

Evan 5
Evan Sampling Day 5

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the August 20 sampling interview 5 with Evan that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/pQxdBNiz8E0>. 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

- 0:05 RTH: So this is the first time that we have seen each other in three, three-ish weeks or something like that. Two and a half, maybe three, three weeks.
- 0:15 Evan: It's been too long since my inner experience has been interrogated. I was missing it!
- 0:20 RTH: Well, good. We'll try to, we'll try to scratch that itch here this morning in the, this afternoon. Anything we should be talking about?
- 0:27 Evan: I want, I just wanna mention one thing that's been kind of, uh, *crazy*. For some reason, and I dunno why, but our podcast together, Russ, has completely exploded in the last three weeks. It is now *by far* the most watched podcast on my channel, and I would have to do the maths, but it might have more views than all of my podcast, other podcasts combined. Our episode is on 130,000 and still going up. I am, which is far and away higher than my second most, which is at 10,000. So I dunno what caused this, but the demand for inner experience is, it's there and it's been great to see. The comments are amazing and very entertaining, and lots of people confident about their inner experience when they shouldn't be. Um, but it's been, it's been a wild ride the last few weeks seeing it going up. So I thought I'd mention that before we dive into the beeps.
- 1:21 RTH: Well, I, I, I had meant to mention, to mention, I had meant to mention to you as well that I have been now receiving a, an email a day, maybe, from people who are telling me about their inner experience and that they've seen a podcast, which I presume is your podcast. Most, some people. [Evan: Right!] Some people say it is. So there's a lot of people who are writing to me directly more than I can respond to, or whatever, and saying, well, I've, you don't understand my inner experience, or, I've got inner experience that's different from anything you've ever seen, or some, something like that.
- 1:59 Evan: Interesting.

- 2:00 RTH: And it's sort of hard for me to know what to, what to do with that. But it, I do think there is a growing interest in inner experience. And where that comes from, I don't, I don't know. I suspect it's a swinging of the pendulum from the, the sort of the denial of inner experience that's rampant in the world. And, uh, but it's hard to know.
- 2:27 Evan: Maybe people are finally getting over this *everyone thinks like me* bias, and they're, y'know, finally we're coming to, y'know, the conclusion that everyone's minds are very different. And we, there's very, there's evidence of that now. Y'know, there's a, there's a lot more people coming out with ADHD, autism, all these different forms of neuro divergences, and people are starting to kind of accept the idea that somehow our 86-billion-neuron brains are actually quite different from each other. Which, um, has kind of seemed certainly obvious to me, but, y'know, maybe not for others.
- 3:03 RTH: Well, that would be the optimistic way of looking at it. And, uh, and, and it might actually even be true. So it's, uh. But I, but I, I, y'know, I, I think that the, the kind of effort that we all, that the three of us and the others folks are involved with is sort of the opposite of the main thrust of AI, in the AI direction, which I think the AI direction is just a symptom of the whole, of the whole deal, where you don't really need to care about anything. You just put in a bunch of numbers and out comes an answer. And that answer can be convincing and interesting and useful and whatever. I'm not, not, I'm not criticizing AI, but it's an, it is an entirely impersonal, uh... I'll leave it at that. It's, it is *entirely* impersonal, and, and, uh, DES is the absolute diametric opposite of that.
- 4:04 Evan: Right. It's probably a conversation for another day, but I'd love to get your thoughts on an AI model that was trained on inner experience, y'know, had this billions and trillions of data points on inner experience and what that AI might look like. Definitely a conversation for another day. It's something that I've been interested in and thinking about.
- 4:27 RTH: I've got a team working on that.
- 4:31 Evan: [inaudible]
- 4:32 RTH: and when I have something to say,...
- 4:32 Evan: That's very interesting.
- 4:33 RTH: I'll say it. Right now, I don't have anything to say about it, except that I've got a team working on it. And I shouldn't say I've, I shouldn't say "I've got a team working on it," there. I should say, "There is a team working on it that's trying to take *my stuff* (and I'm involved with it), but it's not like I recruited these people and whatever.
- 4:55 Evan: Interesting. Cool. Excited to hear more.
- 4:58 RTH: I'm participating in it for good or for ill. We'll see about that. So shall we dive into Evan's... is this gonna be day 5? Is that I've sort of lost track, but something like that.

- 5:15 Evan: Yeah, I have as well. I'm not sure if but 5 probably sounds about right.
- 5:20 RTH: Let's presume for the moment that it's day five and I'll, I'll sort that through before I make the video. But, uh,
- 5:29 Evan: Yeah, so beep number 1.
- 5:31 RTH: So I'm ready if Gualtiero is ready.
- 5:34 GP: Ready.
- 5:34 RTH: Number 5, *day* 5, number 1.

SAMPLE 5.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 5:39 Evan: So I was standing up. Most of my awareness was that my legs were incredibly tired, heavy, and sore. I just completed an inhumane, ridiculous workout. So almost all of my experience in these beeps was leg down (or waist down) mostly. Um, and then I had some tactile sensation of my hand being on my hip and my fingers pressing on my skin. But probably 80% of the awareness was just tired legs, heavy legs, and sore, sore legs.
- 6:17 RTH: And is there basically one sensation of heavy-soreness or is this a multiple? My legs feel heavy and they feel sore and they, whatever.
- 6:30 Evan: I was thinking about this question, cuz I thought you might ask me, and I don't, I don't really know. I am, they, there seems to be distinct aspects of it, but it is sort of perceived as, as a whole, like it's hard to, I would say *sore* and *heavy* are probably different in that the soreness is localized specifically to a particular, like my quad is sore, but the heaviness is sort of a bodily sensation of the entire leg and equally spread out over the whole leg, if that makes sense.
- 7:06 RTH: Okay. And so does it seem to me that at this moment, well, lemme, lemme ask a, a more fundamental question. So first off is, is, is this aspect of your experience entirely sensory? That is, I'm not analyzing where, where this comes from, or what happened to it or whatever, but I'm just feeling it?
- 7:24 Evan: Sensory. Um, it's perception rather than cognitive awareness. Yeah.
- 7:28 RTH: Okay. And, and then does it seem like I am noticing my legs? Or does it seem like I am noticing my legs *and* I am noticing my quads? Or is that, or is that too fine a distinction? Or
- 7:44 Evan: Does it feel like I'm noticing my legs and the pain or just the pain? I think I have some... I don't know [inaudible].
- 7:57 RTH: Okay. So "I don't know" is a fair enough, fair enough, a fair enough answer to that. There doesn't have to be an answer to that question. I'm perfectly capable of ans,

asking questions that don't have answers. And, uh, so what I'm, what I'm gathering is that as far as my leg aspects is concerned, I am feeling sensations in my legs. I'm feeling what my legs are sending to my brain, I guess, I guess you could say. And, and there's heaviness and there's soreness and maybe these are differentiated and maybe there's, maybe they're not. But I am 80% of my sensorium, consciousness, whatever, is receiving perception sensations about leg pain soreness.

8:48 Evan: Yes. Yes. I think that's right.

8:51 RTH: Okay. You have any more questions about that, Gualtiero?

8:55 GP: Yeah. Um, when you, if I understood correctly, when you initially described the experience used, you used the words *tired* and *sore*, and then later you switched to *heavy* and *sore*. Is *heavy* a better descriptor for what you initially called *tired*? Or are there three different things? Or what's the best way to describe the relationship between the tiredness and the heaviness sensations?

8:55 Russ comments: GP is correct to be inquiring about whether there is an experiential distinction here between *tired* and *heavy*. Evan had said (5:39) "my legs were incredibly tired, heavy, and sore" but RTH omitted the *tired* concept when he replied (6:17) "is there basically one sensation of heavy-soreness...?" It would have been somewhat better if RTH had asked "is there basically one sensation of tired-heavy-soreness...?" and let Evan sort it out from there.

RE: "Or what's the best way to describe the relationship between the tiredness and the heaviness sensations?"

Here is a fine but important point. That question is (in my view) too much about the words. Yes, Evan used two different words (*tired* and *heavy*), but using two words does *not* necessarily imply that there are two different sensations, as is implied by the inquiry about the *relationship between* them.

Here is another way of saying the same thing: GP's question *thingifies* or *nounifies* what has until now been a description and an adjective. The fact that Evan's legs feel heavy does *not* imply that he has a sensation of heaviness. The fact that Evan's legs feel tired does *not* imply that he has a sensation of tiredness. The problem is that once GP thingifies (nounifies) two separate things, then it suggests an inquiry about their relationship / interaction, whereas if he had stayed in the descriptive (adjectival) mode, there is no such temptation.

In short, I think GP's 8:55 turn is apt until the last sentence.

The good news is that Evan does not bite on the nounification and returns the conversation to its descriptive, adjectival form.

9:33 Evan: I think I might've said the fir... I have all three words written down. So "legs, very tired, heavy, and sore." So I might've said all three. And then the second time, you're right, I leaned on *heavy* and *sore*. What's the difference between them? Good question. If I differentiate...

9:49 RTH: If, if [inaudible]

9:49 Evan: Yeah, I can differentiate *soreness* for sure. But heaviness and tiredness, like those are both just metaphors really, right? They're both, they're both just compar, they're both just words. I don't know if either of them necessarily approximates the experience of the whole leg and what I'm feeling. Is one of them better or the other. I don't know. Maybe heavy, hard to say.

9:49 Russ comments: This is, in my view, an exquisitely sensitive response, where Evan acknowledges that GP has nounified *heaviness* and *tiredness*, but then forcefully denies the nounification—they're just metaphors, they don't approximate the experience. This rejection of nounification arises organically from Evan's attempt to describe his experience—that is, it is not the result of some rule-based preference for adjectives over nouns.

10:14 GP: No. And I didn't mean to suggest that. I, um, I was under the misconception that you might have switched from *tired* to *heavy*, but really there was all three of them. So that's a helpful clarification. Thank you.

10:14 Russ comments: This is, in my view, a good example of how good DES interviewing works. RTH somewhat unfairly understated Evan's possible distinction between *heavy* and *tired*; RTH's understatement probably led GP to over-separate *heavy* and *tired*. But the context of the interviewing (this is Evan's 5th day, and Evan is knowledgeable about our aims) enables Evan to get us back on track.

All this is in the *it's not about the words* discussion. It *is* about the words in the sense that RTH's and GP's worded imperfections caused us to spend some valuable interview time making distinctions that were probably not necessary. But it is *not* about the words in the sense that Evan's skill about the process (which RTH and GP have transmitted to him across four sampling days) allows him to respond to what RTH and GP really want to know despite the imperfection of both of their questions.

10:32 RTH: Onward. And then there is something about hands on hips. Fingers on hips. I can't, don't remember exactly what you said.

10:40 Evan: Yeah, some I had like my hand like this. [demonstrates] So some tactile sensation of my hand, near my hip and then fingers pressing on my skin. But I would say maximum 20% of the experience, maybe even just 10, the legs, the interceptive perception from the legs is really the vast majority of my awareness in that moment.

11:00 RTH: Okay. And without, without trying to get too careful about the last 10 or 20%, is this a sensation of, uh, of uh, of a an on-my-hips sensation? Or on-my-fingertips sensation? So am I, am I feeling something pressing against my hips, which happens to be my fingertips? Or am I feeling my fingertips pressing against something, which happens to be my hips, if that distinction makes sense?

11:27 Evan: Yeah, I, I think it's both. I seem to, I think I, I think when I tend to have one body part touching another, I can feel the sensation on both ends.

11:36 RTH: Okay. So let's...

11:37 Evan: I didn't have any cognitive, cognitive awareness either way. So I wasn't thinking fingers on hips, it was just feeling on fingertips. The skin on the finger of my fingertips and the skin on my hip.

11:48 RTH: Okay. So let's, let's set aside the, *I usually do* portion of that, because [Evan: Okay. (laughs)] that may or may not be true. And I don't, I, I don't, I, I don't wanna explore something that we don't have a way of doing it. But what I, so I think it is *possible* to have my fingers on my hips and feel it in one aspect of my body and not the other. Whether that's true for you, [Evan: Yes.] I don't, I don't mean to imply that it, I think it is. I just don't want us to *assume* that just *because* my fingers are in contact with *my* hips, I must be feeling 'em in both domains.

12:22 Evan: Yes. Yeah. No, I understand.

12:24 RTH: Okay. So there's something, and these are fingers on my bare hips? This is not, it's not like on my [Evan: Yeah.] shorts or whatever. So it's,

12:33 Evan: Yeah.

12:34 RTH: So this is a, my skin, my hip skin feeling, my fingers pushing, and my finger skin feeling my hips as best I can tell in the last 10, 10%.

12:48 Evan: Yeah, sounds about right.

12:48 RTH: But ent, *entirely*, both of the, both of these sensations, which I keep, which first I'm gathering occupy sort of a hundred percent of whatever, whatever we want to call this stuff--awareness, consciousness.

13:03 Evan: Yeah.

13:03 RTH: Apprehensions or whatever. They're all, it's entirely sensory.

13:07 Evan: This is where it gets really tricky, right? With the, with *awareness*, and separating awareness with what was in your visual field in that moment. Like of course I was looking at something and I know what I was looking at, but in the moment of the beep, I'm really trying to direct my awareness to what was there. And I, I think it was a hundred percent bodily perception. But it, that's, that's the really hard part, right? Y'know, there, there might be some visual field in there. There *might* be. I think, I think upstairs it was pretty quiet, anyway. [RTH: Okay.] Y'know, those, those probably some other stuff going in there. But that's the really hard part to tease, to tease, tease through to really figure it out.

13:49 RTH: Okay. So what I would say about that is our goal is not perfection. Our goal is as good as we can do. And, uh, so I'm happy with beep number 1. Gualtiero, you...? [GP gives thumbs up] Onto beep number 2. And maybe we should, before, before we do that, Gualtiero, I, I can't ever, can't remember: Have I been the primary interviewer on all of these? And if so, should I continue in that role or,

- 14:21 GP: Yeah, I like the way we're doing it. If I have any more questions, I'll ask. [RTH: Okay.] If not, you ask way better at this than I'm,
- 14:31 RTH: So I'm not, I'm not sure that I can remember how we're doing it, but so, so if I'm doing it in a way that offends you in any way, well let me know and we'll, we'll figure it out. So number 2.
- 14:42 Evan: And my, my girlfriend's crawling behind me because she feels like she can't be on camera. You're allowed to just be on camera and get something. She's just crawling behind me. You're allowed to, you're allowed to walk.
- 14:50 RTH: Hello girlfriend! I, We can cut you out of there. And uh, or
- 14:54 Evan: Yeah, she was just, no, she has no problem. She just didn't wanna disturb and she thought crawling across the floor was a better way of not disturbing. Anyway,
- 15:00 RTH: I, I think in the scheme of things we can, we can deal with girlfriends a lot easier than we can deal with a lot of other things and...

SAMPLE 5.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 15:08 Evan: Yes, exactly. Okay. Beep 2. Um, so again, a feeling of, of body tiredness. My right quad felt specifically tight. And this time I was looking at a man on a computer screen focused on his eyes. And there was some yellow in my perceptual awareness as well.
- 15:37 RTH: So I'm not sure that I got the overall gist of that. Are there, are there three, three aspects here? Quad tight, seeing the eyes of the guy, and something about yellow? Or is that, is that three sort of separate strands?
- 15:52 Evan: Yeah. Yeah, I would guess so, cuz I, I was looking at them on the computer screen focused on his eyes. There was some awareness of eyes. And then there was some yellow in the awareness as well. So I guess that those are, are separate. Cuz it was a, a different element to then the person and the eyes. So it seemed different.
- 16:11 RTH: Okay. Gualtiero?
- 16:13 GP: Uh, the, you started but with body tiredness, is that a fourth thing then? A fourth thing? Yeah, a fourth experience?
- 16:23 Evan: Yeah. I, I, I would say so and all. I don't, I don't think I've found the right word for that, but yeah, it is just a full-body heaviness. Tiredness. I, I don't know if those are the exact right words, but it's definitely the most prominent awareness.
- 16:39 RTH: So in this beep, unlike the previous beep, there are two separate strands of bodily focus, I guess you might say. Sort, sort of my overall body tiredness *and* my quad tightness.
- 16:55 Evan: Yeah.

16:57 RTH: Is, is that your understanding too, Gualtiero? Is that...?

17:02 GP: With the minor qualification that in the first one there was still some distinction, maybe partial distinction between the tiredness of the whole leg and the heaviness of the legs as a whole and versus the more specific soreness of the quads. Um, so even there, there was a, there was a bit of a distinction between these two aspects of the experience of the legs. But it was maybe it wasn't as distinct as in this one. Is that fair? Or was it a similar distinction between the overall tiredness and the, um, tiredness in the right quad? It does...

17:54 Evan: <crosstalk>, I think the main, sorry.

17:57 GP: No, anyway, from the way you described it, I would agree that it seems like the, the second the experience of the body in the second beep was two more distinct experiences than in the first.

18:08 Evan: Yeah, yeah, definitely. If that, that's your question. That's definitely true. Yeah.

18:15 RTH: So it seems to me like we're sort of in agreement here that there's *more* distinction, there's there, there's, there's more separateness of two tracks in the second beep than there was in the first beep. Which is not to say there was none in the first beep. And what we were said in the first beef was, well, maybe there, maybe there was, and maybe there wasn't. I'm not sure about the second beep were saying, yeah, I'm pretty sure there were two.

18:39 Evan: Yes,

18:39 RTH: Everybody with that,

18:42 Evan: Especially because the, the feeling of tightness in the quad is a different feeling of the, the tiredness in the body. Whereas before it was kind of the whole legs were, were tired, heavy sore.

18:55 RTH: Okay. Okay. And then there's the eyes. So the, I'm, I'm seeing the guy on the screen and I'm looking at his eyes? Is that...?

19:14 Evan: Yeah.

19:15 RTH: And, and have I,

19:17 Evan: Well, well, looking at his face, but I have sort of maybe slightly more awareness of his, his eyes, so that his total face is definitely, um, in the awareness, but his eyes moreso.

19:28 RTH: Okay. And is there, and is there anything particular about his eyes? Or is it just I can say that, I see

19:35 Evan: I think, I think this might be a product of not my experience and more the, what I'm trying to achieve by making a thumbnail. So, so like, I'm, I'm focusing, this is where I'm not sure if this is necessarily an, an [inaudible] element of my experience or I'm focused on that because eyes are important in thumbnails, and that's something that I'm cog cognitively aware of, but wasn't aware of in that moment, if that makes sense.

20:05 RTH: So is that to say I have a sort of a sensitivity to the eye display of a thumbnail? [Evan: Yes.] And that's probab, that's probably the background of what's having me focusing mostly on the eye aspect of this face display.

20:20 Evan: That's my hypothesis, yes.

20:23 RTH: Okay. So it's not like I'm seeing his eyes because they appear angry to me, or because they, they are blue and I like blue eyes or whatever. That's

20:33 Evan: Not that I was aware of anyway.

20:35 RTH: Okay. And then there's *yellow*.

20:39 Evan: Yeah.

20:41 RTH: And I, I, so far I haven't understood anything at all about yellow other than there's yellow.

20:49 Evan: Yeah. That's kind of all... Like I did, again, I didn't take what, how big the yellow was, how much yellow there was, what the form of the yellow, the shape of the yellow. All I got was *yellow*.

21:05 RTH: And does the yellow, is the yellow on the computer screen?

21:08 Evan: Yeah.

21:12 RTH: And is it on the guy's face? Like

21:15 Evan: He's wearing? No.

21:18 RTH: So somewhere in ...

21:19 Evan: It's a brush stroke. It's a yellow brush stroke. But again, interestingly, I never, I didn't get anything of brush stroke or size or brush or stroke or anything. Only the *yellow* I took from.

21:30 RTH: So my real eyeballs are aimed at the real screen. [Evan: Yeah.] And on the real screen there are two aspects or two things being displayed. One is the guy's face and the other is a yellow brush stroke. And about the face, I'm interested in the eyes primarily and about and, and for some reason I have, I am seeing the yellowness but not the brush-stroke-ness of this other aspect.

- 21:59 Evan: Yeah, that's correct.
- 22:00 RTH: Okay. And, and is that yellowness out there on the screen? I see that I, I am seeing yellow on the screen as opposed to I am seeing mentally yellow that is probably triggered by the screen, but it's really an inner perception? Is that distinction of
- 22:21 Evan: The first one. But I, I did that, that distinction has confused me a few times, because in my mind all color is, is mental perception. But the first one I like the first there was definitely yellow as yellow would be displayed on a monitor like this on the screen. It wasn't a, an artifact or hallucination.
- 22:39 RTH: Okay. So I have, I have sampled with some people who, who would say "it is as if I have a ganzfeld of yellowness in my imagination. And there's nothing out there [Evan: Right.] that looks like a ganzfeld, but it's clearly yellow." And, and sometimes these people would say "it, it's the same yellow as something that was out there in the environment. [Evan: Right.] But I'm not seeing out there in the environment. I am seeing a wash of yellow that's clearly an inner seeing rather than an external seeing." I'm gathering that's *not* what you're saying. [Evan: Yes.] You're saying I am seeing the yellow that's on the screen. [Evan: Yes.] It seems to me like a visual perception of an external thing, [Evan: Yes.] even though I am (mentally, no doubt) ([coughs] Excuse me.) abstracting the yellowness out of the brush-stroke-ness, [Evan: Yes.] to be interested in the yellowness and not interested in the brush-stroke-ness.
- 23:38 Evan: Yes, that's true. And that, thank you for giving that distinction, because I was never quite sure the difference. But yeah, I completely understand that.
- 23:47 RTH: It is, it is in, in, in my work is a very sim, a very central kind of a thing because people wanna know why I call this kind of thing *inner* experience. Cuz Ev, Evan is saying, well, y'know, I'm seeing the yellow out, out on the screen. That's not an *inner* experience, that's an experience of something yellow out on the screen! But the fact of the matter is, *experiential* fact of the matter is that it's Evan's experience, which he has innerly massaged to be interested in the yellowness and not the brush-stroke-ness.
- 24:16 Evan: So Yeah. Or the words on the, on the screen. Cuz there were, there were words on the brushstroke was over a word, but none of that. I didn't care about any of that for some reason.
- 24:29 RTH: Right. So what I've got from this is three (or maybe four, depending on how we count things) sensory, perceptual things, what I call sensory awarenesses. The eyes, the, the body tiredness, the quad tightness, the eyes and the yellow are all I'm seeing / feeling some aspect of the inner external world without [Evan: Yeah.] cognizing about it.
- 25:05 Evan: As much as I can minimize the, the cognizing because there's always gonna be a certain amount, I guess, right. Which, yeah. Which
- 25:14 RTH: This is not, I guess what we might call a *propositional*, there's no propositional thinking. That's in my experience. Does that correspond to your definition of propositional thinking Gualtiero? (We've had a conversation about that in different

context.) But these are not propositional experiences, these are sensory aspects mostly. [GP: Yeah.]

25:36 Evan: Can you give a definition of how you're using *propositional experiences*?

25:46 RTH: My definition, which I think is Gualtieri's definition, but I'm not a hundred percent sure about that, is that propositional thinking has some yes and no answer to it. That I am thinking, I am thinking that there are three blocks on my Zoom screen here and there either are or not about that. So that makes that a propositional thought.

26:09 Evan: Okay.

26:10 RTH: Whereas if I'm noticing the green on my zoom display, there's a green, thin green outline around me because I'm talking right now, and when Evan's talking, it's around him. The noticing of that greenness would not be propositional.

26:24 Evan: Right.

26:26 RTH: I'm personally, I personally am not in favor of that kind of distinction because, well, it's sort of the same thing that we were talking about before. It's everything is, you could say is propositional, but then nothing is.

26:42 Evan: Makes sense.

26:44 RTH: So what I really wanna do is I wanna make sure that Gualtieri understands what we're saying here on, in, on Gualtieri's terms. Well, he's got questions that, that he wants to ask.

26:58 GP: I, I could elaborate slightly. I would, what I would say is that for something to be propositional, there has to be an articulation such that something like a predicate may or may not apply to something like a subject. Um, so if, if the experience is such that there's this kind of articulation, um, and then there, therefore there is a, there is, as Russ will say, a yes or no answer to the question whether this predicate like concept applies to the subject-like concept, then, then that comes propositional. But if it's just an awareness of a, of a, something, like a yellowness or eyes, somebody's eyes, then that's sensory. Um, but you could *add* to the yellow, the experience of the yellowness, the *thought* there's something yellow there that would be propositional. To say, I was *thinking* that there's something yellow there, then that would be propositional as opposed to I was just experiencing the yellowness there.

28:09 Evan: Yeah. I think Russ's definition is easier to understand, but I think, I think I understood your, the, the elaboration. I think I got it.

28:21 RTH: We, what I think is at the heart of the matter is that the yellowness, as I understand it, and correct me if I got this wrong, is that I'm seeing yellowness as yellowness and I'm not cognizing about it, not analyzing about it, not propositionalizing about it, whatever. I'm just seeing it.

28:43 Evan: Yeah. Sensory yellow.

28:45 RTH: Okay.

28:45 Evan: Yeah.

28:49 RTH: Onward.

28:51 Evan: So beep 3?

28:52 RTH: Yep.

SAMPLE 5.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

28:53 Evan: I was thinking in my head, so the words “weirder or stranger,” and I had a visual awareness of the word “weirder” on the screen in front of me.

29:15 RTH: And I’m thinking “weirder.” I’m thinking I didn’t quite understand what you meant by I “I’m thinking weirder or stranger.” Does that mean I’m thinking quote “weirder or stranger” unquote?

29:27 GP: Ahh.

29:28 Evan: Yes. Sorry, I’ll add, I’ll add the quote unquote. Yes. [RTH: Okay.’ So thinking in my head quote, “weirder or stranger” unquote.

29:34 RTH: Okay. And so let’s, and, and is that more or less or equally salient to you than the “weirder” that you see on the screen?

29:45 Evan: More substantially. More maybe 70—30.

29:49 RTH: Okay. So let’s start there. So these are words, three words that are present to you as a phrase, I guess” worder, “weirder or stranger” unquote. [Evan: Yeah.] And how are those, how is that present to you?

30:09 Evan: So I don’t think I see the words. I don’t, I don’t think, I don’t, I don’t think I project an image in my head of these words as I, as I said it. But they, they were just thoughts, “weirder or stranger,” but quite emphasized thoughts. Not, they were intentional emphasized thoughts. Not, not quick, not just stream of flow. I’m not sure if that clarifies it.

30:40 RTH: Well, it’s on in the direction of. So is there a voice involved in this? So we’re, I, so I, I I’m totally confident that words can be present either voiced or not voiced. And so I’m not trying to suggest one way or the other. But I’m *asking*: is there a voice involved in this “weirder or stranger”?

- 31:05 Evan: I think so, but I don't, do you mean do I actually have the auditory experience in my mind as if I was hearing someone in real life? Like I'm listening to you? Is it similar to that?
- 31:23 RTH: Well, what I'm trying, I'm trying to, I'm trying to get us to describe this without, without my asking any, any more questions that I have to ask. But the, the but the, but that is kind of the kind of thing that I'm having. I I'm, I'm, I'm interested in. Are there auditory qualities to this? There don't have to be. So I think...
- 31:43 Evan: No. It doesn't feel like it has an auditory feature.
- 31:46 RTH: Okay. And how about a motor fea, a motor feature in the sense of, I feel I understand myself to be speaking these, even though there's no words coming outta my mouth. I, I feel these words to be spoken by me. *Or*, but it's also possible for words to just be there and specific words to be there, "weirder or stranger." Those specific words are somehow present, even though I do not speak them innerly or outerly or whatever. And I do not hear them, but they're there nonetheless.
- 32:25 Evan: I wish there was a way that I could know exactly what you mean by the words that you say. Y'know, I wish I knew exactly what you mean by your questions because I, I feel like it might be elements of both of that. There maybe there is some element of me being, of me being there and me being the one to voice it. But it's always like, I don't know exactly if I, if I said yes to that, if I am saying exactly what you're asking. I don't know if there's, I mean, it feels like a bit, but not, it's not very prominent.
- 43:25 Russ comments: That is a beautiful statement of the struggle that must be at the heart of an exploration of inner experience. It is *not* about the words as if words can be carefully defined in a public manner and then used accurately; it is about the experience, about using words to point in a shared manner at Evan's experience.
- 33:05 RTH: So when *I'm* speaking and *you* are hearing what I'm saying, that's what I would call the straightforward-est definition of "hearing." That's, when I use the word "hearing," that's what I mean. I'm doing something; you're receiving the something; and, and in the *hearing* world, you're not creating what it is that you're hearing. You are *receiving* words that are being created by somebody else. And uh, also in the, in the real hearing world, you can say that there are characteristics of that: this guy has a baritone or bass voice and he's not speaking withdrawal. And, y'know, we could describe the characteristics of what is heard. That's what I mean by *hearing*, *hearing* words. And what I would like to know is whether there is any phenomenon like *that*. So, so I mean...
- 34:09 Evan: Okay. I would say No.
- 34:13 RTH: Okay. So I mean, I mean, by hearing inner, innerly hearing as close as I can get to the same thing as outerly hearing, that's what... Some, some people, some people would say, for example, "I hear Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and I can hear the opening cellos and, and as if I were there;" and there's no, there's no question for them. This is an auditory experience. *I hear it*. [Evan: Right.] And some people can say that about a

voice too. I", I have an inner voice. Uh, there's, there's somebody saying, and I can tell you what the characteristics of that voice are." And I gather that you're saying that it, I can't do that.

34:55 Evan: No. It, it just feels a part of me. It's not, it doesn't, I would say that there's no connection with hearing. I would never have then placed any auditory perception or hearing with those thoughts. [RTH: Mm-hmm.] even though that I am very confident, I *can* imagine songs and I can think of songs in my head and that they *can have* an auditory tone. This wasn't it.

34:55 Russ comments: It seems that we have come to a shared understanding of how to use *hearing* when applied to Evan's inner experience: in this case, our use of *hearing* does match Webster's definition. But we have established that correspondence only through careful, nonleading exploration.

35:19 RTH: Okay. And then about speaking, I would say when you were speaking just a minute ago, that was what I would call *external speaking*. And I would call, just call that *speaking* in, in general and whatever that experience is of speaking for you. I am gathering it's different from hearing for you that you're never confused. Well, am I, am I, am I speaking those words or am I hearing those words? That is not a confusion for you, I'm guessing.

35:50 Evan: Yes. Right.

35:51 RTH: So the question is, is there any, and, *and* I, and I would say that the, that the difference there has something to do with production and, and conveying what it is that I'm trying to convey and whatever speaking is for you. The question is, is there any *of that* present for you in this "weirder or stranger" set of words?

36:22 Evan: I would say I'm definitely leaning more towards No than Yes. [RTH: Okay.] But it could, it could be parts... I'm definitely more on the No end than the Yes. But I wouldn't be shocked if there was bits of the Yes, y'know, sprinkled in.

36:33 RTH: Okay. And, and I would, and I would, uh, assent to that, that I don't think it's crystal clear, necessarily crystal clear that, that there has to be a clear Yes and a clear No. I, I, I think inner experiences doesn't follow the same rules as external experience. I think there's a pretty clear experience as to whether you're hearing my voice or whether you're speaking your own words. That's pretty, not much confusion about that. But I, I think in, in, in the inner world, I don't think it's necessarily that cut and dry. Gualtiero?

36:33 Russ comments: Note that (unlike in the case of *hearing*) RTH leaves the definition of *speaking* unclarified. We have taken a few steps in the direction of understanding what is meant by *speaking*, but we will remain open to further clarification if the opportunity presents itself.

37:08 Evan: Definitely not. Yeah.

- 37:10 GP: Um, I have another related question or maybe another way to ask the question, um, because I'm very intrigued by this whole conversation about the, the thought of "weird and or stranger." So here's a, my way of asking: Was that, did that involve a temporal flow from "weirder" to "or" to "stranger"? Or were you thinking of all three words at the same time?
- 37:10 Russ comments: This is mostly an important question, but it is undermined by being too much about the words. The important part is the inquiry about whether the words/phrase unfolds over time, vs. being present all at once. The undermining part is that it suggests that there are three words, each in their stand-alone-ness, first "weirder" and then "or" and then "stranger." That would be mostly true in the natural world, but not necessarily true in the inner world. There can be an experienced unfoldingness without an experienced discreteness of word – word – word.
- 37:40 Evan: Temporal flow. Interesting. What, what does that, what does a temporal flow, what distinction does that draw in your mind in this conversation?
- 37:53 GP: It, it helps to clarify whether there was some kind, something like inner speech, which would take time to go through the different words and maybe the parts of the words, or what, something like what Russ calls unsymbolized thought, meaning awareness of a full content. In this case, it's not quite a fully propositional content because it's just these three words that you're aware of, but it's, it's a thought, it's a thoughty experience as opposed to a more sensory experience. Um, [Evan: Yeah.] because it's not something you were sensing from the, you were, you were a separately, visually experiencing the word "weirder," but not the "or" and the "stranger." So yeah. Um, I hope that I'm not,
- 38:46 RTH: So I agreed with everything you said, and I thought that the, I thought the line of questioning, I, I would've asked that question as, do these, do these words seem to unfold across time? Because I think that's a little more neutral. But the, but I, I'm totally on board with the, with the spirit of that question.
- 39:04 The only thing that I would've objected to is that I don't think it, it says anything about *speech*. Gualtieri seemed to imply that this, this, if they were words unfolded, it makes it sort of closer to inner speech. And I don't think that's true because it would be just as good to, for hearing: hear, heard words unfold across time as well. And, uh, so
- 39:26 GP: Sure, for sure. Absolutely. Yes. I, yeah. So I was using the word *inner speech* in a way that's encompasses potentially inner *hearing* as well. [RTH: Okay.] But yes.
- 39:37 Evan: Good, good to get a question that I can actually add answer with some certainty, cuz there's not many of those that you get in this practice. So it's good to get one where I'm like, *yes, I definitely the first one*.
- 39:47 RTH: So, so the words unfold across time as, as in "weirder" is there before "stranger" and or is in the middle.

39:56 Evan: A hundred percent [inaudible] yes.

39:58 RTH: Okay. And, and, and that by the way, is, uh, is different from words that you'd see on a page, for example. If you had a headline worder or stranger, you could say, I see both of those, or all three of those at the same time.

40:13 Evan: Right. It might be useful or not useful to, to say that only the word "weirder" was on the screen. So my visual awareness of the word "weirder," it was "weirder or stranger" was in my head. So that's maybe that, that's why there was also a temporal statements. I wasn't reading it off the screen. Those words weren't on the screen.

40:30 RTH: Okay. And, and did the, is there a semantic significance of this? Is it just "weirder or stranger" ...?

40:46 Evan: So I was, I was actually gonna say maybe another element to this that I was experiencing was that, that's a judgment I'm making in my head is what I'm thinking is, which is better: using the word "weirder" or using the word "stranger." So there is, there is, uh, again, sort of a judgmental layer to it that I'm out thinking about. What I was mostly aware of were those actual words, but there's a tone of judgment where I'm trying to think which word is better. Is it "stranger" or "weirder"? I didn't write that down. But there's, there's definitely a layer of that.

41:21 RTH: So I, I am engaged in the task of deciding whether I prefer the word "weirder" or "stranger" in this context. I don't know if that's separate [inaudible] what I said first.

41:35 RTH: But that, that train of thought is not directly present to me at this particular moment. It's no doubt something that I'm engaged in.

41:44 Evan: Yes.

41:45 RTH: What's present is the worded display "weirder or stranger."

41:54 Evan: Yeah. There's al there's almost certainly a tone of it, though if you, if, if that, if that makes sense. Some, some tone or resemblance of a critical lens or a judgment.

42:06 RTH: Cred, credulous about it or whatever. Okay.

42:11 Evan: Whatever word you want to use. Yeah.

42:14 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good about that aspect. Gualtierio, you happy with that? [GP: Yes.] And, and what, so what I would say about that is that it seems a hundred percent clear that there, that these are exactly the words that are present "weirder or stranger." *How* those words are present is not so clear. Maybe there's an element of speaking, but if it is, it's a very slight. Doesn't *seem* like there's an element of hearing, but if so, if there is, it's even slighter. All that seem right?

43:03 Evan: Yeah. It's not completely clear to me right now the difference between thinking words and it be speech or not speech. Like what, what is techni, what's thought and what's

inner speech, which weirdly enough is one of the hot debates in the comment section of our video as well—people not really being able to parse those apart. And I’m not a hundred percent clear right now what would be inner speech and what would be, just *thinking* the words. Definitely elements of both but hard to really know.

43:48 RTH: Well, I think, I think there’s no general way to answer that question. I think if we, if we get subsequent samples today or down the road in which you are engaged in what is clearly inner speaking, then [snaps fingers] you will know what the difference between inner speaking [Evan: Right.] and somehow producing. I’m innerly, we can say, I, I’m innerly producing words. These words unfold over time. It doesn’t, it isn’t obvious to me that I am speaking them, but maybe I am, maybe I’m not. That’s what, that’s how far we’ve gotten. And I don’t think it, I don’t think it’s worthwhile to try to get farther than that.

43:48 Russ comments: RE “if we get subsequent samples today or down the road”
Perhaps coincidentally (but it happens often enough that I think it is *not* coincidence), we will get such an example later today. See 1:07:41.
But most importantly, note that RTH does *not* try to define the terms carefully and then see how to apply those terms to Evan’s experience. That would be too much about the words. The intent is to keep Evan’s focus on his *experience*, *not* on the words he uses to describe that experience. That intent requires skill, patience, and humility.

44:26 Evan: Okay.

44:27 RTH: What I *would* say is that for some people, they’re, the difficulty that you’re having does not exist. They, they would say, [Evan: Right.] *they* would say, “I’m totally speaking those words. I’ve got, it’s in my, my own voice. It’s got, I, I speak with the same *lilt* as I do in when I, when in in my outer voice. It’s got my same Irish accent and whatever, and I’m, I’m halting the same way that I would sort of search for words or whatever. It feels, feels like I’m doing the same kinds of things that I do when I’m speaking aloud.” Then there’s no question that that’s inner speaking. But I haven’t heard much of that or any of that about this description.

45:14 Evan: No. And that’s also useful. I don’t think, there’s definitely not an accent. There’s a sense that it’s *from me*, that it’s being *driven by me*, but it’s not, it’s not a, there isn’t an a tone, there isn’t an accent. There isn’t a, a real voice either on producing it or, or hearing it. So then maybe that leans it more towards just thinking.

45:36 RTH: Right. So the distinction, the distinction that I would make—Gualtierio made it between inner speech and unsymbolized thinking—I’m, I’m, I’m happy *not* to call this unsymbolized thinking. For me, the distinction is between inner speech (or inner *speaking*, what I call) and *words present*. So I’m, I make words present to myself in some way that’s not speaking. That’s what, that’s what *words present* means to me. Clearly words, there’s no question about that. These are the words “weirder or stranger,” absolutely those words and not, not “weirder or easier” or “weirder or, or problematic” or whatever. It’s “weirder or stranger,” those exact words. Which, but I, y’know, I, you got a lot of neurons out there that can participate in this task.

- 46:35 Evan: Right, right. But yeah, good distinction. I think these are, these conversations are, are both helpful and interesting
- 46:45 RTH: And, and I'm also seeing "weirder" on the screen.
- 46:48 Evan: Yeah.
- 46:49 RTH: And are there, are there aspects about that that, that go beyond just my eyeballs are aimed at this aspect of the screen and I'm seeing it?
- 47:01 Evan: No. I don't think I encapsulated anything else. The shape of it, the size of it. I think it just awareness of it being there.
- 47:09 RTH: Okay. And, and there as a word? [Evan: A physical word. Yeah.] I am, and not only a physical word, but a *experiential* world, *experiential* word. I am seeing the word weirder. Not seeing a visual display that I could say is the word, is the word "weirder," but I am in some way reading or absorbing, receiving the meaningful display of a word "weirder" from the screen.
- 47:41 Evan: Yeah. Yeah. Again, very, very hard to, to, to know when the, when it beeps what to include in terms of vision. Cuz the vision is obviously there at the beep, and it can be very hard to separate awareness from what you are objectively seeing, but it's not really reaching your awareness in a strong sense. I sort of always struggle with that a bit, cuz of course, it's always stuff in your visual field figures not noticing it. It's hard to know if that's 5, if that means it's 5% of the awareness of the be 10% or 20%. It's definitely present. I'm definitely aware that it's present. But was it in my awareness? It can be, it can be quite hard to tell.
- 48:25 RTH: So I personally have difficulty understanding... What you're, what you're saying is a very common thing that most everybody says, actually. But I personally can't see any reason to favor visual phenomena over any other kind of phenomena. Your eyes are open and you're seeing a bunch of shit. I accept that. But your ears are open and you're hearing a bunch of shit, and your ass is open and you're feeling the chair and whatever, and you're leaning forward and back and it's, and so your proprioception of doing that, and you were gesturing a little bit ago and, and all that, all that stuff is being somehow experientially processed. I *personally* don't see why there's, why there's warrant to, to say that the visual is *more present* than all those other things. Unless it is! And if it is, then for sure, but
- 49:16 Evan: We're definitely vision dominated creatures, right. In terms of our sensorium. So maybe it's just a property of that, y'know, 80% of our experience of the world is visual. Right, right. That's what they say. And so I guess it might just be that, that we just have more visual processing going on and hence it more prominently there. Because I would say it hasn't been the case for me for the other sensations. If I hear something notable in my awareness and I not jot it down, but I don't have constant, all those other things that you said, vision is really the only one that's, that's

questioning for me. When, when it beeps how much that of what I had in my visual field, was I aware of, how much was it, was it impacting me in that moment?

49:16 Russ comments: RE “We’re definitely vision dominated creatures...in terms of our sensorium.”

In the samples we have seen so far, Evan’s directly apprehended experience is *not* dominated by the visual. He has far more bodily and proprioceptive experiences than visual experiences. Here’s a list of nonvisual experiences starting with day 2 (as usual in DES): feeling metal-y sharpness of the comb going through my beard; tasting fuet, feeling pressure on lip, hearing music and feeling heart beating, feeling breeze, feeling warmth of sun, feeling lip movements, feeling pressure of pen, feeling softness of girlfriend’s skin, mostly nothing. Here are the visual experiences: seeing purple, seeing whiteness, seeing the person, seeing scene around me, seeing tsunami wreck, seeing computer screen, seeing video while editing. Those are just crude lists, and they do not include today (which is mostly bodily). But one can’t conclude that Evan’s directly apprehended experience is dominated by the visual.

RE “80% of our experience of the world is visual.... That’s what they say.”

I would suggest being hugely skeptical about such claims, because primarily they come from retrospective self-report, which is not to be trusted. Evan himself, even though he has been carefully examining contradictory evidence from his own inner experience, continues to say that he is dominated by the visual. (That is not a criticism of Evan; it is a recognition of the strength of presuppositions, which die hard.)

I happily accept that there may well be a sense in which “80% of our experience of the world is visual” is a true statement. But until you know the methodology and the definitions, I think it is wiser to be highly skeptical.

50:01 RTH: Well I, I for sure do not want to imply a *disfavor* of vision. Um, if, if it seems like there are other aspects of this visual field that I’m experientializing at any particular moment, then I wanna talk about those, even if they’re minor. But what I, what I *don’t* think we ought to do is to say, well, just because my eyes are open, then I am processing that, cuz I [Evan: Yeah.] don’t think that’s necessarily true.

50:35 Evan: Yeah. Again, another thing that that that probably isn’t a right or wrong answer on. But something that I’ll still trying to figure out. Shall we move on so we have enough time to get through?

50:45 RTH: Yes sir. Number 4.

SAMPLE 5.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

50:47 Evan: Already 6:50. Um, so I was reading the words “5-HT hypothesis of depression” on the screen; thinking possibly interesting podcast. And then again, I had visual awareness of a face on a screen.

51:09 RTH: And is the possibly interesting podcast, is that directly present to you? Or is that an explanation of 5HT and depression or whatever?

51:19 Evan: Directly aware to me. Okay.

51:21 RTH: So there's three aspects of my experience, simultaneous: 5-HT, I forget exactly what those words were.

51:29 Evan: Hypothesis of depression. Yeah.

51:33 RTH: And the possibly an interesting podcast and the face. Then do those seem equally present to you? One more than the other?

51:43 Evan: I would say probably reading the words is the most prominent; thinking, possibly interesting podcasts that the most prominent; and then visual awareness of the face third most.

51:53 RTH: Okay. Well, let's start with the first of those. So I'm reading "5-HT Hypothesis of depression." Is that on a screen or a

52:04 Evan: Yeah.

52:06 RTH: And what's the experience of that reading? How do you experience that?

52:15 Evan: So the words are being processed in my consciousness, in my awareness. Again, there's no big projector. There's, it's not very prominent, like as you said with the reading before. I don't necessarily know if there is a, as much a temporal sequence to it. So I prob, I don't think I read the 5 and then *H* and then *T* and then *hypothesis*, like I kind of was reading it as a, as a whole. And then thinking *possibly interesting podcast* as I, as I was reading it. But the words aren't in my mind necessarily. I can just see them, understand their context.

52:57 RTH: So does is that to say I am not articulating aloud or to myself these words, but I am gleaning their context? I'm gle, I'm gleaning their semantics as I [Evan: Yeah.] encounter them.

53:14 Evan: Yeah, that's exactly right. The concept is being translated almost immediately.

53:18 RTH: Okay. So I am not *speaking* these words aloud or to myself in, in my experience, no,

53:26 Evan: Not in this case. No.

53:27 RTH: Okay. Gualtieri, are you happy with that portion?

53:35 GP: Are we talking about the stuff he was reading or are we already talking about this? The words he was *thinking*?

53:41 Evan: Reading still.

53:43 GP: Okay. Yeah, I'm good.

53:45 RTH: Okay. And then, so, so I guess so, so I would, I, I would say as my understanding so far about this portion of it is that there, there's really no aspect of my experience other than I am receiving the meaning of these words as I encounter them. It's not like I am picturing the 5-HT model or the or... So there's no visualization.

54:16 Evan: No.

54:17 RTH: And there's no articulation, either spoken or heard of them. And yet I'm getting the meaning. Yeah.

54:25 Evan: Okay. Yeah, that's right.

54:26 RTH: And then there's *some* recognition that this is possibly an interesting podcast.

54:33 Evan: Yeah.

54:34 RTH: And how does that go?

54:36 Evan: I would say definitely more passive than intentional. Again, no, it's not in my voice. It's, I would say it's thought rather than inner speech. Again, with small asterisks, I'm not having that fine distinction fully. But it definitely felt just more of an automatic thought rather than an intentional speech that I was acting out, if that's sort of the distinction that we're, we're working on.

55:09 RTH: And is, are there words involved in this thinking that this would be possibly interesting? Like the word "podcast," the word "interesting," the word "possibly"? Any of those words?

55:19 Evan: Probably not actually. I don't actually think the words. More just the idea, possibly. Interesting. It's more of a conceptual thing, again, more of a kind of a cognitive, judgmental layer rather than the words.

55:34 RTH: So it would be more or less okay to say that this, this *could be* rather than *possibly* this could be an interesting podcast that would be just as good.

55:43 Evan: Yeah.

55:44 RTH: Or, or this could be *fascinating*. That would be just as good.

55:51 Evan: Um, by just as good. Do you mean that? No, like, okay. Okay. That's an important one. So no, like it wouldn't be, I, I wrote down possibly interesting podcasts, cuz those are the words that I thought. So there wa, there is some wordiness to it.

56:06 RTH: So the question, and this is the tricky question. The question is, that

56:10 Evan: Was a good dis that was a good distinction.

56:10 RTH: s there, are there words?

56:14 Evan: Yeah.

56:14 RTH: Present quote, possibly interesting podcast unquote. *Or* is it the case that I am thinking a thought that *if I had to put into words* would be quote, “possibly interesting podcast.” But I didn’t have to put them into words cuz I was doing the thinking and, and I, I knew what it meant.

56:34 Evan: No def... So “possibly interesting podcast” is definitely the framing. It’s those specific words, not, not other words.

56:43 RTH: As, and are those words present to you at the moment of the beep? Or is the concept *possibly interesting podcast* present to you, even though it’s not worded?

56:57 Evan: I would say both, but those words are definitely present. Those words are definitely, uh, I have awareness of them. I guess what I was trying to say at the start was that it, it feels more like a thought than an intentional inner speech, but it’s those, it is those words specifically.

57:19 RTH: [pause] And are those...?

57:20 Evan: So much harder than the sensory? Sensory so easy. *I saw yellow*. Easy! [laughs].

57:27 RTH: So comparing “possibly interesting podcast” as words that are thought, because my, my, my, I would say that my impression was that, that that that wasn’t about words. I was a little surprised to find that that was about words (that, that’s more about me than about you). But what I would like to know is on the possibility that there are, and were in fact words, are these “possibly interesting podcasts” presented in a different or the same way as “weirder or stranger”?

57:27 Russ comments: Note that RTH is *not* defining *inner speech*, or defining *words present*, or defining *unsymbolized thinking*, and then trying to get Evan to tell him which of those terms is applicable. That would be too much about the words. Instead (and the difference is diametric), RTH is trying to help Evan become able to apprehend his experience securely, so that it doesn’t matter what words he uses. He wants Evan to be in a position to use whatever words are at hand to describe experience that is unequivocally apprehended, so that he can say, e.g.: about a particular experience, it has characteristic *A*, but if I say *A* that puts too much emphasis on the *a* aspect; and it has characteristic *B*, but if I say *B* that puts too little emphasis on the *b* aspect; and it’s somewhat fair to call it *C* but that leaves out the *D* aspect; and so on. In such locutions, it is not necessary to have precise definitions of *A*, *a*, *B*, *b*, and so on. It is necessary to have a secure apprehension of the experience and the ability to try to let words rest easily on that experience but to notice those aspects which are not easy.

57:55 Evan: So this is... No. Definitely different. And this is, this is what I was gonna say, that there’s definitely less of a temporal flow to “possibly interesting podcasts.” It feels like maybe that all came at once or it was a lot, like, it “weirder or stranger” was a much

more intentional speech with that felt like it had a start and an end. And the “possibly interesting podcast” kind of feels like it came to me in one moment in those words, but not possibly interesting podcast in sort of a, as much of a sequence. They feel like different things. But I don’t know if I’m articulating that very well.

58:33 RTH: Okay. So what I, what I would say is that I think that the reason that that DES has to unfold over time so that we can figure out how to make those distinctions so that next time we’re quicker at it or better at it or more efficient at it, whatever.

58:33 Russ comments: RE “make those distinctions”
He does *not* mean this in a definition-of-the-words way. He means that *whatever you call it*, you probably have to become sensitive to the all-at-once-ness-vs-unfolding-over-time-ness of the experience. See the comment at 57:27.

58:50 Evan: Yes, for sure.

58:54 RTH: At the moment we can say, sort of, *well it’s not like that*. But it’s exactly how it’s different from that is sort of hard to say.

58:54 Russ comments: This is RTH’s way of saying *it’s not about the words*. He doesn’t care about defining concepts; he cares about helping Evan to apprehend his upcoming experiences while somehow recognizing some important aspects that might bear noticing.

59:03 Evan: Yeah, if, if speech and thought was on either side of an axis or a spectrum (now I don’t know if you’re gonna be happy with this, this at all) like the “weirder or stranger” was more on the speech side of the spectrum than it was the thinking side of the spectrum, which is “possibly interesting podcast,” which is sort of also on an, on an axis of intentionality versus passiveness, if that makes sense.

59:31 RTH: So I wouldn’t, what, what I would say about that is that I thought we worked pretty hard in beep number 3 to say that it wasn’t speech, and I but to keep speech and intentionality sort of on a separate deal. But it’s, that’s sort of hard to do. And so I think we sort of fall into making it seem like speech, which

59:55 Evan: It, it’s, I think it’s more like speech than beep 4, but that’s not to say that it felt very like speech.

1:00:02 RTH: Right. That’s the, that’s the thing to keep in mind—it’s just [Evan: Okay.] the hard part.

1:00:02 Russ comments: In line with the *it’s not about the words* comments that I have been making, the hard part should be understood as saying *let’s not let the words* (like speech, intentionality, etc.) *get out ahead of our ability to apprehend the phenomenon with fidelity*. Once we get good at apprehending the phenomena, *then* we might apply ourselves to choosing the best words to describe the phenomena.

1:00:08 Evan: Okay.

- 1:00:12 RTH: Gualtiero?
- 1:00:14 GP: Yeah, I have a clarification. When you initially described the thought, it, you, you only, uh, mentioned “possibly interesting podcast.” Um, was there, in, in that thought, was there implicit reference to the, the, the, the words that you were also reading at the time? Was that the, was that the subject of this “possibly interesting podcast” and where you’re referring to that in your thought as well?
- 1:00:49 Evan: Definitely. Yeah. So completely connected. Yeah.
- 1:00:52 GP: Okay. So, so that, is that why you didn’t object when Russ characterized your thought as *this* is an interesting podcast? Cuz the, the, the, *this* part you didn’t mention at the beginning, but it was there sort of, if not explicitly thought at least it was implicit that the “possibly interesting podcast” is that, is that subject matter that you were reading about?
- 1:01:16 Evan: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Okay. I understand what you’re, what you’re saying. Yes. Yeah.
- 1:01:23 GP: [laughs] Well, somebody could think “possibly interesting podcast” without a specific topic in mind or with a different topic in mind than what you were reading.
- 1:01:31 Evan: Sure. Yeah, no, definitely link. Definitely.
- 1:01:34 GP: Yeah. Okay, good. Got it.
- 1:01:38 RTH: There are theories of inner speech that all inner speech is shortened in the, in, in this way, reduced in this way. The whole entire, the whole entire sentence would be, this would be a, this five HT depression thing might be a possibly interesting podcast that there’s no reason for qual for Evan to say the first part of that because he knows what he’s talking about. But I don’t think that that’s true actually about most inner speech. I think most inner speech actually is in full sentences, but Vygotsky doesn’t see it that, that way or didn’t see it that way, or whatever. So the third aspect of this is that there’s, I I’m seeing the face on the screen.
- 1:01:38 Russ comments: Vygotsky, the Russian psychologist known for his work on inner speech, held that all inner speech is *predicative*—that is, inner speech states the predicate but does *not* explicitly state the subject, because *of course* the inner speaker knows what the subject is and it would be redundant to say it. Evan’s “possibly interesting podcast” is a good example of Vygotsky’s predication—the entire sentence might be “This 5HT depression thing would be a possibly interesting podcast.” As Vygotsky held, Evan condensed this sentence by omitting the subject (“This 5HT depression thing”), leaving only the predicate (“possibly interesting podcast”).
In my opinion, Vygotsky was mostly wrong—most inner speaking is actually of complete sentences without any condensation or predication. Evan’s sample here is rather unusual.
- 1:02:29 Evan: Yeah, I don’t think there’s much, much else to say there really.

1:02:35 RTH: Okay then we have, we have hit our hour. Should we call it...

1:02:42 Evan: I'm happy to do one more beep. cuz this one was kind of interesting if we want to get through it a bit quicker, but I'm, but up to you guys, if you're running off to do important consciousness work!

1:02:52 RTH: It's okay with me. I'm, I'm in favor of it.

1:02:54 Evan: We can, we can try, we can try to get it done.

1:03:00 RTH: Important conscious work and wait another 10, 15 minutes! [they laugh] [RTH: Right. Let's...]

1:03:03 Evan: Nice. Okay,

1:03:05 RTH: So we're gonna do number 5 or number 6.

1:03:09 Evan: Uh, we'll do 5. [RTH: Okay.]

SAMPLE 5.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

1:03:12 Evan: I remember the different elements of it because I have a bit of writing. So I was typing on my keyboard, but that was *not* in my awareness. Reading "this episode was brought to you in partnership." And then I was imagining in my mind's eye a video segment. This was gonna take a bit of explaining maybe cuz there's a few aspects to it. But, so I was imagining in my mind's eye a video segment in a pink/red color. The pink/red color is strongly in, in the awareness. And I was the saying, "this episode is brought to you in partnership" felt like it was in my narrator voice. So I sort of have a, a voice that I do for ads and things like this. And it, y'know, sounds a bit more formal, a bit more proper. So I was reading it in that voice. So there, there's definitely a bit of an accent to this one, to this one. I know that was maybe not, there's a few elements there.

1:04:17 RTH: So I'm gathering that there are two aspects of this experience, of two experiential aspects. The typing doesn't count cuz that wasn't really being experienced. I was typing, but that does, that was just happening.

1:04:29 Evan: Yeah.

1:04:30 RTH: So I experience the stream of word "this episode is brought to you in partnership" *and* I am somehow imagining a video segment. [Evan: Yeah.] Those are the two, those are the two strands. And do those seem like equally prominent to me?

1:04:48 Evan: They almost seem as one, [RTH: Okay.] in a strange way.

1:04:56 RTH: Okay. So...

1:04:57 Evan: This is what I'm, what I'm doing. Yeah.

1:04:59 RTH: All right. I'm happy with that. And, and do I experience myself as *saying* this phrase, "this episode is brought to you in partnership"?

1:05:18 Evan: I think so, cuz this time it has an accent in that I was aware that I wasn't just saying it without a tone. There was a strict, "this episode was brought to you in partnership" [said with specific emphasis]. Like it, I had that idea in my head of the exact cadence and the way that I would say it.

1:05:34 RTH: And this is innerly experienced. I'm not saying this out, out of my real mouth.

1:05:41 Evan: No. No. I'm all, all inner.

1:05:43 RTH: Okay. And, and does it feel like I am... And well, and, and you say this one thing and, and involves the video. So I'm seeing this pinkish red video and I, does it seem like I am sort of transporting myself into the situation where I'm watching a video and giving narration about it at the same time? Is that, is that what, is that what this experience is the heart of this? Or does it seem like I am saying that I... So

1:06:13 Evan: Like transporting myself do it... I'm generating a visual in my head of what a, a small segment of the video will look like while narrating over it. And the, the things that are in mo, my strongest awareness is there is the color of the video and the narration of this episode "Was brought to you in partnership."

1:06:39 RTH: Okay.

1:06:39 Evan: Does that answer your right?

1:06:41 RTH: Well, I, I think so.

1:06:44 Evan: Transporting kind of threw me off there. I'm not, maybe this,

1:06:48 RTH: So, so it doesn't seem like, I don't, I don't feel myself to be engaged in the editing task, but I am performing things that take place in the editing environment, or something like that.

1:06:59 Evan: Yeah.

1:07:00 RTH: Okay. So the, the words are present with an accent. Are these present as if I am saying those words? Or as if I am hearing myself?

1:07:14 Evan: This time? For sure. I have a lot of clarity on that. Yeah. Okay.

1:07:18 RTH: So

1:07:19 Evan: Yeah, just me.

1:07:22 RTH: Okay. So I would say, now this is the bookend of the, what, what I said earlier on. This is, seems to me to be an example of a clearly, uh, understood, clearly apprehended inner speaking. *This is inner speaking*. There is no question about that.

1:07:41 Evan: Okay.

1:07:41 RTH: 10 minutes ago or whenever you were saying, well, I'm not sure what it means to be inner speaking, how, what, what the difference between somehow knowing words and speaking words. I don't know what that was. And I, and I said, well, maybe we'll have some clarification about that. Well, this is the clarification of that. This is what it's like to innerly speak.

1:08:00 Evan: So there's always an accent, there's always a cadence, there's always a tone to inner speech?

1:08:06 RTH: I wouldn't wanna be that specific about it [Evan: Okay.] because this is, this is a, this, this example sort of heightens the accent and the cadence and, and whatever, for the reasons that you gave. And it doesn't have, [Evan: Yeah.] that doesn't have to be that, that specific.

1:08:22 Evan: Okay. But I'm just really trying to pinpoint like how I would know, is it, did it have these sort of features? But I under, I understand the uniqueness of, of the different context.

1:08:33 RTH: Okay. And then about that, about the other, about the other part, about the video. So I am seeing in my imagination... This is I'm not seeing out on the screen something, I'm seeing something in my imagination. Is that right? [Evan: Yeah.] And I am seeing a video about which I am particularly interested in the pink/red? Is that right? Or...? [Evan: Yeah.] The alternative to that would be I am seeing pink, some pink/red shit, that I understand to be a video, but it really, in my imagination, it's just a sort of some pink and some red.

1:09:15 Evan: The first one, the, the pink/red color is, is relevant. It's the brand colors of the company that I'm thinking about doing the partnership with. That's why that's connected and why that's, that's related.

1:09:28 RTH: And specific...

1:09:30 Evan: Of color.

1:09:33 RTH: So my, the question that I'm trying to ask is: Do I see a video screen? Or do I see colors that I know to be part of a video screen?

1:09:47 Evan: I think I'm kind of projecting. I think what I see is a rectangle on a black background. So like a 16 by 9 screen and I'm picturing the pink, and then it's just like the outside of that 16 by 9 framing is black in my imagination. It's not the full, I dunno, aspect ratio of your imagination. It's, it's, it's in the 16, it's framed, if that makes

- 1:10:15 RTH: Sense. So I what I, I understand that as being something like I am seeing a not very articulated video. I am seeing a video in the sense that I see a screen [holds up hands to form a rectangle] and I see some colors on the screen and it's mostly the colors that are present to me.
- 1:10:32 Evan: Yeah. The movement on the screen. But know there's, there's some, there's something changing on the screen, but the color is the prominent aspect.
- 1:10:41 RTH: Okay. So it's not just that I'm seeing color, I am seeing a video that has colors in it, but the colors in the prominent part. Is that right?
- 1:10:47 Evan: Yes.
- 1:10:49 RTH: Okay. [Evan: Yeah.] So what that, what that does for, for me, given that we're now past our time is, is that that makes it clear that Evan knows the difference between innerly seeing colors and externally seeing colors. We had that question about yellow back, back a little bit ago.
- 1:11:12 Evan: Yes.
- 1:11:14 RTH: And seeing colors as being colors out there. But all I am seeing all, all that stuff, we we're making distinctions about that. So this was a good example from, so I'm glad we spent the time talking about something other than the important roles of consciousness.
- 1:11:35 Evan: Imagine being that being quite scary if you weren't able to distinguish between external and internal color. That seems like bridging on psychosis or hallucination, just schizophrenia. That seems like a quite a scary thing to not be able to differentiate.
- 1:11:54 RTH: [pause][sigh] Yeah, I think it, I, I... Yeah. There's a lot to be, lot to be said about that. Probably better, better not to, not to venture down there.
- 1:12:09 So I'm happy with what we have said about this particular sample. We, I would say that there's probably more to be said, but maybe not worth doing it that given the time that it's at and what I think is we should figure out when we're gonna do this again, assuming that every everybody wants to do it again.
- 1:12:27 Evan: Absolutely. I, I, I kind of feel like I want to do like three more of this at least sort of before I get to any sort of ideas really. Um, it feels like I'm improving a little bit and maybe I was a little bit stale there cuz we went, Russell had the, the nerve to go on holidays for three weeks, so [RTH: Yeah.] would I,
- 1:12:48 RTH: Sorry about that.
- 1:12:52 Evan: Um, no, that sounds good. Next, next week is perfect.

They compare calendars

1:13:52 RTH: And I will prepare a video and a transcript and comment, commented-upon transcript, which I have been sending. I think I've, I think I'm up to date about that. And uh, and you all should feel free to add comments or, or disagreements or, or whatever to the, the comments. The comments that I think are I, I'm putting out there are things that I think would be interesting to the 150,000 people who might be following along with this when, when, uh, Gualtierio or when *Evan* gets a chance to put that on a web.

1:14:26 Evan: Yeah, I think it could go really. I think this is really first in kind in terms of a video, especially with the first podcast. I'm super excited to see how this comes together. But I think it, I think it could get very serious viewership.

1:14:40 RTH: Right. If people were interested in what we, in the conversation that we had last time, [Evan: Yeah.] they should be interested in the conversation that we'll have *next* time. Absolutely. That would be about, that would be about, uh, Evan's own experience.

1:14:54 Evan: Right. Right. Yeah, I'm excited. I think it's been really fun. I'm really glad that we decided to, to do this. I'm learning a lot and super excited to see how it comes together in the end. I think it's, I think it's a cool project. It's been, it's been a pleasure to do it.

1:15:10 RTH: Alright, sounds good to me. I will, I guess I should put in my calendar that, uh, what do we think is gonna be Evan 5, but I'll, or Evan 6, but we will, I'll make sure what the numbering is before I, before I send out this calendar invite.

1:15:29 Evan: Perfect. I'll let you solve consciousness. See you next week guys.

1:15:20 GP: See you.