

**Gualtiero 6**  
**Gualtiero Sampling Interview 6**

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the June 16 sampling interview 6 with Gualtiero that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/miEvk57H5qM>. In green are Russ's comments, and in blue are Gualtiero'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 = Gualtiero Piccinini  
LG= Lauren Graf

0:04 RTH: So this is gonna be day 6, I think, if I'm not mistaken. Anything we ought to be talking about before we look at beep day-6 beeps?

0:19 GP: Sort of, um, okay.

0:22 RTH: Go for it.

**BEEPED-WHILE-SLEEPING DISCUSSION**

0:24 GP: This is a continuation of my ongoing, um, attempt at investigating what happens when I'm sleeping. [RTH: Okay.] Um, so I've been doing that almost every night. And in order to te- to try to test or push the limits of whether I, I really *am* unconscious or I'm just *forgetting* what I am thinking of by the time that the beep wakes me up slowly, y'know, in those, cuz *until now*, y'know, those were all, uh, cases where I didn't hear the beginning of the beep. And if I heard the beginning of the beep, it was when I was taking a nap, and I, um, and I was always thinking of something at that moment. And, but at night I, y'know, it wouldn't wake me up. And so then by the time it woke me up, I was not aware of experiencing anything.

1:17 So I, I turned up the volume to the max. And I've done this now multiple times, and most of those times, except for once, where I could tell I was thinking of something, um, yeah [pause] I'm sorry, other way around except for once where it did not wake me up right away, and then I didn't- I was not aware of any experience prior to waking up, but that's analogous to those other cases when the volume was low. Every other time with the volume at the maximum. I heard the beginning of the beep *and* I was thinking of something at that moment. Um, so I still don't have any case in which I hear the beginning of the beep (like, I wake up immediately from the beginning of the beep) but I am not aware of having, having been thinking of anything prior to the beep. So I thought I would share that.

2:24 This is partly inspired by your comment last time, Russ, when you said, the fact that it takes a while to wake me up could be used as an argument that I, in that

process, in that slow process of waking up, I'm also forgetting what I was thinking about. So, so far yeah this, this, this is all consistent with that possibility, I think.

2:51 RTH: So the, let me, let me see whether I understand the story here. So *if* I hear the beginning of the beep, I also think, as best I can tell, trying to be honest about it, [GP: Mm-hmm.] that there was some thought process inchoate, some inchoate thought process going on right before the beep.

3:13 GP: Yes, yes. Which is surprising to me. I expected the opposite, [laughs] at least some of the time! Um-

3:30 RTH: So I, so I don't, I don't know anything about, I'm not a sleep researcher. But I, I, I would say that it's still possible that responding to the beep gives you the opportunity, even if you hear the beginning of the beep, it gives you the opportunity to make it seem that (this is sort of the Carruthers argument in general, but applies specifically to sleep) that you can swiftly create something.

4:03 GP: Um, yeah, I don't, I mean, yes, from the outside, maybe that sounds like a possibility, but from the inside that does not seem like a serious possibility. What seems like a serious possibility is that there's never a time when I am not thinking of something while I'm sleeping. Um, and that's the opposite of what I was expecting.

4:25 RTH: So I didn't, I didn't mean to argue against that. I think that's quite possible. I didn't just- didn't mean to argue for it either cuz I don't really know.

4:33 GP: Okay. Okay. Yeah. So what, what I would say is that I am a hundred percent confident that when the beep wakes me up from the very beginning—or meaning, or meaning I hear the beep, I hear the beginning of the beep—then I, I am immediately aware that there's *been* a train of thought in my mind. And at that moment I am at least somewhat aware of what the content of the train of thought is and what the thought is at the very moment that I hear the beep. But it fades away, y'know, so quickly that typically I don't remember *any of it* by the time I'm writing notes. Uh, although in some cases I can remember maybe the topic, y'know. In one case it was the cleaning of the house. I was in a house that needed to be, needed to be cleaned, not where I live, not here. Um, so I was very concerned about having to clean all this nasty stuff, and that's what I was thinking about. But that's, that's as far as I can remember. Y'know, it's a little bit like that time where I could remember that something wasn't possible, but I couldn't remember what was impossible. [Sample 1.3] So it's a little like that, like I can remember sort of the topic, but not more specifically, y'know, what I was thinking about, y'know? Like was there something specific that I was worried about cleaning in the house or something like that. Um, and then the other times I can't remember any of it. I just am *confident* that it was happening on its own right before the beep. And then, y'know, the beep wakes me up and then I, y'know, if I try to write it down, it's gone.

4:33

Russ comments: This is my understanding of your observations so far. Is this right?

| State  | Hear beep onset? | Immediate impression of ongoing experience?                    | Immediate recognition of content? | Secure recognition of content? |
|--------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Awake  | Yes              | Yes (but not always propositional, and not always well-formed) | Always                            | Sometimes                      |
| Asleep | Yes              | Yes                                                            | Usually                           | Sometimes                      |
|        | No               | No                                                             | No                                | N/A                            |

Gualtiero comments: that is correct.

6:26 RTH: So one of the characteristics of these beeps [GP: Mm-hmm.] that are waking you up is they would be at the beginning of sleep, relatively speaking, cuz the beep is only an hour long at the most, at the most. So you're getting a beep two minutes, or 15 minutes, or 29 minutes, or 38 minutes, or something into being asleep.

6:45 GP: Yeah.

6:47 RTH: So we could figure out a way to get you a longer beep. So I've, I've got ways to do that. There, there are several different ways that we can, that we could get you a later-in-the, uh, a longer, a longer interval before the beep. We can talk, we can talk about whether that's a worthwhile thing to do, and if so, how we're gonna do it cuz several possibilities.

7:13 GP: Yeah. Um-

7:14 RTH: So it could be that, that you haven't yet gotten into stage four deep sleep, which would be totally unconscious sleep in the beginning of sleep. So I, I'm, I'm guessing that there is a sleep literature that interrupts people (and I don't, I'm not particularly familiar with that actually) but, uh, but it interrupts people that sometimes time locked, y'know, they observe EEGs or whatever observing when you're in REM sleep or whatever, and interrupting you in and not in REM sleep and identifying stages [GP: Yeah, right.] of interrupting you then.

7:47 I don't know what the characteristics of the interruption are. Wouldn't surprise me if they're not adequate from my point of view, cuz I think you need a [RTH snaps his fingers] really sudden rise time to, to minimize the issues that we've been talking about so far. But the, and I, I'm not sure that they are, they take that stuff adequately seriously (adequately from my point of view). But, but I don't really know. I'm, I'm not, haven't been that interested in sleep, I guess.

8:20 GP: Right. No, I, I agree that this could be fine-tuned with trying to time the beep to correspond to the deepest stages of sleep. I don't think it makes a big difference if it's more than about an hour, because within an hour you *are* supposed to get into the

deepest stages of sleep. Um, and then you go through cycles. So, y'know, you get into the, the first couple cycles you're supposed to go into the deepest sleep, and then you don't even go back into the deepest, y'know, like stage four, whatever it's called. Um, you may get to stage three in your third cycle and then that's it. And typically, I think, I'm not, I'm not an expert either, but-

9:06 RTH: Right. I think, I think that's what happens, too. But, but, but we, we don't really know much about the onset of the beep so far cuz it could be, it could be quite quick. Unless, unless you're recording the time. If you're recording the time of the beeps, that would-

9:21 GP: Yeah. I, I, maybe what I could do is I could try to record more precisely when I go to sleep and when the beep occurs. Right now I'm just, yeah. I'm writing it down, but it's kinda vague and like, I, I didn't write down exactly when I went to sleep, so [RTH: Okay.] yeah. That would be interesting. Yeah. Good idea. Good idea, thank you.

9:41 RTH: The, probably the easiest way to to control a beep is to, instead of having the beep come from a beeper, have the beep come from like a laptop. If you got a laptop that you can, and, and I can give you a way of having, delivering the beep through an earphone that you would plug into your computer. And the computer ba- basically what it, what it would do is basically it would play a song that ends in a beep, but the beginning of the song is just silence. So we can, we can program it for as long as we want of silence and then a beep after that.

10:15 GP: Yeah.

10:16 RTH: And, uh, so we can, so we can, we can talk about whether that's worth the effort of doing it. It's not that big a deal. I mean, I've got recorded beeps, and I, I haven't done this kinda stuff, but we'd have to just, we'd have to determine how random we wanna make it. So there we, and there are ways to, I think that we could probably do that as long as you're willing to play the game cuz-

10:41 GP: I'd be, I'd be interested in trying that. Uh, and even preferably set the time if it was possible to just set the time of the beeps, y'know, at say 45 minutes after, um, I go to sleep, or an hour, maybe try different times.

10:58 RTH: So do you, do you, are you an Audacity user? Do y'know, do you do editing? And what, tell me what, you, tell me what you want you first, first off, you tell me that you've got a laptop that you can plug an earphone into and, and hear the [inaudible] [GP: Yes, I do.] Alright. Then, then you tell me what you want in terms of how many, how much silence- so this is basically, it's gonna be a song that's gonna be, if you say 45 minutes long, it's gonna be a song that is 45 minutes and one second long or whatever. And then the beep. So then we have to, you have to tell me whether you wanna have the beep go until you stop it, or whether you wanna have, in this case, a, a time-limited beep. A beep that goes for one second or two seconds or whatever. So you can tell me that and I'll, and I'll, and you can, you can give me a range. I would like a 45 minute one and a one hour one in an hour and 15 minute one or whatever.

11:55 GP: Yeah. I would like all of that. I would like a 30 minute, 45, 1 hour, 1 hour 15 minutes. [RTH: Okay.] That's probably about it, because by, I think by an hour and a half you get- I enter a second sleep cycle.

12:10 RTH: Okay. And then, and then you want the beep to last for some number of seconds and then stop? Or do you want the beep to continue until you turn it off on-

12:22 GP: I would let it continue. Yeah, let it continue.

12:27 RTH: Okay. All right. Then, then we can, we will put the, will play back in in, uh, are you a Windows, Windows guy or Apple guy?

12:38 GP: Mac, I have a MacBook.

12:41 RTH: So if you play a song in your Mac, what, what app does it use? I'm not a Mac user. I'll, I'll figure that out. I'll figure that out. Or I'll send you some beeps and then you can figure it out. [GP: Yeah, probably.] But, but, but basically it'll, it'll start, the what'll happen is you'll start the song and then you'll go to sleep and the thing will, the thing will be playing this song, but the song will be silent. [GP: Yeah.] And then after a while it'll beep and then your task will be to find the computer and turn off whatever app it is that, that that's playing the song back.

13:12 GP: Yeah.

13:12 RTH: Which is probably just touch the screen or-

13:15 GP: Yeah. Touch the [RTH: Touch the space bar.] button or touch the pad or something like that.

13:21 RTH: Right. You, you'll have to play with that, see what happens, could happen. But I will, I will send you a bunch of files and then, and then you can d- you can determine how random to make these things. Like if you've got a, a partner, or Lauren can do it for you or whatever. She, she can, you can, if, if you wanna be awakened either at an 45 minutes or an hour, but you don't know want, don't know want, don't want to know know which then you'd have somebody rename the file for you and then, and then not- and then you would have to not look at the length of the file when you, when you load it. But that, and then you can figure it out to do that. I'll send you the files and then you can, you can enlist somebody if you want to rename files to use this one "Tuesday night file" and uh, uh, [GP: Yeah.] and don't, and don't tell me how long it is. And-

14:15 GP: So what, what's the, why would that be important if I, for me not to know? I'm not, I'm not arguing about it. I just, since I'm asleep, I presumably will forget about that while I'm sleeping. And not really, it won't affect what stage of sleep I'm in.

14:38 RTH: I guess it depends on how good a sleeper you are. If you're not a very good sleeper, you could be, well, *I'll just stay awake here until, until I know the beep is coming. I'll just wait here until the beep, until the beep happens.* But, [GP: Yeah.] but-

14:51 GP: I don't think that's a serious risk. I'm good at going to sleep. I'm not as good at staying asleep, but I'm good at going to sleep. [RTH: Okay.] Like at the beginning, I'm sleeping very soundly.

15:07 RTH: Yeah. I, I a few- 10 years ago probably had a sleep study where I went to, I, I went to the Mayo Clinic somewhere. So I had to travel to the Mayo Clinic and, and basically they said, if you can do this whole sleep study in one night, then you only have to stay one day. And then, then you can go back, you can go home. But if, if you don't sleep well, then you gotta stay two nights. And so I was motivated to sleep one night and, uh, and so I, I was trying to go to sleep and I couldn't sleep and I wouldn't, couldn't fall asleep and couldn't fall asleep! And finally I ring the bell to the, to the worker and say, "y'know, I think, I think if I could have some aspirin, if you, if- is it legal for me to have an aspirin? If you can gimme a couple of aspirin, I'll, I'll be able to go to sleep, I think." And she said, "well, you can have that- all the aspirin that you want, but you were asleep five minutes after your head hit the pillow and [laughs], and, uh, you just *think* you haven't been asleep. And, but the fact of the matter is that you have indeed been asleep!" So I'm, I'm, I'm a believer that people can't tell, don't, don't... That's, that's part of the *people don't know their own mental, mental states* evidence.

16:07 GP: Yes. I've had, I've had that experience only during naps though, where I, I, I'm trying to go to sleep and I'm, y'know, I'm staying there and I'm awake, I'm awake, I'm awake. And then at some point I wake up and I'm thinking, wait a minute, I was sleeping this whole time!

16:24 RTH: Well, inner, inner experience is a slippery, slippery deal.

16:31 GP: Yeah. Yeah.

16:34 RTH: All right. More to be said about that or should- I'll- we- I have my marching orders about that. So I'll, I'll send you some files and you can do with them what you want.

16:34 Russ comments: Russ sent him the audio beep files the next day.

16:45 GP: Yes. Sounds good.

#### BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT COMMENT TO TRANSCRIPT FOR DAY 5

16:48 RTH: And then we've, we've had some comments going back and forth, and I, and I've got more to say, the comment that I wrote about your most recent, recent one, I, I, I wrote a reply to that, but in my not sleeping last night than I, I thought there was some things that I should have said about that, that I haven't, that I haven't said. So that, that one was about maybe we should, maybe we should pick a, uh, presupposition and go with that. Pick a good pre- presupposition and only try to bracket the bad presuppositions. And what I'm gonna write about that- so did you, have you read my response to that?

17:24 GP: Not yet, no.

- 17:25 RTH: Alright, well, if you haven't read it, then if you haven't read it then, then there's no reason for me to tell you what I would, how, how I would've continued. I will just sometime later on today, continue and then you can read it.
- 17:35 GP: Okay. Yeah. Yeah. This morning I was, y'know, participating in a webinar and I had to prepare for that yesterday. And so then that took my morning, well, it took my, yeah. Much of yesterday and the day.
- 17:47 RTH: Got it. I'm not, I'm not complaining. I'm just, if you haven't, if you haven't read the first half, then I won't tell you what the second half is. But I'm gonna, I'm what I'm, what I guess I am sending- saying is I, I'll send you a updated version of- that'll have one more paragraph in it, or two, one or two more paragraphs, um, in my reply to your most recent comment.
- 18:13 All right. Then, does that mean we're ready to talk about beep 6.1?
- 18:18 GP: Yes,
- 18:21 RTH: I'm ready.

#### SAMPLE 6.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 18:22 GP: Okay. So this was yesterday afternoon. Um, I was reading particularly to prepare for this webinar this morning. And at the time of the beep, my- I felt my visual attention shifting from reading the words "formal logical" at the end of one line on the page, which was the screen on my computer, to reading the word "proof" at, at the beginning of the next line, um, on the far left of the page. Um, while, so this was written, I think this was my, my own notes that I was reviewing, uh, not- that was not part of the awareness, I don't think. Um, but while I was reading, I was shifting the attention, y'know, I was shifting my attention from basically one side of the page to the other. And from the words *formal logical*, to the word *proof*.
- 19:30 Um, I was also trying to think of what else I needed to say about human intelligence versus large language models, which was the topic of that quote and of the topic of the main presentation today, which I was commenting on, I was gonna comment on. (So I was writing my comments.) Um, so that- I had this feeling of searching for information, y'know, searching for, y'know, what am I supposed to say about this, y'know, I'm gonna say about this.
- 20:05 Um, so yeah. So there's two parts to the main things I was experiencing: this shifting of visual attention with some awareness of what was on the page, y'know, at the beginning and the end of the shifting; and, and this sense of searching for information about the topic of human intelligence versus large language models.
- 20:31 RTH: And are those more or less equal?
- 20:36 GP: Yeah, more or less equal. Yeah.

- 20:38 RTH: Well, let's start with the phonological proof. So your attention is shifting. Is that a- are, are we talking about visual thing or motor thing or proprioceptive thing, or none of the above, or-?
- 20:55 GP: Um-
- 20:59 RTH: Or, or semantic thing? I'm not, I'm not trying to... I'm just saying I don't understand what you mean yet by "visual attention shifting."
- 21:12 GP: I guess as a- as best I can reconstruct, it would be a shift from looking at those words, *formal logical*, to looking at that next word, *proof*, considering that, y'know, they weren't in sequence one after the other. Y'know, *formal* and *logical* were in sequence one after the other, but they were on one line- at the end of one line, and then the word *proof* was on the other side. So there was also a movement of the eyes from one side to the other of the page. Um, but I think the dominant aspect of that experience was just the shift from the words on one end to the other word on the other end. Not so much a proprioceptive experience, y'know, sense of the shifting of the eyes. It was just more of the shifting of attention from- or, or reading, from reading those two words, *formal logical*, to reading the word *proof*.
- 22:25 RTH: So are the, are the words *formal logical*? F-O-R-M-A-L?
- 22:30 GP: It's all part of one sentence, y'know, *formal logical proof*. And the words *formal logical* was on one side, at the end of one line. And the word *proof* was then [inaudible]
- 22:40 RTH: I just wanna make sure I got, I got the words right. So the words are *formal* and *logical*, that are put together as an adjective for *proof*, *formal logical proof*. Got it. And, and so I'm gathering from what you're saying is that my experience is more a visual shifting than a semantic shifting. It's not like I have grasped *formal logical*, and now I'm about to grasp *proof* where I'm in the midst of that. But it's more, I feel my visual attention shifting from *formal logical* to *proof*.
- 22:40 Russ comments: On reviewing the video, I think RTH has misrepresented GP's experience—it is more a shifting of attention than of *visual* attention.
- Gualtiero comments: I think it's fair to call it a shifting of *visual* attention.
- 23:22 GP: Yes. I mean, under- I was also understanding what those words mean. It's not like I didn't know what they were. It was, y'know, it was- it would've been different if I was reading a language I don't understand. Um, but I was reading something to understand, so I was understanding what they mean, but I was also shifting attention from one to the other.
- 23:43 RTH: So this, so the distinction that seems, that it seems to me, which I'm, (and there are lots of other distinctions too), but the one that was occurring to me was, I think it's, I think it's possible. I think people very often read without any visual experience *at all*. They obviously, their visual processing is processing it cuz they're doing the reading.

But, but there are a lot of people just don't pay any attention to that. Like, I have a reading study and most of the people in my study actually just form visual images of what they're reading and then didn't, didn't attend to the words or the, or the visual experience at all. They have an- y'know if they're reading about a castle in Spain, well, they got a picture of a castle in Spain and-

24:25 GP: Mm-hmm.

24:26 RTH: So the- so what I, what I want us to, what I wanna be sure is that we don't, we're not saying, well, there's a visual thing *because there must be* a visual experience cuz I don't think that's necessarily true.

24:39 GP: Uh-huh, yeah. There's definitely a visual experience.

24:46 RTH: Okay. And the visual experience is of the *shift*.

24:50 GP: Well, I, I wouldn't, I wouldn't say that because the shift itself is not visual. The shift is the, is, is, is a shift in attention from one side of the page to the other. And from those two words *over there* to this word *over here*.

25:15 RTH: So my experience of this port- this portion of my experience is about seeing-

25:24 GP: What I, what I'm trying to say is I'm not, I'm not visually experiencing the shift. [RTH: Right.] I am, I am experiencing the shift between seeing two, these two words to this other word. So seeing this other word.

25:37 RTH: So that's, that's, that's the distinction I'm trying to make as clear as we can get about. So does it seem like I'm seeing the word *formal logical*, and then a little bit later I'm seeing the word *proof*? [GP: Yes.] And, and I am describing that as a *shift*.

25:57 GP: Yes.

25:58 RTH: Or does it seem like I am in some way experiencing a *movement* from one to the next? And I could describe that as a *shift*. Or that's the, the or that question's in the weeds and I just can't-

26:15 GP: Yeah, yeah. No, I, so I, I probably was also experiencing the, some kind of movement. I mean, my- certainly my eyes moved and perhaps this attentional shift came with some awareness of a physical movement. But that was certainly not prominent in my experience. The way I wrote it down was that it was a *shifting in visual attention*. So I'm, y'know, I'm reading this thing and then I'm shifting to the other side of the page and reading the other side.

26:58 RTH: And is the, *to the other side of the page* a part of this experience? Or is that a statement of fact?

27:07 GP: Not, not explicitly, yeah, not explicitly. And at least the way I, the way I remember it, and the way I wrote it down, was more just the shift from those two words, which I

basically, y'know- so as far as I can tell, I read those two words together which, y'know, because they were next to each other and they sort of go together, *formal logical*, and then shift to the other word *proof*. [RTH: Okay.] So that's, that was the focus, the words themselves, not so much the page or the side of the page.

27:37 RTH: Okay. And so I think I, I think I understand here, so well, maybe I should say what I understand, what I understand is: that at the moment of the beep, I have taken in the word- I've visually taken in the words *formal logical*, and I'm in the process of- about to take in, or maybe this had just happened, I'm not a hundred percent sure about that. But, but then, but then later, somewhat later, microsecond later, I'm gonna take in the word *proof* and, and I grasp myself as first this and then that.

28:17 GP: Yes.

28:18 RTH: And the fact is that whether they're on one side of the page and the other side of the page, and that may contribute to this stuff, but it's not like I'm experiencing myself as directly moving from one side of the page to the other. [GP nods affirmatively] And what I would say about that, the eye movements, the eye movements, y'know, we're, we're saccading all the way, all the, all the time. Our eye movements we never pay attention to that. So we got 20 saccades or however many there are per second. And we don't feel any visual vibration, even though our eyeballs are doing it. And so there doesn't, there doesn't have to be, and probably *isn't* most of the time, a, a muscular or proprioceptive view of reading. Maybe there is, but not very often. So we good about that portion? [GP: Yes.] Sound like, sound like I understand.

28:18 Russ comments: This discussion is a good example of what is necessary in the acquisition of the skill of describing experience. The fundamental skill is separating what is actually part of the experience from everything else, and cleaving to the experience. Here, the experience is an attentional shift from *formal logical* to *proof*. But our conversation was *not* efficiently about that attentional shift—besides that, we talked about lines on the page, and about computer screens, and about the position of the words on the screen (far right and far left of the page), and visual shifting, and proprioceptive eye-movement sensations, and human intelligence, and large language models, and so on. Those are characteristics of the universe at the time of the beep, and no doubt contribute in some way to whatever was the directly apprehendable experience at the moment of the beep. (And if we include those, we should also include the time of day, and what Gualtiero had for breakfast, and the war in Gaza, and the price of gasoline, and Gualtiero's friend's birthday party last week, and the care issues in national cemeteries, and....) But all those are either nonexistent or in the weeds by comparison to the directly apprehended shift from *formal logical* to *proof*.

The DES object is to describe directly apprehended experience with fidelity. That means treating the big-picture stuff as big-picture stuff, and in-the-weeds stuff as in-the-weeds stuff, and not confusing in-the-weeds stuff for big-picture stuff. That does not mean that the in-the-weeds stuff is not important; it means that *as far as Gualtiero's directly apprehended experience at the moment of this beep is concerned*, it is in the weeds.

For one example: It is a fact of the universe that Gualtiero's eyes shifted from the right-hand part of the page to the left-hand part of the page, that his eye-muscles (and neck-muscles, etc.) moved his eyeballs from right to left, and that it is possible to have proprioceptive experience of those muscles as they move the eyes. But the right-side-to-left-side eye movement was *not*, apparently, a fact of his experience, or if was experienced, it was "in the weeds." The DES aim is to try not to let the weeds get in the way of the main experience.

- 29:10                    And then the other, the other part is: I am in some way pondering what I should say. What is, what is there to say? And, and the, and the content is easily transmittable in this interview—it has something to do with what's the difference between human intelligence and LLMs? And, and so is, and, and is that content directly present at the moment of the beep? Or is, or is it the fact that I'm thinking about, I'm trying to think about something, I'm receptive to something, and then-
- 29:49    GP:            Right. Yes, it's more that's the context of the topic. Um, but the experience is more of searching for information about that, or searching for what I wanna say about it, y'know? Gathering, gathering thoughts, expect, y'know, so it's like, y'know, you're like pulling thoughts out of your brain kind of a thing. Um, or at least trying to, because, y'know, I got interrupted and-
- 30:19    RTH:            But the, the, so what I'm, what I'm gathering for that is my experience is more of pulling thoughts or being available to thoughts or, [GP: Yeah.] or, or whatever, *without* so much being available- having directly experienced that it's about human intelligence in large language models. There- that is the topic-
- 30:40    GP:            Right, so-
- 30:40    RTH:            That's, that is what I'm-
- 30:41    GP:            That, that's what I'm looking for thoughts about. But it's not the content of the thought, y'know, really, or the experience. The content of the experience is more the sense of grasping for the thought. y'know, like it's, uh, it's, um, I guess an analogy would be when, when, um, when you're looking for something, y'know, like you're, I don't know, you have, you need the keys to the car and you don't know exactly where they are. And so you just go around and go, okay, where are they? Where are they? So you're, you're trying to find the information somewhere in your, in your mind.
- 31:17    RTH:            Got it. And the concept of *keys* is not necessarily directly present. I'm looking at the places where I've left- where I frequently leave my keys. I'm looking there, and if I see my keys, that'll solve my searching dilemma. [GP: Right.] But it's not like I'm saying "keys" or thinking *keys* or seeing a picture keys or whatever.
- 31:33    GP:            Right. Y'know, what you're looking for, but you're not necessarily like focusing on that explicitly.

31:40 RTH: I'm more into the *looking* than the *for* of what I'm looking. [GP: Yeah.] All right. And I think I'm good about that, unless there is anything else going on in this experience, or if Lauren has a question? [Lauren shakes head negatively]

#### DISCUSSION OF DES VS LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS

31:50 GP: And it's fascinating, y'know, like side note, because I don't think that is quite the way large language models *themselves* work, that they don't have this internal process of like, *oh, like, let's see if I can think of something like that*, y'know, by like, you're just searching for the information inside. Not an expert on large language models. But what little I know-

32:13 RTH: Well, I've, I've been thinking for quite a while that the absolute antithesis of large language models is pretty much DES. [GP: Yeah. (laughs)] What, what we're doing here is, is, is, is, is, is, is, is *exactly the opposite* thing of a large language model.

32:35 GP: Yeah, yeah.

32:36 RTH: Large, large language models are, are predicting what people would say regardless of what experience is. [GP: Yes.] And *we here*, I think are trying to figure out what experiences without caring what the words are. [GP: Right.] That's the, the words are entirely non-important to me. It's the experience.

32:55 GP: Right, exactly. And, and a lot of times there are these spontaneous experiences or thoughts or, y'know, trains of thought. Some of them are, y'know, expressible linguistically, some of them are, maybe you can try to describe some aspects of them linguistically, but they don't have to be linguistic in nature. And also they are spontaneous. They're not just like, y'know, we're, we're just gonna predict the next word in a, in a sequence. Um, we just have like, thoughts bubble up in our mind.

33:28 RTH: Right. I agree.

33:28 GP: That's definitely a common experience, at least, y'know, using DES. Um, [RTH: Right.] but yeah.

33:35 RTH: So sooner or later, you or I, or both of us, or all three of us or whatever, gonna have something to say about, about this, because I, I do think it's a, it's a relatively fundamental importance.

33:46 GP: Yeah.

33:46 RTH: And the, and it, it, it really, it goes to the heart of DES, from my point of view, because what DES is about is trust and fidelity and, and, and trying to, trying, trying jointly with, with, uh, honesty (or genuineness or whatever you wanna call it) to describe a phenomenon. And the LLMs are just *exactly* the opposite of that. [GP: Mm-hmm.] And L- the LLM is all about the L, the first L, both Ls actually. And DES is about neither one of those things. DES is about *you and me*. It is not about you and me averaged across 2 million billion, however many there are out there in those, in those language models.

34:41 GP: Yeah.

34:41 RTH: And, uh, so I haven't, I haven't put my thoughts about that together, but, but it's, it's an important deal. [GP: Yeah.] Number 2?

#### SAMPLE 6.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

34:52 GP: Number 2 happened while I was almost finishing writing my notes about the one that I just described. It only happened three minutes after the other one. So I was staring at my notebook on the empty spot right after the, the acronym LLM. Um, so I was about to, I was, I was trying to formulate the next phrase, which was a clarification on what I was experiencing in my previous, um, before my previous- with the previous beep. And so I beeped again. And so I- part of the experience was just staring at the blank part of the page after LLM written on the page, while trying to formulate the next phrase that would sort of clarify what I meant. So in some ways it's similar, there's a visual experience, but it's just a- the blank part of the page, and also this sense of searching for information.

36:02 RTH: So let's start with the visual experience. So I would like us to distinguish between *my eyeballs are aimed at this blank part of the page* as a fact of the universe that anybody could see. If I, if I had been there next to you, I could have seen your eyeballs aimed at the page. [GP: Yeah.] *And I am experiencing the blank part of the page.* I am seeing the blank part of the page.

36:27 GP: Yeah. So it's the second one.

36:29 RTH: It's the second one. So you, okay. And, and is there anything more to be saying about that? Other than I'm seeing it as far as my experience is concerned?

36:43 GP: Uh-

36:44 RTH: I understand that at the- in, in the state of the universe, and in the end, in the state of, of Gualtiero's intention, he wants to put something in there. [GP: Yeah.] I, I understand that's, that's what's happening. But as far as the visual experiences I'm seeing, I am seeing a space.

37:00 GP: Yeah.

37:01 RTH: Is that right?

37:01 GP: Yeah. I mean, y'know, of course it's surrounded by other, y'know, the rest of the page. So there's like this rest of the page is in the weeds, as you say, but-

37:10 RTH: But not necessarily experientially. That's the question. So the question is: is the rest of the page there experientially?

37:16 GP: In the weeds.

- 37:20 RTH: Okay. And, and so what I, what I would, what I, maybe we've talked about this before, but the, y'know, the faces/vase [GP: Yeah.] ambiguous figure. [GP: Mm-hmm.] When you see the, the faces, the vase is *gone* (for most people). [GP: Yeah.] You wouldn't say "it's in the weeds." You would say, "well, it's just not there—I'm seeing faces." And then when you're seeing the vase it's like, well, the faces are gone. And people wouldn't say, well, *most people* wouldn't say the, the vase is gone.
- 37:57 GP: Right.
- 37:57 RTH: So that's, that's, so that's the difference between *in the weeds* and *I just don't think I experience it*. But also in the weeds it says, I, I really can't make that distinction. I'm happy with that too.
- 38:11 GP: Yeah, well.
- 38:13 RTH: So what, what I'm, what I'm trying to do is to get us to be as good as we can do about that without being better than we have a right to be.
- 38:18 GP: Right? Yeah. Um, yeah. So I, yeah, I don't think I can be super precise, but the best I could say is there's still some minimal fading awareness of the rest of the page or part of the page surrounding that blank area. Um, but it's, it's outside of the, my attentional focus, my visual focus, so it's not dominant.
- 39:00 RTH: Okay. And then I am trying to formulate the next phrase. And is, is there anything that's different from the previous beep where I was trying to have something to say about large language models?
- 39:18 GP: Yeah. Well, there's a difference. Well, there's a difference in, in the specific goal, there's a similarity in the, in the sense of searching for information. But in one case, I'm searching for kinda general thoughts about the, the general topic of LLMs versus human intelligence. Whereas in the other case, I am, I'm, I'm actively trying to clarify the content of that beep. So I am looking for something that would clarify that. So there, I'm, I'm maybe holding the- some information present in my working memory, let's say. (I know this is theoretical talk, but) I'm probably, I'm probably actively, y'know, like rehearsing the content that I just wrote down and, and trying to find a way to clarify what I was trying to say about it. And the, the phrase that I came up with was "searching for information," and then I wrote that down, but I hadn't, I hadn't found it yet when I, y'know, when the beep- um, I heard the beep.
- 40:39 RTH: So the way, the way that I hear what you just said is basically something like: the, both of these samples (6.1 and 6.2) involve awaiting information, searching for information, trying to get information, or something like that. But the, the difference in, and, and there are, there are differences, there are theoretical differences. I'm, I'm searching for different things and, and y'know... But the *experience*, as far as I can tell so far, and this is a question, that the experience seems like the *first* beep is a more open-ended or amorphous searching, whereas *this* searching seems more pointed or focused. Is that right?

41:33 GP: Yeah. And it, it's, it seems like it's more directly, um, based on information that is in, in a sense, um, actively present to me, even though it's not the, the explicit focus of that one experience, but it's, it's, it's also there in the background. And that's what I'm trying to think about. Like, I have, I have this information there that I'm looking to clarify as opposed to just a general topic where I'm looking for something to say about that.

42:19 RTH: So it's the, the beep 2 experience is more anchored. [GP: Yeah!] More experientially anchored [GP: Mm-hmm.] Whereas the beep one is more a traw, trawling for whatever might, whatever might come up. This is-

42:37 GP: Yeah. Yeah.

42:41 RTH: All right then I think I'm good. Number 3?

### SAMPLE 6.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

42:47 GP: Number 3 was a very diffuse experience, um, with a lot of things kinda being in the experience at the same time. I was hearing the letter *S* or the *sound* *S* at the end of the word *sbaglius*. It's my, one of my made-up pseudo-Italian words when I talk to my dog. Um, so I was, I was talking to her and, um, I was, I was saying that, that word and at the end of the word is an *S* sound, and that's the sound that I was aware of, y'know, uttering and hearing at, at the moment of the beep.

43:34 But I was also aware of doing a crunch while listening to a workout video and playing with Cinnamon and seeing part of my living room around me. And, uh, I, I don't think that there's like any one of those that were much more prominent than the others. It was sort of a whole bunch of things that I was, at least that, that seemed to me that I was sort of aware of all these things to about an equal degree.

44:17 RTH: Okay. Well, let's start with the first, the first one. So I, I, I'm hearing the *S* in *sbaglius*

44:27 GP: Well, yeah. That the word is *sbaglius*. It's a, it's a sort of made up Italian pseudo word. [RTH: Okay. How should I-?] so *sbaglio* without the *S* without- and without a *U*, y'know, with ending with an *L* means mistake in Italian. But I was using this like, um, mod- modified word that I made up.

44:49 RTH: So how should I spell this modified word here? It just-

44:51 GP: S, S-B-A-G-L-I-U-S.

44:58 RTH: Okay. And, and my experiences is of the *S* sound.

45:04 GP: Yeah.

45:05 RTH: And, and does that mean that at, at the moment of the beep, my experience is *not* of the entire word, but of the *S* sound of the word?

45:14 GP: Yes.

45:16 RTH: And [pause]

45:16 Russ comments: I think RTH has not done a good job of articulating the question that he is trying to ask, and RTH's unclarity affects (or infects) the next several minutes of the interview.

Here's another attempt at what he was trying to ask: Is the centrality of Gualtierio's experience the *word sbaglius*, and the beep happens to come at the end of that word (which is to say, at the closing *S* of the word)? Or is the centrality of Gualtierio's experience the (hissy) *sound* of the *S*, which happens to be the last sound of the word *sbaglius*? That is, is Gualtierio's experience of a *word* or of a *sound*? My best guess, considering the entire interview, is that Gualtierio's experience is of the sound, but RTH's questioning muddled those waters, and we never get it clarified.

Gualtierio comments: I think the best answer I can give is what I said at the beginning: the experience is of an *S* sound at the end of the word *sbaglius*. The word was in the experience prior to the beep, but right before the beep the most salient aspect of it was the sound *S* that comes at the end. Part of the experience was the awareness that that *S* is part of the larger word.

45:32 GP: Primarily, y'know, primarily it's the, it is the *S*, y'know, I think it, it beeped right after the *S* so I stopped, I stopped talking at that point. Um, I had, I had time to finish the word, but not say another word.

45:48 RTH: So the, so that's the, that's the question that I'm trying to figure out how to ask fairly, which, which, which is: Does it- and, and is it the case that I have said *sbaglius* [GP: Mm-hmm.] and now I am hearing that word? Or is it the fact that I have said *sbaglius* and I am hearing the *S* that is- happens to have been the end of the word?

46:14 GP: Yeah. I'm hearing the *S*. Yes. Uh, primarily, I'm just hearing the *S* at the end of the word. Um, and the, and the word itself is directed at Cinnamon. So I, I'm also feeling the directness of the word at, at Cinnamon, but mostly I'm hearing the sound *S* as opposed to the whole word. I mean, I heard the whole word, it's just that by the time of the beep, the *S* was more the- was more present at that moment.

46:50 RTH: So that's the distinction that I want, that I want us to be, to be clear about, as clear as we can be. So does it seem like I'm hearing the end of the word, which happens to be an *S*? Or does it seem like I am hearing an *S* which happens to be at the end of the word, but that's not really the important part of my experience?

47:08 GP: No, I guess I would say the first one. So it's, it's the *S* at the end of the word that I'm hearing.

47:17 RTH: Okay. So now the, the skeptic in me, which I'm, I got a lot of skeptics that I multi-process here, but one of, one of my multi-processing skeptics has said- says at the, at the outset, he was saying "I was pretty much into the *S*." But *now* he's saying, well,

that's pretty much the end of the word. [GP laughs] And, and so what to make of that? And the answer might be, well, the theory has overtaken the experience, and so it has turned into the word. That's one explanation. Another explanation is, well, the first, the first description was slightly inapt, and when he has refined it, then it, it becomes more about the word. And I don't think I, I don't know the answer. And, and it wouldn't surprise me if you don't know the answer.

48:08                    And so the conversation that we're having right now is not so much about this experience, about this beep, but about next time or whatever, because I think, I think it is an important distinction to be made. Like I'm, I'm sampling with a guy right now who's, who's, who I'm pretty sure pays particular attention to pieces of words. He takes the- it, it is pretty—he's fairly unusual in this regard—but he- what his word I think is called, he latches onto. So he's, so he's listening to a podcast or whatever, and a word is taken, word has gone on. And, and he, he has latched onto that word, which means he has pulled this word out of the sequence and he's holding onto it while the rest of the words keep on going. And most of the time that word is the last word in the sentence, but it's not *always* the last word in the sentence. And that's, that's sort of the distinction that we're making here. It seems to me, is it the last sound in the word, or is he interested in that sound because he's interested in that sound? Not because it's the last sound that he has heard. And, and I don't think, I don't think we're in a position to answer that. And what we are in a position to do is to raise the possibility that those are two different things, while we simultaneously raise the possibility that Russ is on a wild hair and doesn't, doesn't really matter. But that's the- that is what the experiential aim is, is.

49:55                    So the, the, the different, the difference—to try to return to the present situation here—the, the, the difference is, is this primarily a sensory experience where my- I am sensorially aware of the *S* sound? Or is this more a semantically, grasping the word for whatever quasi-Italian meaning it has and they- and, and I am- as I grasp that word, I get, it's the end of that word that I'm grasping, and therefore the *S* is a portion of the semantic processing?

50:32    GP:            Yeah. I would say it's more of a, uh, sensorimotor experience, but it comes with the knowledge of the whole word that just came before it. So even the, the whole word was a sensory motor experience, y'know, experience uttering and hearing the word, and at the end of the word, I hear the beep. So at that moment, I was more aware of the *S* cuz that was the, the sound that came just before the beep.

50:32                    Russ comments: RTH has asked (49:55) about whether the *S* is a *sensory* experience, and GP has responded that it is a *sensorimotor* experience. The *sensory* and the *sensorimotor* are, experientially, two very different things. The *sensory* refers to how the *S* sounds—its hissiness. The *sensorimotor* refers to a process involving sense organs, muscles, neurons, and so on. There is no question that a sensorimotor process was ongoing at the moment of the beep—Gualtierio was saying “sbaglius”—which does involve a coordination of sense organs, muscles, neurons, and so on. The question is whether at the moment of the beep Gualtierio's directly apprehended *experience* is of just (or primarily) the heard *S* (in which case DES would say it is sensory awareness) or of the entire production/hearing, in which case it would be

legitimate to call it a sensorimotor experience. What I *don't* want us to do is to confuse the directly apprehended experiential with the inferred procedural. (But I say again, RTH has not done a very good job of asking these questions; see the comment at 45:16.)

Gualtiero comments: I think you asked the questions well. I also appreciate your skepticism. Perhaps most people report such experiences as sensory and not sensorimotor? This is an example where it seems impossible to avoid assumptions, for even asking the question requires the assumption that a subject can distinguish between a sensory and a sensorimotor experience. I'm sticking with my answer that, to the best of my ability to report on my experience, it involved both sensory and motor aspects. Perhaps 30 years of tai chi practice have made me more aware of my own bodily movements than the average person. IDK. A related point is that when I say "motor", what is probably happening is that I am either perceiving my own movement or perhaps I am aware of the corollary discharge of my motor intentions. So, the "motor" part of "sensorimotor" experience still has sensory aspects to it. More assumptions here!

Russ comments: RE (Gualtiero comment at 45:16) "I think the best answer I can give is what I said at the beginning: the experience is of an *S* sound at the end of the word *sbaglius*." and RE (Gualtiero comment here at 50:32): "I'm sticking with my answer that, to the best of my ability to report on my experience, it involved both sensory and motor aspects."

Those statements are not the same, and as a result, my antennae jangle.

I fully accept that the sensory *S* sound is at the end of a word, and that Gualtiero fully understands it as being at the *S* at the end of a word (he would not confuse it, for example, with the hiss of a snake or the hiss of a pressure cooker). Furthermore, I fully accept that the *S* is the result of a sensorimotor process of speaking, and that Gualtiero fully understands it as being the result of such a speaking process (he would not wonder, for example, whether he was hearing his voice being played on his stereo). And I fully accept that both those understandings in some way shape or inform the hearing of the *S*—that is, I fully accept that "it **involved** both sensory and motor aspects" is a true statement.

However, I think the sensory and the motor "**involvements**" which make that a true statement are not the same. The sensory is involved in one manner of speaking (the directly apprehended manner), and the motor is also involved but in an entirely different manner of speaking (the theoretically inferred manner). GP *could have said*, in his (42:47) opening salvo, "I was feeling my chesty thrust and tongue-y curl as I said the *S* at the end of the word *sbaglius*." Had he spoken thusly, we doubtless would have concluded that he had a direct apprehension of the motor act of speaking; in that case we would have also acknowledged that there was also present to some degree the hissy sound of the *S*, which (we would have agreed) doubtless provided some sensory feedback shaping of the musculature of the word production—that is, we would have acknowledged an ongoing sensorimotor process. But "chesty thrust and tongue-y curl" is *not* what he said, and I think the reason he didn't say that was

that the chesty thrust and tongue-y curl was *not* directly apprehended (whereas the hissy *S* was directly apprehended).

Said another way, I think GP's (45:16) "I think the best answer I can give is what I said at the beginning: the experience is of an S sound at the end of the word sbaglius" is a true statement in the *direct-apprehension* manner of speaking. GP's (50:32): "I'm sticking with my answer that, to the best of my ability to report on my experience, it involved both sensory and motor aspects" is a true statement only if the *theoretical-inference* manner of speaking is included (as applying to the motor) along with the direct-apprehension manner of speaking (as applying to the hiss).

The aim of DES is to cleave to the direct apprehension because that (and only that) is a phenomenon that can be directly described. That in no way implies that the theoretical does not exist or that it is not important. It means that if one wants to grasp phenomena (as does DES), one needs to bracket the theoretical, because any confusion with theory will diminish the fidelity of the description of the phenomena. The theoretical can be theorized about, not described.

Gualtierio comments: I agree it's important to separate the "directly" apprehended from the theoretically inferred. Yet as far as I can tell, in this case I apprehended what I would call a "motor" aspect of my experience as "directly" as I apprehended its sensory aspect. By sensory aspect, I mean the S sound as heard (similar to how I would hear an S sound produced by someone else, or from a recording). By motor aspect, I mean sensing my body, or at least part of my body, while it's acting to produce the S sound. It seems to me that when I experience myself speaking, I often experience both the sound and something like the internal production of the sound at the same time, and this was an example of such an experience. I still don't see anything in Russ's comments that convinces me that I was merely inferring my physical involvement in producing the sound, as opposed to feeling it. I could be wrong. Perhaps I convince myself that I'm feeling my own bodily production of the sound because I happen to know that my body was producing the sound, and maybe this is what Russ is trying to say. But it could also be that, if most people do not report being aware of their own production of their own talking, it's because they are not aware or paying attention to it, whereas I often am, and the fact that Russ is not used to hearing reports like this makes him skeptical of my report of a sensorimotor experience (as opposed to purely sensory).

Russ comments: (1) My aim in this comment (as in all DES expositional interviews and also in the comments thereon that we are passing back and forth) is more about tomorrow than about yesterday—more about building skill/appreciation (so that *next time* we can be more faithful to Gualtierio's experience) than about trying to get sample 6.3 right. The logic is simple: if we have to debate/discuss/criticize what we said in the 6.3 interview, we were not adequately prepared to apprehend Gualtierio's experience when beep 6.3 sounded. So we can try to hash out the details of Gualtierio's 6.3 experience, but we have to accept that that hashing will fall short of fidelity to the

experience of 6.3; but it may make us more adept in similar situations on later days.

(2) Today I think that I was too conclusory in my [RTH2] comments. For example:

| What I said in [RTH2]                                                                                                               | What I would say today                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| But “chesty thrust and tongue-y curl” is <i>not</i> what he said, and                                                               | But “chesty thrust and tongue-y curl” is <i>not</i> what he said, and                                                               |
| I think the reason he didn’t say that was                                                                                           | one (of other possible) reasons he didn’t say that was                                                                              |
| that the chesty thrust and tongue-y curl was <i>not</i> directly apprehended (whereas the hissy <i>S</i> was directly apprehended). | that the chesty thrust and tongue-y curl was <i>not</i> directly apprehended (whereas the hissy <i>S</i> was directly apprehended). |

That is, I think I had a warrant to be genuinely skeptical about your direct apprehension of motor experience, but that warrant does not include a license to resolve that skepticism.

(3) I think a warrant for skepticism must arise from what Gualtiero said. Here, for example, the warrant arises from:

- GP made no real mention of anything motor until 8 minutes into the interview (50:32). Until then, as plainly as I can understand it, GP’s description had been of the sensory;
- In particular, GP did not describe directly apprehended motor experience of speaking when it would have been natural to do so, particularly in the opening salvo (42:47—44:17)
- Gualtiero advances theoretical explanations when DES requests descriptions of phenomena. For example: “It seems to me that when I experience myself speaking, I often experience both the sound and something like the internal production of the sound at the same time, and this was an example of such an experience”; and “But it could also be that, if most people do not report being aware of their own production of their own talking, it’s because they are not aware or paying attention to it, whereas I often am.” Such theory / generality may well be true in most cases, but that has no bearing whatsoever on what happened in the specific case of sample 6.3.

(4) I’m no mind reader, and I certainly am in no position to try to “convince” you of your own experience. I am, however, a careful interviewer who genuinely tries to understand what GP is trying to convey, which requires me to notice what he says, how he says it, when he says it, what he doesn’t say, what he says that is extraneous, what he says that is related to what he has previously said, and so on. A corollary of all that is that I do not accept that GP is infallibly correct whenever he speaks about his experience. In short, I am (or at least try to be) a genuinely skeptical (where by *genuinely skeptical* I intend

its etymological roots: Greek *skeptikos* “thoughtful,” from *skeptesthai* “to look, consider”) interviewer. About sample 6.3, I think that GP provide lots of occasions for skeptical antennae to jangle (a few are provided in (3) above).

(5) My job, as I see it, is (a) forthrightly to convey to GP how I understand what he has said, *not* because I know the truth but because I accept that neither Russ nor Gualtiero has incorrigible access to Gualtiero’s experience; and (b) to try to continue to encourage in both Russ and Gualtiero the genuine skepticism about what Gualtiero’s experience so that we, together, can do what is impossible for me alone (and, likely, for Gualtiero alone). Generalities such as “when I experience myself speaking, I often experience both the sound and something like the internal production of the sound at the same time, and this was an example of such an experience” are vulnerable to confirmation bias, and it’s my job to try to help protect us from that particularly insidious human proclivity.

Gualtiero comments: what RTH says is entirely sensible but there is still a disconnect. RTH writes, “GP made no real mention of anything motor until 8 minutes into the interview (50:32).” But my very initial report on the experience concludes with “at the end of the word is an *S* sound, and that’s the sound that I was aware of, y’know, uttering and hearing at, at the moment of the beep”. The word “uttering” is my attempt to convey that there was something motor (as well as sensory) about the experience. Now, I am still not sure how to tell from within whether an experience of that sort is purely sensory or also has a motor aspect to it. The motor aspect was not specific to the tongue movement, or I would have said so. It was more of a diffuse sense that I was uttering (producing) the sound as opposed to just hearing it. I did my best to report my experience as it seemed to me. Surely my report is fallible. Side note: how did (some) past philosophers manage to convince themselves that introspection of current experiences is infallible? It’s pretty hard to figure out what I was experiencing at the time of the beep. It probably has to do with the fact that armchair introspection feels easy—because it’s not rigorous enough.

Russ comments: RE “But my very initial report on the experience concludes with “at the end of the word is an *S* sound, and that’s the sound that I was aware of, y’know, uttering and hearing at, at the moment of the beep”. The word “uttering” is my attempt to convey that there was something motor (as well as sensory) about the experience.”

In this series of backs and forths, we are, it seems to me, engaged in the attempt to figure out what to do about what Russ calls is presupposition-detector antennae. That lies at the heart of DES, and I have never (at least in writing, and probably otherwise as well) explored it adequately. So I am grateful for these exchanges and hope that if I am off the mark, I do not unduly offend.

Furthermore, what I think I am about to say is probably at least to some degree redundant to what I have said in previous comments on the Gualtiero interviews. I

don't wish to defend that redundancy, but I will say that it is not my intention to be redundant. I am trying to respond to what you say in GP5 without being too concerned about what I might have said before.

With that preamble, I return to the opening salvo GP5 quotes: "But my very initial report on the experience concludes with 'at the end of the word is an *S* sound, and that's the sound that I was aware of, y'know, uttering and hearing at, at the moment of the beep'."

I happily accept that GP may well have used the word "uttering" with the intention of describing his directly apprehended motor experience. But his locution is also consistent with describing a directly apprehended *sensory experience* conflated with a presuppositionally driven *motor expectation*. I'm no mind reader, so I don't know which is a more faithful description of his experience at this beep, and it is *absolutely not my place* to try to convince GP of his experience.

However, it is *absolutely my responsibility* to try to help Gualtierio overcome [bracket] any presuppositions that he may have that interfere with his ability to apprehend and describe his before-the-footlights experience. That is challenging because presuppositions are delusions, and it is the nature of delusion that Gualtierio will be blind to any presupposition he may have and, moreover, will have developed and practiced unrecognized strategies to defend against exactly that delusionality's being discovered and/or reduced. In short, Gualtierio must honestly deny the existence of any delusion he may (or may not) have: if he *does not* have a delusion, the suggestion is mistaken so he must deny that he has it; if he *does* have a delusion, the delusion will defend itself so he must deny that he has it. As a corollary, whether Gualtierio denies or does not deny a delusion is of no interest to me—it cannot possibly be informative. (I hope Gualtierio does not take that personally—it is true of all delusional people, and, I think, short of nirvana, all people are delusional.)

The DES art, to the extent that such art exists, is to help us genuinely to cleave to experience, which means bracketing whatever presuppositions exist. I cannot merely blindly accept a denial. I cannot merely accuse anyone or everyone of having a presupposition. The art is to cultivate presupposition antennae that detect the *possibility* of a presupposition. Those detectors are not mind readers, so they should not be evaluated on whether they are correct or incorrect. They should be honed / calibrated / evaluated on whether they jangle when there is *warrant* for wondering whether there is a presupposition in the vicinity.

That warrant comes from the manner in which Gualtierio describes his putative directly apprehended experiences. For example: If Gualtierio had used the same number of words, with the same level of confidence-suggesting intonation, and with the same number of subjunctifiers, to describe his sensory aspect and to describe his motor aspect, and with the same degree of detail, then Russ would have no warrant for suggesting or wondering about the operation of a presupposition regarding sensory and motor experience. But that is not what Gualtierio said, which was "at the end of the word is an *S* sound, and that's the sound that I was aware of, y'know, uttering and hearing at, at the moment of the beep." That sentence is, to Russ's antennae, much more heavily directly apprehended sensory than it is directly apprehended motor. The antennae are not (only) about counting, but to the extent that counting is important, there are three sensory references and only one motor reference. The antennae are not (only) about grammatical structure, but the

structure of this sentence is explicitly about the sensory and only ambiguously about the motor. I am not trying to defend the *correctness* of my antennae; I am trying to describe why there is *warrant* for the antennae to jangle when Gualtiero says or implies that there is an equality between the direct apprehension of the sensory and the motor.

I emphasize two aspects: First, I am not mind reading. My antennae have been trained to jangle when there is the *possibility* of a discrepancy, *not* when there is an *actual* discrepancy. Second, note that the examples that I have provided are entirely personal in the sense that they react to what *Gualtiero as an individual* has said and how Gualtiero *as an individual* has said it. The jangles are *not* theoretical or inferential—I am *not* imposing any impersonal theory onto Gualtiero—they do not jangle *because Gualtiero is a member of class X, and theory suggests that therefore he is likely to have presupposition Y*. The warrant comes from what Gualtiero himself said (including, of course, how he said it).

So I have tried to hone my presupposition antennae to provide warrant for mentioning Gualtiero's presuppositions. And then I have tried to mention them within the limits of the warrant. I do not have a warrant to be dogmatic, so I have tried not to be dogmatic. I do not have a warrant to be a mind reader, so I have tried not to mind read. But I also do not have a warrant to ignore the characteristics that jangle my antennae, so I have tried not to ignore them. You can judge for yourself the skill with which I have done those things.

I have *not* tried to talk you into or out of a presupposition—that would be a waste of time. I have on occasion said my antennae jangled, and when I have done so, I have tried (including this comment) to do so aimed at *tomorrow*. That is, I have not tried to resolve yesterday's ambiguity—I have tried to help us get in a position so that *tomorrow* Gualtiero may describe his experience with less ambiguity. That is, these discussions don't answer the question, they only raise the issue: *could it be a presupposition? Maybe! I should be careful about this at upcoming beeps*.

In this particular situation, I am trying to convey to Gualtiero that I know nothing about whether he directly apprehended a motor experience at the moment of beep 6.3. What I would like to suggest is that *next time*, in the immediate response right after some future beep, if it occurs to him to jot some note about the motor, it might be valuable *right then* to consider the extent to which the motor is immediately apprehended, whether it is apprehended in the same way and to the same extent as the sensory, and so on.

RE "Now, I am still not sure how to tell from within whether an experience of that sort is purely sensory or also has a motor aspect to it."

This is indeed the same heart of the matter. I emphasize that the word *experience* has many different meanings, and the only one I am interested in is the directly-apprehended-at-the-moment experience, the before-the-footlights-of-consciousness experience. Absolutely the only way to tell is from within: Gualtiero alone has to apprehend his experiential phenomena, as they present themselves to him, and then determine in the as-best-he-can-ascertain immediacy of his experience what was and what was not directly apprehended.

This conversation reminds me of a *Saturday Night Live* sketch from 1994-1995; it is definitely worth the 90 seconds required to watch it on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bKgsR\\_9qa4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bKgsR_9qa4)

I will provide a transcript of that sketch at the end of this interview in case you can't access the video, but like all important things, the original is better than the transcript.

RE "Side note: how did (some) past philosophers manage to convince themselves that introspection of current experiences is infallible?"

I am not a student of the history of philosophy and may well be mistaken, but I think either they were confused by the ambiguity of the word *experience* or they explicitly were *not* interested in directly apprehended experience. I think they were convinced (wrongly, in my view) that directly-apprehended, before-the-footlights-of-consciousness experience was unimportant, and by *experience* they meant something like *the end result of a thought process*.

William James famously used this sketch (Figure 1) to illustrate "that it makes little or no difference in what sort of mind-stuff, in what quality of imagery, our thinking goes on. The only images *intrinsically* important are the halting-places, the substantive conclusions, provisional or final, of the thought" (James, 1890/1950, p. 269). The *substantive* portions are the A and Z in James's sketch; the *transitive* portions are the several connecting curves. One thinker can get from substantive experience A to substantive experience Z by the slightly curved transitive path; another thinker can get from A to Z by a curly transitive path, and so on. The transitive paths don't matter, according to James: about all those thinkers "we say, and rightly say, that all the thinkers have had substantially the same thought" (James, 1890/1950, p. 269) regardless of which transitive path they had taken.

Philosophy, or at least James, is about the substantive portions A and Z. DES, by contrast, is an attempt to glimpse the transitive portions, the DES directly apprehended experiences are moments along the transitive paths. James thinks the transitive paths don't matter (probably, I speculate, because he thought it impossible to ascertain anything along those paths (as he famously said, you can't "turn up the gas quickly enough to see how the darkness looks"; James, 1892/1984, p. 147). But James didn't have a beeper. The beeper certainly does *not* allow you to see how the darkness looks, but it *does* (or at least may) allow you to see

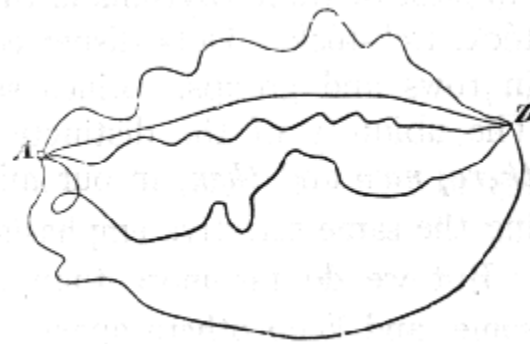
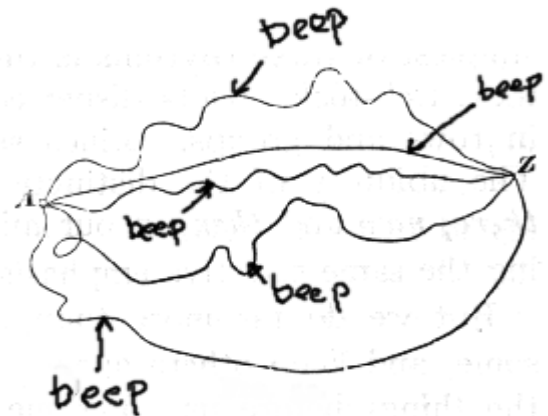


Figure 1: James's sketch of the stream of consciousness



the mice, etc., that were there in the dark before the light caused them to scurry away.

Philosophers can claim infallibility about A and Z because no one can dispute claims about those states. But I think A and Z, to the extent they exist, are nearly infinitely complex states that cannot be captured or described in any way, so an infallible claim about them is meaningless. Therefore I think “infallibility” is not the proper word; a better word would be “unfalsifiability”: claims about A or Z are *unfalsifiable*. I think claims about A and Z are not true, because (I think) people’s states are too complex to be graspable. But there is no one who can show that they are false. To believe in the infallibility of one’s own claims about A and Z is delusion.

So I think James and others have it exactly backwards. They focus on the substantive conclusions (which they think are intrinsically important) and ignore the transitive (which they think don’t matter). I focus on the transitive (which I call pristine inner experience) and ignore the substantive conclusions (which I think are delusions).

All of that is more theoretical than I would prefer to be. Better, I should have said “I focus on pristine inner experience to the extent that it is apprehendable” and leave it at that.

Even better, I should have said “I am interested in Gualtiero’s pristine inner experience to the extent that we can apprehend it.” I accept that we will never Truly apprehend Gualtiero’s pristine inner experience (James is to some degree right about the gas), but we might be able to apprehend it with fidelity, and that will require, among other things, that we differentiate between pristine inner experience and all else.

- 51:06 RTH: So to rewind a few, few more minutes, in, in, in my metaphor of the faces and the vase [GP: Mm-hmm.] The faces are the word, and the, and the vase is the S sound. And I can be paying attention to the word as one way of looking at this thing, or I could be paying attention at the S sound as another way of looking at this experience. And the question is, at the moment of the beep, which one is it? If they’re- the first question is whether that question makes sense. *And*, and then if it does make sense, which one is it? And I don’t expect this or even want us to answer that question about this experience. What I want us to do is to recognize that if we’re, if we’re trying to be, be fidelity trying to get to the fidelity of Gualtiero’s experience, we might have to make that kind of distinction. Or, or, or maybe Ru- Russ is barking down the wrong tree- barking up the wrong tree (trying to mimic our president).
- 52:16 Okay. So we’ll leave that one. Then, then I’m doing a crunch and listening to the workout video?
- 52:25 GP: Yes.
- 52:25 RTH: And that’s to some degree in my experience, but not the only thing?
- 52:30 GP: Mm-hmm.
- 52:31 RTH: And I am playing with Cinnamon beyond the saying of that. So the, the saying of *sbaglius* is part of that playing, but not the entire thing?

- 52:42 GP: Yes, yes. So I'm talking to her while I'm also playing with her, with my hands. Um, she's, y'know, I don't remember exactly what was happening at that moment of the beep, but we were playing and I was aware of playing with her.
- 52:57 RTH: And I'm-
- 52:58 GP: She, y'know, when I'm like working out on the ground, like if I'm doing crunches for example, she will come there and start, y'know, brings the toy. She wants to wrestle with the toy with me. And so, y'know, while I'm crunching, I'm also like holding one side of the toy and she's pulling, things like that. But I don't remember if that's what was happening, but it was probably something like that.
- 53:17 RTH: And that, and that is occupying a portion of my inner experience, but not the primary portion, but [GP: Yeah.] not nothing either.
- 53:26 GP: Right, right, right.
- 53:29 RTH: And then I'm also seeing the living room.
- 53:33 GP: Yes.
- 53:34 RTH: And, and the distinction I wanna make there is between *my eyeballs are aimed at the living, living room, so therefore I must be seeing it, or I am somehow experiencing it?*
- 53:46 GP: Yes. I'd say I'm experiencing the living room, part of the living room, y'know, whatever portion is in my visual field.
- 53:55 RTH: And the distinction there is, y'know, when I- while you- we've been talking and you've been trying to explain things or whatever, most of the times I- when I'm looking at you, I'm totally trying to figure out what Gualtiero is saying, and I'm totally into Gualtiero. But now when I'm broadening my perspective, I can see the face on the wall and the rafters and, and whatever. And those have no doubt been on my retina equally all the way, all the way along here. But I would say that most of the time when I'm trying to figure out what Gualtiero means when he says *sbaglius* or whatever I am, I'm not even in the slightest of paying attention to the antlers, even though they're clearly there to be seen.
- 54:39 GP: Mm-hmm. Yes.
- 54:45 RTH: And that, so *theoretically*, I would say, I'm *always* processing the antlers. They're in, they're in my field division. But *experientially*, I think we'd have to beep me and see, but I- my, my guess is that if you beep me while I was trying to figure out what Gualtiero was meaning when he was saying *sbaglius* or whatever, the, I had *destroyed* the antlers, they were *gone*, [GP: Mm-hmm.] I'm guessing, but I don't really know. And that's, that's why this whole thing is why the, why the DES process has to be iterative and why, why we have to learn how to talk about these things, because we've got, we have to refine our ability to pay attention. Get good at getting what's in

attention *right then* because we don't have, there's really no second chance, second chance gets infected by theories or whatever.

55:55                    But I think I'm good about this beep and it's 1:59. Do we wanna look at another beep or do we wanna say we, we contracted for an hour and uh-

56:18    GP:            [looks at his notes] Yeah, I mean, I don't think there's anything like super crucial in the other few beeps that I had, one was, y'know, one was from last night and I already kinda talked about that at the beginning. So I think we can stop.

56:32    RTH:           Alright. Shall we do this again?

56:36    GP:            Yeah.

Russ comments: This is the transcript mentioned at 50:32.

*Saturday Night Live (1994-1995)*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bKgsR\\_9qa4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bKgsR_9qa4)

### Home Headache Test

0:01     She:                I've got this pain in my forehead. It goes all the way to the base of my neck. It feels like I have a headache, but how can I be sure?

0:08     Her partner:        I feel fine, but what if I have a really bad headache and don't know it?

0:13     Announcer:            When you're wondering if you have a headache, you want an answer and you want it fast. That's why Leland Meyers has developed H-H-T, the first at-home headache test available in the United States. [laughter] To use the home headache test, simply draw a moderate amount of blood, [laughter] place it in the centrifuge, put a drop on the tester strip, and wait two hours. [laughter] If the spot turns blue, you have a headache. If the spot turns green, you don't. If the spot turns purple, results are inconclusive. Try again with a larger blood sample. [laughter] Convenient, safe if properly performed, and up to 80% accurate.

0:51     She:                    [distressed] Oh God! I'm an agony!

0:53     Her partner:            [looks at her test strip—a green spot] Honey. You don't have a headache!

0:55     She:                    [beaming] Oh, thank God!

0:57     Her partner:            [beaming, looking at his own test strip] Neither do I! [they embrace]

0:59     Announcer:            [laughter] The Home Headache Test from Lehman Myers. Because what's worse: Having a bad headache or not knowing if you have a bad headache?