and look at it, I can say, "oh, there, where's air coming? It's going this way." But, but I was noticing the air current at the moment of the beep.
- 53:44 Evan: Yeah, I think so, anyway.
- 53:46 RTH: And which is more prominent to me, the air current or the reading.
- 53:52 Evan: I, I should have maybe wrote, written down a percentage, cuz I, I for some reason don't have a very strong memory of this, of this beep. It wasn't very eventful. Um, I couldn't tell you to be honest. Now I don't, I don't have the strongest memory o,f of how this was divided up. Should I write that down? Roughly?
- 54:12 RTH: Only if it's salient to you. I, I don't want to tell you how to do it. I want you to tell me about your experience.
- 54:18 Evan: Yeah, I, my memory of it isn't, isn't, isn't too good.

54:23 RTH: Okay. So I'm reading, I'm reading on WhatsApp. [Evan: Yeah.] Reading with comprehension? I'm understanding what's happening?

54:32 Evan: Yeah.

54:33 RTH: Okay. And is there anything to say about that experiential bucket? How that, how that experience presents itself to me?

54:42 Evan: That's a good question. I wasn't reading it out loud. I wasn't moving my lips, for sure this time. Um, I don't know experientially reading. Like am I, I don't think I'm magnifying the words in my mind or anything. No, I just, I just think I was, no, I don't mean there was anything experientially interesting about the reading.

55:06 RTH: So it's *not* like I'm *speaking* the words or [Evan: No.] it *is* like, I'm speaking the words either innerly or outerly?

55:13 Evan: No, definitely not outerly. But...

55:19 RTH: So one, so I don't, I don't mean to imply that you *have to be* speaking them innerly because I think it's totally possible to apprehend the meaning, to glean the meaning [Evan: Yes.] without speaking, without speaking innerly. [Evan: Yea.] And it's also possible to innerly speak. So I'm, I'm, I don't favor either one of those methods, either one of those experiential aspects.

55:39 Evan: Yeah. I, I think it was a very minimal part of my experience, like just the, the reading of the message. I don't think it was particularly maybe a little bit innerly, but it was not prominent.

55:52 RTH: And by the it there, the, it there is, I'm getting the meaning, but *how* I'm getting the meaning, I can't really tell you.

55:57 Evan: That's exactly it. It was a simple message. So it kind of was just read in automatically. No thought required.

56:05 RTH: Okay. So this, I'm, I'm getting, I'm, I'm gleaning the semantic content of this message. And if I'm speaking it in any way, that's the absolutely minor-list minorly-est part of the experience.

56:24 Evan: Yeah. Yeah.

56:27 RTH: Okay. You happy with that Gualtiero? [GP: Yeah.] And then I am feeling air current on my body.

56:38 Evan: Yeah. Right side of my body from the back, from the bottom of my back to the top of my shoulder.

56:44 RTH: And I'm understanding this to be a sensation. I have the sensation of a breeze blowing on me.

56:50 Evan: Yeah.

56:51 RTH: And I know that it's coming from the fan that's over there and I know what the temperature is and I know all the rest of the stuff about it, but that's not in my experience. What's in my experiences of the air moving across my body.

57:02 Evan: Yeah.

57:03 RTH: And anything more to say about that?

57:06 Evan: I don't think so. There's maybe always a mild like sensation of the air itself being slightly colder than my skin. So again, a slight cooling sensation, but I don't think it was the prominent part of that experience.

57:22 RTH: So this one is more about *air movement* than it is about *cooling*. [Evan: Yeah.] Cooling might have been a, might have been a part of it, but the smaller part, yeah. And I think, I think last time we had a beep where it was mostly about the cooling part of it and the air might have been...

57:38 Evan: Yes. Yeah, I think so as well.

57:42 RTH: Okay. Then I'm good about that. You happy Gualtiero? [GP: Yes. Thank you.] It is 6:59, which means we've been at this for 59 minutes. Should we skip the last beep or we wanna do the last beep? Or, I'm easy.

58:01 Evan: It wasn't a complicated one. If we wanna do it for five minutes again, I think my experience was

58:06 RTH: Go for, let's go for it. Number 6.

SAMPLE 2.6 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

58:08 Evan: So just the sense all I've written is I have the sensation of heat and sweat on my skin, but blank thoughts. So I was just standing on the, about my balcony and the sun hitting my skin. So all I was experiencing in that moment was really the heat sensation on my skin.

58:26 RTH: And this is more about the heat than it is about the sweat?

58:30 Evan: Yes, definitely.

58:33 RTH: But either way, this is a bodily sensation.

58:36 Evan: Yeah. I have absolutely no visual experience in this moment. I have no, nothing going on upstairs. Literally just heat on the skin is, yeah.

58:48 RTH: Okay, then I am good about that. [Evan: Yeah.] So shall we do this again?

They compare calendars

1:00:44 RTH: All right. Sounds like a plan to me.

1:00:45 Evan: Thanks, gents.

1:00:46 RTH: And, and I will, I will do the same thing, which is to make a transcript with commentary and, and whatever, which I have sent to everybody. And Evan, and Evan, you can look at those or not look at those. How, however you are interested.

1:00:58 Evan: I haven't, I haven't honestly looked at them yet cuz it's been a very busy week. But I, I probably will outta curiosity.

1:01:03 RTH: If you do look at them and, and you're interested in the commentary, the commentary is in green so you, if so you can jump from comment to comment to comment if you want. Or you can go back and look at what you said or whatever. But, uh, and, and if you want to *add* comments, you should do so. And if you disagree with any comments that I have made, you should do so. And the same goes for Gualtierio. So the commentary allows us a colloquy we about the stuff if we want to have it and, uh,

1:01:37 Evan: Yep. Sounds good.

1:01:41 RTH: Alrighty. Sounds good to me.

1:01:43 Evan: Thank you guys. Have a good weekend.

1:01:45 RTH: See ya.

1:01:46 GP: Yeah, you too.