

Gualtiero 7
Gualtiero Sampling Interview 7

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the June 23 sampling interview 7 with Gualtiero that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ClZhU9pVPXA>. 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

0:05 RTH: How are we doing?

0:07 GP: Pretty good.

0:09 RTH: It's Monday for me. I suppose it is for you as well.

0:13 GP: [laughs] Yes.

0:15 RTH: And I've got workman in my house, which might cause some hammering noises and it might *possibly* require me to go and supervise for a minute or answer a question or whatever. I'm hoping that that's not the case. They've been here long enough that they should know what they're doing and, uh, but it's not exactly under my control. So anything we should be talking about before we look at beeps?

CONVERSATION ABOUT SLEEP STUDY

0:46 GP: Well, um, I'd like to continue our conversation about my attempts to, um, figure out what I, what I do or do not experience while I sleep. And I got your recordings for the night, which, um, are great, and I appreciate them. And the one that I've been trying to use is the 60 minute. And what's happened is that, um, even when I put it at the max, I take the loud one and I, and I crank up the volume to the maximum that my computer will, will do with earphones. Um, I, I think one time I, it did wake me up at 60 minutes, but I was thinking about something, uh, so it wasn't blank, but every other time that I've tried it (and there's at least five or six, I can't remember, four or five, four or five, several, several) it's skips the, the 60 minute meaning I don't hear it at all. It doesn't wake me up. And then I hear it at the 120 minutes because it re, it repeats, y'know, it starts over. So,

2:14 RTH: So what that means is that you're missing *two* beeps, because you're missing the beep at 60 minutes and which is like a minute long or 30 seconds, I forget what I did. 30, I think 30 seconds. And, and also the beep that it's at, that's at the beginning, which is like five seconds.

- 2:28 GP: Yes. So I just don't hear any of that. And then I hear at 120 minutes and then, but then I am also thinking of something or, y'know, I have some kind of experience there. Um, but it, what my interpretation is that by the 120 minutes, I'm out of a really deep sleep phase. And so that I can hear the beep. Um, and I, I looked this up a little bit and it's consistent with the, with sleep studies. And so when they do sleep studies, they, they monitor you with like EEG [RTH: Right.] um, sensors. And they can tell from your waves whether you're in deep sleep and then they wait 10 minutes and then they wake you up. But the way they wake you up is apparently if they use sounds, they're like intermittent sounds, so they, y'know, it's like beep-beep-beep like that so that, y'know, it's on and off and I guess that maybe has a better chance of getting through.
- 3:33 Or sometimes they use other methods like physical shaking of the person. Um, and the, the finding seems to be that people are very hard to wake up, uh, when they're in deep, deep sleep, like the deepest state. And typically they, they are not woken up right away. They don't hear the beginning of the stimulation that wakes them up. And then they almost always report that they have no awareness of anything. They were not aware of anything right before they got woken up. So that is, um, that is consistent with my, y'know, attempts. Um, so I'm, I'm gonna try again. I dunno if, um, you think it might be more helpful to modify the sound a little bit or make it like up, y'know, like beep-beep-beep, like intermittent or something? I dunno. We could try. Well,
- 4:40 RTH: I'll, I'll make whatever beep you want. I can, y'know, if you want beep-beep-beep-beep-beep, I'll make a beep-beep-beep-beep beep for you.
- 4:46 GP: Yeah. Can we do that one, one like that at 60 minutes <inaudible>?
- 4:49 RTH: 60 minutes and, and sing it for me so that, and then I'll, so how, how far apart do you want?
- 4:57 GP: Like, like an alarm, like beep, beep beep, something like that.
- 5:02 RTH: Okay. So you're talking about a half a second, roughly in between beeps. It could be a quarter of a second, a quarter of a second long beep with a [GP: Yeah.] half a second in between, something like that.
- 5:13 GP: Something like that could be even longer. But, because the question is would I, I, I wouldn't, there's no way I would hear the beginning. I can tell you that much. Cuz I've already tried with the even regular beeper, right. And I was woken up after the whole beep was done when there was chirping. So I, I guess I had to wait until I had enough [inaudible]
- 5:37 RTH: Right. So, so my guess, my guess is that the method isn't gonna be adequate to answer your question, but, but I think you should decide that for yourself. And I'll, and I'll do whatever it takes for you to arrive at whatever conclusion you want. Not that I, I don't want to talk you into *my* conclusion. I'll, I'll send you a, you, you specify the beep and I'll send it to you and, uh,

6:01 GP: And if you can like make it last for a long time, that might be even better. Like, y'know, instead of having it only for 30 seconds, it could go on for, I dunno how long,

6:12 RTH: Uh, I can, I, can you tell me what you want and I'll make it for you.

6:16 GP: Make it half an hour. I dunno, [laughs] . Okay. Okay. That way eventually it will wake me up at some point.

6:21 RTH: Okay. But then the, then the question will, will, would be what would, y'know if it woke you up at some indeterminate time after it began? So you would know that *then* in the process of awakening from deep sleep after 20 minutes or two minutes, or 8 minutes or whatever, that there was or wasn't, some thinking involved.

6:44 GP: Yeah.

6:46 RTH: And if you would find that interesting. I'll make you the beep. I personally wouldn't find that particularly interesting because it, I has too much alternatives for, y'know, extraneous, extraneous stuff, getting in there, get mixed up, mixed up with too much other stuff. Yeah. But, but y'know, that's my opinion and

7:05 GP: Yeah. But I dunno exactly when I would wake up. So I would like to try it.

7:10 RTH: Okay. So I will make you, I will make you a half an hour, uh, a uh, an hour delay, an hour silence, plus a half an hour of quarter on quarter off, 700 hertz beeps. [GP: Yeah.] And if in, after we're done here, if you want to time things and decide that you don't really like quarter on, quarter off before a couple hours from now, when I get around to making these things, then send me an email and tell me what you *do* want in the timing department.

7:10 Russ comments: Russ emails Gualtiero an .mp3 file with 60 min of silence followed by 30 min of square-wave 700 Hz beeps--.5 sec beep and .5 sec silence. (The original suggestion of .25 sec seemed too fast.)

7:43 GP: Okay. I think we can start with that. Yeah, I, okay.

7:48 RTH: Alright. Alright. Sounds like a plan.

7:50 GP: Thank you.

7:54 RTH: Anything else we should be talking about before we look at beeps?

7:58 GP: I'm done.

7:59 RTH: So this is gonna be day 7, if I'm counting correctly. Not a hundred percent sure about that, but looks like Lauren agrees with me. So,

8:10 GP: Yeah,

8:11 RTH: Day 7, I'm ready.

SAMPLE 7.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

8:16 GP: Okay. So the first I have is, um, made out of three parts. One hearing Cinnamon's squeaky toy. Um, it shows, y'know, she's got a squeaky toy that [RTH: Got it.] and so she sometimes squeaks it and makes a lot of squeaking. So I'm, I'm hearing that.

8:40 Second, seeing my legs on the floor, one straight, one bent (um, cuz I was, uh, doing some kind of stretch or something like that) against the brown hardwood floor. So I'm just the visual experience of my legs on the floor.

9:00 And third, um, some residue or echo of my previous thought, which was in Italian, interestingly. And it was something like, he is like, "we can't live like this." And it's, it's just a reference to Martin making a lot of noise. It, it's, it's not a serious thought. It's, I mean, there's later on a frustration because she can be loud, but, y'know, I, I know she's a doctor's playing. It's like, it's cute, but I like to engage in these kinds of things. And I, and I don't remember if I verbalized it, I dunno if I had said it out loud, it's possible.

9:43 And it's not, it might have been in inner speech, but that would be surprising because I don't, I don't have a lot of inner speech and if I do it's, I'd be surprised if it was an Italian. But you never know. But it wasn't happening at this moment of the beep. It was sort of just the, a kind of residue. So this is something I've observed now many times that at least my impression is that there's something lingering after I have a thought. Y'know, like I have a, I can have a thought and sometimes the beep happens *while* I'm having the thought and sometimes the beep happens like *a little after*, like a second say after, and it's, there's still like some residual awareness of the thought that I had without it really like being fully happening at that moment. It just happened and it's, there's some awareness of it.

9:43 Russ comments: RE "it might have been in inner speech, but that would be surprising because..."

That is a worrisome locution because it suggests that Gualtierio is not keeping adequately separate the distinction between directly apprehended experience (either it was or it was not in inner speech) and all else (here, explanation: "surprising *because...*"). Being confused about whether something is directly apprehended or inferred is the basis of presupposition / delusion.

RE "But you never know."

However, that is a heartening locution because it suggests that Gualtierio is working at keeping those things separate. DES is an iterative procedure, and part of the iteration is to allow the time necessary for the acquisition of the necessary bracketing interests and skills.

10:41 RTH: And, uh, and the timing, timing involved, you would say is on the order of a second, and I don't wanna hold us to the second, but it's less than 10 seconds and more than a millisecond. [GP: Yeah.] On the order of a, on the order of a second.

10:53 GP: Yeah. Yeah.

10:55 RTH: And, and are these three things, as far as you concerned, present as on ongoing in the beep ongoing at the [snaps fingers] moment of the beep?

11:08 GP: Yes.

11:10 RTH: Okay. And equally?

11:11 GP: Yeah.

11:12 RTH: Okay.

11:14 GP: About equally.

11:15 RTH: And, and so how, how confident are you that these are ongoing aspects of your experience that you would, you would have even without the beep, or with some method that that could identify this time without a beep? I would say I was, I had three aspects of my experience, and this is what they were. So I'm asking the skeptics question. The skeptic, the skeptic would be, well, how do you, how do you, how confident are you that this was actually ongoing rather than made up? And I, and I, and I understand that at, at the extreme of that question, you *can't possibly* answer it. So I'm not a I'm not asking for what *it actually is*, what I'm asking for, what it, *how you experience it*.

12:04 GP: Yeah. Well, yeah. So I would say, yeah, this is how I experienced it to the best of my ability to, y'know, recollect, um, and describe the content of my experience at the time of the beep [RTH: Okay.] Um, and yeah, we've talked about this a bit. If you, y'know, a few times how there's a whole process that goes from the experience itself to hearing the beep, to trying to pay attention to what was in the experience right before the beep, or at least of like, the memory, some kind of like immediate memory of what would've been in the exp, in my experience right before the beep. And so yeah, there's some kind of processing reconstruction, memorization, attention shifting, and then finding words to describe it. So there's, y'know, there's a lot happening there, but I'm doing the best I can to try to, as you say, faithfully, um, um, describe what was happening.

13:04 RTH: Okay. So let's, let's start with the echo, [GP: Mm-hmm.] because I think I, I, I think it'll give us a chance to talk a little bit about the kinds of things that you were just talking about. So, so there is, I, I understand that the, the straightforward description that you're giving is: a second or so ago. I was thinking about, I can't go on like this, it can't go on like this. I can't remember exactly what you said.

13:35 GP: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It, yeah. "We can't live like this." In Italian, though.

13:43 RTH: And I'm gathering that you're confident that it's in Italian, [GP: Yeah.] even though you're not confident that it was words that were spoken! But this was somehow an Italian rendering of something [GP:Mm-hmm.] And I'm confident about that.

14:02 GP: Yes.

- 14:04 RTH: And, and then there was some talk about, well, that would be surprising to me, cuz I don't think, I think Italian, I don't think, I think in words or whatever. And that I would say would be after the beep. That would be meta-conversation, meta, meta-thinking. [GP: Yes.] And so the DES task is to separate the meta thinking, the meta, however, however we wanna conceptualize this, away from the direct app, what I would call the direct apprehension. And so what, so what I get from that is: that at the moment of the beep, there is this Italian, clearly Italian echo where the, where the words are, clearly "we can't live like this" (in Italian), [GP: Mm-hmm.] but it's *not* clear to me how those words are present. And it's *not* clear to me exactly how those words had been present in the original non-echoed, original thought, whatever, what it is that we're gonna call that.
- 15:04 GP: Yes. Right? Yes. Correct. Yeah. [RTH: Okay.] Yeah. And, and this is partly because it's, it's quite challenging to try to remember all, or at least as many aspects of my experience at a moment, at the moment for the beep to, to remember *all* of them, to keep track of *all* of them. Because as if I focus on one, I tend to forget the others. And so by the time I start writing, writing it down, y'know, I have to go in some kind of order and I'm writing down, okay, so I hear the squeaky toy, I can see my legs. By the time I wrote down, like the, the note about my echo, I really could not tell for sure if you, if it was something I *spoke* or something that I just *thought*. [RTH: Okay.] Especially because it wasn't even happening at the time of the beep. It had just happened shortly before, but it, I still felt like I had like their *awareness* of the thought having happened or the thought having been expressed, maybe. But I don't *now* I dunno which one it is.
- 16:17 RTH: So I, I accept all those as limitations of the method. I, I, I think there is... The more, the more complex a person's experience actually is, the more difficult it is to get all the details of it. I totally accept that there are, there are people who would say there was one thing going on in my experience (not three as you usually do; you generally have several things going on). [GP: Yeah.] I would say many people would say that's just one thing going on. I was seeing an image of, y'know, my bicycle leaning up against the bicycle rack or whatever. And then they have not too much difficulty in telling me about that detail. And they might make up some details about that, like how much of it they saw or whether there were other bicycles there, whatever. But they would be in the ballpark of, *I had a visual image of my bicycle*. And so there the task for them would be somewhat easier than for *you*.
- 17:19 GP: Yeah. Yeah. I think so. That, that's one generalization that I'd say more often than not, there's at least two, if not three things that I can sort of remember being my experience at the time of the beep. [RTH: Right.] More than one. Sometimes it may be just one, but a lot of times it's not one.
- 17:37 RTH: And, and so the, *one* interesting question about that is, so is it the case that has multiple strands of simultaneous experience, whereas other people only have one? Or is it the case that Gualtiero is a more careful describer and the guy that's only got one experience is willing to give away those other two strands? And I don't think we'll ever know the answer to that *for sure*, except to the extent that I'm interested in it, in it

either way. And I, I don't, I fancy that I don't pressure Gualtiero into having three and not one, and not pressure the other guy into having one and not three.

18:22 GP: Yeah.

18:27 RTH: And I gather, I understand Gualtiero is being *pretty confident* with saying there were these three strands, maybe I've got some details wrong. And I can't remember what the words were in the echo with the...

18:40 GP: Yeah.

18:41 RTH: ...but there were these three strands and there, and, and that, y'know, there's a lot of other strands that could possibly be going on in his experience at that time. Like bombs dropping in Iran, or weather, heat, heat wave and whatever. I mean, there's, there's a lot of candidates, logical candidates, which I understand Gualtiero as, as saying, well it certainly would've been reasonable for me to be thinking about the war or bombs or whatever, but I *wasn't*. You agree with that?

18:41 Russ comments: The object of much of the last ten minutes of conversation is iterative practice aimed at exercising the ability to distinguish between what is directly apprehended and all else. That is always a main task of DES interviewing.

19:26 GP: Yes.

19:27 RTH: Okay. Then about the legs on the floor, so the, the visual scene, what you said about that is I see one leg straight, one leg bent and against the brown floor or something like that. Hardwood floor [GP: Mm-hmm, yeah.] And, and as recorded by a camera, that's would be a description of what would, could be recorded. I see, there, there *are* legs and one's bent and one straight one. Is, in my experience, is it that I see two legs equally *and* I see the hardwood floor? *Or* is it the case that I'm seeing one of those legs and the others are sort of implied 'cause that's the position I'm in and I'm seeing the floor, or I'm not seeing the floor. The floor is the background.

20:16 GP: Yeah. Y'know, again, my best attempt at capturing what I remember experiencing was just the sort of diffused visual experience of the legs. One straight, one bent, y'know, against the background of the floor. Not, not focused on any like detail or one leg more than the other. Certainly the legs are more salient than the floor. Y'know, that's, that's the figure, y'know, the figure is the legs and the lower is the background, not, not the other way around.

20:49 RTH: So that's, that is I guess the distinction that I would like to be clear about it or as clear about as we can, we can be. Does it seem like I'm looking at my *legs*? Or does it seem like I'm taking in a visual scene which includes my legs in the floor, but not one more than the other?

21:05 GP: Uh, yeah, I'd say more the second one, I'm just taking in the visual experience. The visual input.

- 21:14 RTH: So it's *not* a figure / ground-y thing, where the figure is the leg, or one, two legs or one leg or whatever it is. A figure more, a figure-less visual *whatever is falling on my retina I'm seeing*.
- 21:32 GP: Yeah. [RTH: Okay.] Yes.
- 21:32 Russ comments: The immediate but general visual apprehension without a particular figure is fairly unusual in my DES practice (see the comment at 30:29). Later (1:02:55), we speculate that it may be the result of Gualtierio's 30-year tai chi practice.
- 21:36 RTH: Okay. And then I'm hearing Cinnamon's-squeaky-toy. And is that experience of, I hear the squeak, or I hear Cinnamon's toy?
- 21:52 GP: I hear que the squeaks plural, cuz they're [inaudible] in quick succession.]RTH: Mm-hmm.] One after the other. So there's like a lot of squeaks.
- 22:03 RTH: So this is an auditory phenomenon of squeakiness. [GP: Yes.] Squeaky, squeaky, I guess you would say, *rather than* a [GP: Yes.] this is Cinnamon's communication or playing. [GP: Yeah.] or, or whatever.
- 22:18 GP: Okay. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, and I am probably in a sense *aware*, uh, that the squeaks are the squeaks of Cinnamon's toy that she's squeezing with her mouth at that moment. But the thing that is *salient* in my experience at that moment is the squeak. It's not so much everything else, but I mean, I *know* that it's the squeaks of Cinnamon's squeaky toys.
- 22:18 Russ comments: This distinction between what is directly apprehended (the squeak) and what is known (the physics and the provenance of the toy) is at the heart of experience. Keeping those separate is a main aim of DES.
- 22:49 RTH: Got it. And I, and I don't, and I don't intend to rule that out.
- 22:53 GP: It's not like a mysterious squeaking as I don't know what it is and I dunno where it's coming from. [RTH: Right.] I know it's,
- 22:59 RTH: But it's more about the *squeaky* [GP: Yeah.] than it's about Cinnamon-playing.
- 23:04 GP: Yeah, yeah.
- 23:05 RTH: Yeah. It *could be* that I was interested in Cinnamon's playing and part of the Cinnamon's playing was that she's squeaking the, squeaking her toy. But that's *not* so much what this experience is about. This experience is
- 23:16 GP: More about this. Yeah, I think so. Okay. It's more about just the sound.
- 23:16 Russ comments: The distinction that is at stake here is about what *Gualtierio directly/immediately apprehends*: is it about the *sound* or about the playing? It is *not*

about what is falling on Gualtiero's sense receptors (ears, eyes, etc.); it is about how Gualtiero immediately organizes those receptions.

The distinction is important because it hammers home the fact that inner experience is *not* about the stimuli but about *Gualtiero's inner organization* of the stimuli.

23:21 RTH: Okay. And I'm good about that. But I would, I would say in passing that, that that, that example makes, it, makes it clear that there is some... That, that's why I call these things *inner* experiences, even though they're clearly *external* experiences. It's an external squeaking, but it's Gualtiero who, who apprehends the *squeakiness* of it rather than the Cinnamon-y-ness of it. That's what makes it *inner*.

23:51 GP: Yeah.

23:54 RTH: Not trying to defend it. I'm just trying, it occurred to me to say that, I guess is what I should say. Any other questions? Lauren? You, you good about that? Number 2?

SAMPLE 7.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

24:09 GP: Number 2 is almost entirely a, uh, bodily / proprioceptive, I guess, um, experience. So at this point I am doing tai chi and y'know, that's a tai chi, it's a tai chi form. So it's, it's, um, there's movement involved. Um, and I was aware of my body and it's movement. That's the short version of the experience. Um, but y'know, of course there was a specific position I was in of the body including, y'know, all parts of the body, legs, arms, torso, head. And I was shifting the weight to the, to towards the right leg. I think, I think the position that I was getting into, the posture I was getting into is called *brush knee*, but I'm not a hundred percent sure. Um, but the name of it, or the specific posture was *not* in the awareness. Um, it's just to say that there's a specific, there was a transition towards a specific ending position (in which you don't actually stop, you keep going) but, um, um, but yeah... Um, I also wrote that it's a purely bodily or proprioceptive feeling diffused through the whole body.

25:53 And there's also some faint visual awareness of the surrounding portion of the living room. So I was in the living room and, y'know, I guess I was aware of my surrounding visually, but kind of very faintly. Most of the feeling was about the body and its movement.

26:12 RTH: And by very faintly do you mean like 90—10 or 60—40 or 99—1, or that, that doesn't make sense, Steven.

26:19 GP: I'd say, uh, 90—10 or 85—15, something like that.

26:24 RTH: Okay. So pretty dramatically more, much more about the body than the, but...

26:29 GP: Yeah, I would say. Yeah. Yeah.

26:30 RTH: Okay. And, and about the body: it is *not* my legs and it's *not* my arms and it's *not* my feet. It's my entire body.

- 26:43 GP: Yes.
- 26:44 RTH: And is it about the motion of my body or the proprioception of my body, which would be sort of the way my body feels without particularly the, the motion?
- 27:00 GP: Yeah, I'd say it's both. It's both. It's both like where everything *is* and how everything's like related to it. Y'know, everything in my body, like all the whole body where all the parts are like feeling it. Like in a sense there's a sense of like fullness of the body, the different parts of the body, but altogether, and there's *movement* there because, y'know, it's not static. (You can, you can, you can stop and you can hold the posture, but that's not what I was doing. I was in the middle of the form.) So, y'know, there's motion, it's, it's slow motion, and, and you are, you're going with the, with the flow of the motion, y'know, in your, y'know, following your form. And it, it's all very ingrained, y'know, because you, I've done this thousands of times, so, y'know, I sort of like, my body knows what to do kind of a thing. Um, and so it just does it, y'know, you just let it flow. There's not like an effort to like figure out what you need to do. It just happens on its own, but you're *aware* of it.
- 28:07 RTH: Okay. And I, so from that point of view, I would understand you to be saying: I'm aiming towards a particular form, which probably has an name or whatever, but that's that portion of it, that aiming of it is not present to me. [GP: Mm-hmm.] What's present is a motion, [GP: Yes.] which, what I'm gonna describe to Russ and Lauren, how this is experienced, I can say, well, it's heading in that direction. But [GP: Yes.] at the moment I can say I feel the presence of my body, my body is present to me, [GP: Yes.] in motion.
- 28:42 GP: Yes. Yes! I like it! I like that way of putting it. Yeah. And y'know how you said sometimes we know we don't perceive our intention. There was no perception of intention because the intention, the, the, if you act, like you said, intention is more like maybe doing the form, but, but then the kind of, the *form does itself* in this way. Like, y'know, I've done this for 30, 30 years every day, so I don't have to *aim* for a certain movement. It just happens on its own. Cuz y'know, the whole system just follows the form.
- 29:19 RTH: Okay. [GP: Yeah.] And then at the same time, I have a visual awareness of the room.
- 29:28 GP: Yeah. Or a portion of it, of course, y'know, not, I can't see the whole room, but the portion in front of me.
- 29:35 RTH: Okay. And of not any particular aspect in the room? I, it's not, I see the picture on the wall or whatever?
- 29:41 GP: Nah, no, no. It's just kind of very diffused, y'know, okay, there's this space in front of me. I mean, you, this is, I've talked about this before. Like you, you develop this over time as you practice this, y'know, diffuse awareness of, y'know, what's here now. It's not, you're not trying to focus on anything specific. You wanna be aware of everything that's happening here and now. Um, yeah. So it's not like a very focused attention. It's

more diffused. It's diffused. It's like, oh, the whole body in this space and, and it's moving this way.

30:29 RTH: And, and I'm understanding you to be saying that I *see* the room around me. It's not merely that my eyes are open [GP: Yes.] and things are falling on my retina, but that at some (relatively lower) level, I *see* what is falling on my retina. I *experience* what's falling on my retina.

30:29 Russ comments: This is another example of diffuse visual experience (see the comment at 21:32.

30:52 GP: Yes.

30:54 RTH: Okay. And I think I'm good about that. [LG nods affirmatively] Number 3.

SAMPLE 7.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

31:03 GP: Number 3 is, uh, I was on a Zoom meeting [laughs] and with a colleague whose name is Johann (but that was not part of the experience). Um, but I was *hearing* the words, "one of the first things I noticed." And I was seeing Johann and myself on Zoom, on the zoom screen and background (well, y'know, I, so I, I was using my computer like I, I'm right now with you) and there's two us. So there's sort of just the two, um, faces next to each other on the screen. Um, and weirdly enough, I did not write down who was saying the words "one of the first things I noticed." So I, y'know, now I can't remember if *I* was saying them or *he* was saying them. [shrugs shoulders as if in surprise]

31:03 Russ comments: RE "whose name is Johann (but that was not part of the experience)"
Good! GP says that matter-of-factly, which I take as an indication that Gualtiero is here distinguishing clearly and easily between what is directly apprehended and what is background fact of the universe. That is a fundamental DES skill. (See the comment at 9:43.)

32:27 RTH: [pause] So I've got a few things to say about that. One, one is, it is *not* wildly unusual (I would say it's moderately unusual), but not wildly unusual for people to be engaged in conversation and not know who's doing the talking, or who's saying those particular things. So that's not that surprising to me. [GP: Okay.] The, it's *interesting* to me in the sense that, that people take for granted (the world takes for granted; psychology and philosophy take for granted) that people are driving their own talk, and so you should know, you should know who's driving! And, uh, but that, but I think that's, I think people are mistaken about that. And, uh, but it's also, it's also a, a possible that, well, at the time that it was happening, you knew who was driving, but that you had forgotten that.

33:24 GP: Yeah.

33:25 RTH: And, and I don't think I know. And, and apparently you don't know, either. And, and that is fine with me. That's the way this process works. Probably as a result of this con,

conversation that we're having *now*, then the next time it happens, you'll be more attuned to paying attention to whether y'know, who you're, whether you're talking or not.

33:46 GP: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I probably did know. I, I guess at the moment, I mean, at the moment, if you had asked me at the moment who was saying that, I...

33:55 RTH: Not necessarily most

33:56 GP: ...likely would've known, but

33:58 RTH: So whatever. So that's the kind of thing that I would like us to bracket. [GP: Yeah. Yeah.] That's, it's possible that you, that you would know, and it's possible that you *did* know, but it's all, but it's also possible that you *didn't* know and that it didn't matter at that, at that particular time.

33:58 Russ comments: In the comments to interview 5 (at 1:00:19) we had a discussion spawned by Gualtierio's comment "I am still not convinced that the best way to go about describing experience is to (attempt to) bracket all presuppositions." The present sample provides an example of why bracketing all presuppositions is necessary.

Let's start by reviewing this sample. It began (31:03) with Gualtierio recognizing that not knowing who was speaking was weird/surprising, but he reported it anyway. I take the weird/surprising reaction as evidence that there is a presupposition in the vicinity—that one should *of course* know whether one is speaking. That he reported it anyway I take as evidence that he is willing to bracket that presupposition. Good!

But I take GP's (33:46) "I, I guess at the moment, I mean, at the moment, if you had asked me at the moment who was saying that, I...likely would've known" as indicating that the presupposition is pretty strong, which suggests to me that we should exercise the bracketing process in this situation.

Prior to this interview, it would never have occurred to Gualtierio (or to me with respect to Gualtierio) that we should bracket the presupposition that *when I hear someone speaking, I of course know whether or not I am the speaker*. Had we tried, prior to day 1, to list all the presuppositions that we might encounter (as suggested by the Duquesne School), we would not have put *know whether it is me speaking* on the list. And yet, it turns out that now, on day 7, that that may be an important presupposition to bracket. Therefore, I conclude that we have to bracket *all* presuppositions, or at least *be ready* to bracket any presupposition that might arise.

In practice, I think that entails honing my presupposition-detecting antennae so that they are ready to jangle when people say things like "weirdly enough" or shrug shoulders in surprise. That is, noticing the potential that a presupposition is in play is *not* a mind-reading exercise; it is a careful listening exercise that is monitoring for those signs that a presupposition might be operating.

34:15 GP: Yeah.

34:15 RTH: So I'm, I'm, I'm quite,

- 34:19 GP: I mean, just at the time that somebody's speaking, you can check, like even if you ask a question right away, it's happening. Who's speaking? Well, y'know, okay. Y'know, I,
- 34:27 RTH: If you, if you have to check, that's right. You can check. If you have to check, you can check. But that doesn't mean that you have to check, and it doesn't mean that you *did* check.
- 34:35 GP: No,
- 34:35 RTH: That's true. That's the, that is, that is the interesting thing about it, about the experience ordeal experience does not follow the rules of physics or the rules of what seemed like a natural kind of a thing.
- 34:50 GP: Yeah. Yeah.
- 34:50 RTH: So it's, it is fairly frequent actually that people experience themselves as talking. But they will say something like, well, the words, words were just rolling out of me. I didn't know what I was saying. I'm, I'm, I was finding out what I was saying at the same time you were finding out what I was saying or whatever, that the, that the words, the words just occurred. And it's not that big step to go from *that* to, well, there were words in the house at this time, or words on the zoom, on the zoom meeting. But whether I was talking to him or whether he was talking, because it could very well be that he's expressing my thinking as well, y'know, was, was wasn't one of the first things that I noticed either, either. So he could have been expressing that for you, or you could have been expressing it for him, or he could have been expressing it and you weren't really paying attention. I mean, there's a lot of, a lot of possibilities.
- 35:47 GP: Yes.
- 35:49 RTH: *And*, so the, so let me see whether I can back up and say where I think we are here. So I'm hearing the words, "one of the first things I noticed," but at this moment, I can't remember whether I was saying that and then hearing myself say it.
- 36:16 GP: Yeah.
- 36:17 RTH: Or whether he was saying it and I was hearing him say it.
- 36:22 GP: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. It sounds funny to me, but, y'know. Yeah. Like, as you say, it's totally possible.
- 36:32 RTH: Well, the fact that it sounds funny to you is *good* as far as I'm concerned, because that's the, the challenge, the challenge to presuppositions, uh, on, on, on, en route. And, uh, that, that it's accepting that there are things that are happen. That there are things that could possibly be happening, which are beyond what I would've expected. That's what the "sounds funny" means to me. And that's, and that's good, because that's the way I think experience is. I think, I think things can happen in an experience that, that we wouldn't find, that we *would* find unusual. That we would find surprising.

- 37:10 GP: Yeah. They wouldn't expect. Yeah.
- 37:14 RTH: And then I'm also seeing the Zoom display.
- 37:24 GP: Yes.
- 37:25 RTH: And that I guess is a little bit of a misrepresentation for what you said. What you said was, I'm seeing two faces side by side. They are in the real world on the Zoom display. But do I see the Zoom display, or do I see two faces side by side?
- 37:40 GP: I, I see, I see two faces side by side as displayed by my, the Zoom program in my computer. Um,
- 37:56 RTH: So the distinction that I would like us to be as clear about as we can is to separate out the reality of the world—these faces are in fact displayed by the, the Zoom [GP: Yeah.]—and the reality of experience, which is not necessarily the whole thing. So for example, right now, I could be, I could be zoomed in on Gualtiero's face and forget entirely that it's in Zoom. It *is* in Zoom. [GP: Mm-hmm.] But I'm looking at, I'm looking at his face.
- 38:27 GP: Yeah.
- 38:29 RTH: And *experientially*, I'm not looking at his *face on Zoom*. I'm looking at his *face*, [GP: Yeah.] experientially. It *is*, as a matter of fact of the universe, on Zoom. So my question is, does it seem like I'm looking at two faces side by side, or does it seem like I'm looking at two faces on Zoom?
- 38:52 GP: I say it seems like I'm looking at two faces on side by side on Zoom on my computer screen. So it's all, it's all there in the experience in, in some way.
- 39:06 RTH: Okay. [pause] Okay, then I think I'm good about that. We good? Number 4.

SAMPLE 7.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 39:25 GP: Okay. So we have a flavor now! [laughs] Um, I think this might be the first flavor with our beeps. So I'm, I'm feeling, I'm, I'm tasting a peach flavor in my mouth. Um, and I also have a visual and proprioceptive awareness of moving towards the kitchen counter, um, and seeing, no, in the scene around me. And there's also some residue or echo of some propositional thought that I forgot. I remember it was, um, by the time I was writing it down. Um, so yeah. So again, there's three parts. There's the peach flavor. There's the visual and pre perceptive awareness of moving myself towards the kitchen counter; and echo something that I was thinking before, not right at the beep, at the time of the beep but like a little earlier, like say a second earlier. And when, when it beeped, I think I re I knew what it was, but by the time I wrote it down, I did not remember what it was.
- 40:55 RTH: Okay. And equally, three things equally, or is one more than the other?

41:03 GP: Yeah. Um, uh, yeah, probably more or less. Yes. Um, maybe the thought was a little less prominent, especially since I forgot what it was, but I dunno.

41:16 RTH: Okay. So let's start with the peach.

41:18 GP: Yeah.

41:19 RTH: So tell me what that experience was.

41:23 GP: Um, it was just this taste of peach in my mouth.

41:32 RTH: So is the, is the experience of tasting as opposed to [GP: Yeah.] chewing or feeling the texture of, or whatever?

41:43 GP: Yeah. Yeah. Because in fact, there wasn't really any significant amount of peach in my mouth. I had licked, I had just licked my finger or maybe more than one finger. I, I think I was making a smoothie and I probably, I probably like cut the peach into the blender and then maybe threw away the pit or something. And I had like, a little bit of, just a tiny bit of peach left on my fingers and I licked them. And then, and then I tasted the peach, but the, the amount of peach itself was negligible.

42:15 RTH: Okay. And the finger *motion* is negligible as well?

42:20 GP: Yeah. Because by then,

42:23 RTH: [interrupts] Don't need a *because* here! [GP laughs] Just the, just, just the, just the description. The facts. The facts, ma'am. Just the facts.

42:33 GP: No, there's no motion of the finger that I remember [RTH: Okay.] as being experienced.

42:37 RTH: So this is a, this, I'm gathering is pretty specifically this aspect, pretty specifically solely a taste thing. Yeah. *I taste peach*.

42:49 GP: Well, y'know, yeah. Uh, flavor, I would say. Cuz y'know, strictly speaking to, y'know, at least like in a technical sense, taste is just those four, like sour salt, uh, whatever, y'know, sweet and so forth. And then, but then if you add the, the smell, the retro-nasal smell that comes from the mouth, that's where flavor comes from. So it's, I say *flavor*.

43:22 RTH: So I agree with the physics of that.

43:27 GP: If you wanna call it *taste*, we can call it *taste*.

43:29 RTH: *Flavor*, flavor is fine with me. I dunno, flavor. When, what, what I, what I would like us to do is to bracket that, to bracket that description of how flavor works. And, and I don't really care whether we call it *flavor* or *taste*, but, and so I'm, I'm, I'm totally

accepting the truth of what you said about how flavor becomes taste or whatever, taste becomes flavor. [GP: Yeah.] But, but experientially, that is not the way it works. It's not like I have got, it is not like my experiences. I, well, I got some chemical irritation on my tongue, and then when I inhale it becomes flavored. That's that, that's not what happens experientially. No. What happens experientially is I'm apprehending peachy.

44:19 GP: Yeah. And not only that, I'm apprehending it in my mouth, even though the, the smell part is from the nose receptors.

44:19 Russ comments: I'm happy that Gualtiero is recognizing that his experience differs from what the science perhaps would suggest—that is a sign that he is attending to experience and not simply giving in to the science. But I would be happier if we weren't talking about the science at all. At best it is a distraction; at worst it will pollute the description to some degree. So...

44:27 RTH: Yeah. But experience,

44:30 GP: This is very common. This is, y'know, as far as I know, this is, this is a standard way that people experience flavors in their mouth. That's how I experience it.

44:47 RTH: I think "standard" is a little stronger than I would know, but probably more people than not experience it. But, but, but for *you*, what? But I, but mostly I would like to know about Gualtiero rather than, uh, the rest of the people in the, in the universe here. So *you* experienced this as a taste in your mouth?

44:47 Russ comments: ...he brings the talk back to Gualtiero as an individual, regardless of the science or the commonality. That is, he tries to help us bracket all the extraneous possibilities.

45:05 GP: Yes.

45:07 RTH: Or a flavor in your mouth, whatever it is. I wanna call it peachy-ness in your mouth.

45:11 GP: Peach in my mouth, yes.

45:12 RTH: Okay. That

45:13 GP: Was good too! [they laugh]

45:14 RTH: And the, in the, in my mouth period, portion of that is *experienced*. Somehow this is an experience in my mouth. It's not like I'm saying, "well, y'know, there was granules of peach pulp, whatever left in my mouth. And *therefore* it is, this is a flavor that I feel that I experienced that be taking place in my mouth."

45:39 GP: Mm-hmm.

45:40 RTH: Okay. And so I'm good about that. And I'm ready to move on to the next portion, which was moving towards the counter.

45:50 GP: Yes.

45:53 RTH: And this was said to be both proprioceptive and visual?

45:57 GP: Yes.

45:58 RTH: Both equally.

46:01 GP: Mm. Yeah. Yeah. [RTH: Okay.] Probably, yeah. So there's, y'know, there's the looming counter and the space around it, and then there's my body moving that way. Um, and so it seems like it was just kinda one experience, y'know, one experience of me moving towards the counter that I'm seeing, y'know, I'm also seeing it.

46:24 RTH: And, and I'm understanding this as being *without* a particular figural aspect. Is that right? [GP: Yeah.] It's not like I'm *seeing* the counter particularly and moving towards it.

46:37 GP: It's, it's diffused Yeah.

46:39 RTH: Okay. And, and is this in some way similar or different for the tai chi thing from the previous beep where I was feeling my body in motion? Is it more or less like that except not pattern...

46:57 GP: Yeah. I think so. It's, it's, yeah. It's similar in that it's this diffuse experience of my body moving in a certain environment, but it's, it's not as all-encompassing as the tai chi moment, where that's all it is. It's just is like here in my body here now in this space, now it's, it's one aspect among others. There's the peach flavor, and then there's, like, thought residue as well.

47:29 RTH: Okay. Okay. And then there is the thought residue, which I'm gathering we can't say much more about because we forgot it. [[GP: Yeah.] Okay. Yeah. Then I'm good about that. And I would say more or less in passing that the body motion is fairly unusual, might very well be the result of 30 years of tai chi stuff.

48:00 GP: But can you say just a little bit more about that? Do you, are you, is it unusual in the sense that when people report stuff along similar of lines, they usually have something much more specific that they're experiencing? It's not as like diffuse as I would say.

48:19 RTH: Yes. So your experiences are unusual in two ways, I would say. One is a, a bodily presence, [GP: Mm-hmm.] which is fairly unusual. I would say the average guy walking into the counter, walking into the kitchen would be seeing the refrigerator or the seeing the sink or whatever, and moving towards it. [GP: Mm-hmm , Mm-hmm.] And, and **not** have much of a bodily presence. [GP: Yeah. Yeah.] To it. And your experience is sort of unusual in the sense of lack of figural prominence. Most people, most people

would pick out something [GP: Mm-hmm.] visual visually or bodily or whatever. And [GP:Yeah.] But not everybody. And, uh,

49:05 GP: Yeah. Well, I can, I can tell you that this is, y'know, generalization, but, um, my experience of my own body and my relationship between my body and my environment has changed very dramatically since I started doing tai chi. So I, I remember progressively noticing that I became more aware of my body and the way it fits, y'know, it's situated in its immediate environment and even gained a sense of, uh, comfort and, um, and, I control almost or confidence that I didn't have at all when, uh, y'know, before I started doing tai chi. I mean, that was 30 years ago, but I, I still remember, y'know, feeling, for example, very, um, almost afraid. And, and, and, um, especially if I went into like an unusual environment, like an unfamiliar environment, like in a new city or something like that, while you just walking through just feeling very, um, afraid of like what might happen and not comfortable and not, not in control of like, what's happening and not aware of my own body in the situation. But then that like, has shifted very, very far in this other direction of, well, I can feel myself, I can feel my body, I know where I am, and I can, y'know, I'm aware of my surrounding and there's no danger, at least in the immediate surrounding, and I'm fine with that, y'know? So I, it's been like, it's been an interesting change for me.

50:57 RTH: So (a) I don't disbelieve that in the slightest. I would also, (b) would also say that's a generality as opposed to a specificity. But (c) the point that I really wanna make is, wouldn't it be interesting to have sampled with you 30 years ago and then sample with you now [laughs] , and that, *that* would be *totally interesting*. And nobody has done that, including me. And, uh, and it is a, a minor tragedy from my point of view, because the, the, the truth-value of what you have just said, y'know, I'm, I'm, I'm a skeptic, and the, the truth- value what, what you said would be much more interesting from my point of view, if we could document it.

50:57 Russ comments: RE "(a) I don't disbelieve that in the slightest."
True enough, but he doesn't believe it, either. Most people's self-generalities are mistaken in sometimes dramatically important ways. Was the change exactly the way Gualtierio described it? Was the change due to age-related maturity rather than tai chi (or due to a combination of maturity and tai chi)? We have no way to sort those out.

RE: "(c) wouldn't it be interesting to have sampled with you 30 years ago"
Indeed it would. When and if the planet has a mature science of inner experience, we will have lots of good longitudinal studies and derivatively a good understanding of the development and alterations of inner experience. We are a very long way away from that.

51:48 GP: Yeah. Or, y'know, here's another, y'know, distinction. I've had conversations with people where they say things like, yeah, um, y'know, "I feel tense" or "I, I, I dunno if my, if I'm cold or not, or my feet are cold or hot," or, um, "I dunno exactly where they are." And I say like, can't you feel it? Can't you focus on that? Can't you feel like where your feet are, how you're, y'know, if they're cold or hot or something. And, and, and, and they find it very difficult. Um, and they really seem to, to lack a kind of awareness

of their bodies that I can, I think I have now. Um, but I certainly didn't have it 30 years ago. So that's another way of maybe drawing a distinction there. Um,

52:39 RTH: Well, I, I totally agree with that characterization, and what I think of, I think inner experience is a set of skills.

52:46 GP: Yeah.

52:46 RTH: And, and it seems like you should be able to tell what your feet are hot, because that would be, isn't that obvious? And the answer, and the answer is, it's not necessarily obvious,

52:57 GP: But where they are, how they're positioned, or y'know, where your weight is, are you, is we were more on the right or on the left. That's, y'know, it's not just obvious to everyone because if you've never like paid attention to that, right, it's not obvious not to tell.

53:15 RTH: And, and it's, and it's interesting from two different points of view. One is whether you *can*. [GP: Yeah.] So could, when, when instructed, *can* you pay attention to your feet and tell whether they're out or cold. And the other is whether you *do*. [GP: Yeah.] And, and, uh, and do so frequently or rarely, or, or, or whatever. And the samples we've got from Gualtieri makes it seem like he does frequently, even though I claimed a little bit ago that most people don't.

53:45 But, but all, all that stuff to, to my way of thinking, is, is the world would be a way more interesting place if there were a whole lot of people, more or less like me who were doing the kind of thing that I'm doing as well, or better than I'm doing it. So then we could be talking about it and, and, and *really* have good answers to the kinds of questions that you're talking about. Because without that, then we're into the realm of speculative generalities. And, and, and I think we're wildly mistaken, we're having at least the possibility of being wildly mistaken, about that.

54:20 Just like you, just, like for example, today we're talking about, well, is it really possible to have words going on and I'm not sure whether I'm talking or somebody else is talking? [GP laughs] Yes, it's possible. [GP: Yeah.] Whether, whether that happened for *you* at that particular moment, I don't know. And whether it would be a frequent thing for you if we sample with you more, I don't know. But I'm pretty sure it is possible.

54:42 GP: Yeah.

54:43 RTH: The experiential world does not, does not mirror what we think it is.

54:52 GP: No.

54:52 RTH: That's what makes it interesting. On to number 5?

SAMPLE 7.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 54:58 GP: Uh, so I had a visual awareness of three receipts in front of me on the table, and some residue of fragments of propositional thoughts that were, I forgot though. So, and, and what, so, but I, when I say fragments, I mean plural. So there were, there were some, there was maybe a, a chain of thoughts or, or maybe they, I dunno if they were even like directly leading one to the other, but there was this sense of, there's been a sort of series of like, or multiple thoughts that had occurred to me right be, a little before, like say a second bef, y'know, a second to several seconds before. And, um, I probably could still tell at least the topics when the beep happened, but by the time I were down, I couldn't remember what they were.
- 56:02 RTH: So you refer to that this as topics, plural. [GP: Yeah.] And also as possibly a chain of thought, which would be sort of more, more like singular.
- 56:14 GP: Yeah. It might have been one topic, but just like a series of thoughts about that.
- 56:19 RTH: But at this moment you can't, you can't distinguish that? [GP: No.] Because I think it, I think it is, I think it is possible (I have a sampled of people who *do*, I think) have entirely different trains of thought going on simultaneously. [GP: Mm-hmm .] Even, even in inner speech. So people can be innerly speaking two different sentences on unrelated topics at the same time. They can have that kinda experience. That's fairly unusual, but it [GP: Yeah.] but it does occur. [GP: Yeah.]
- 56:51 RTH: And then, and so is the, is the primary aspect of this experience the visual?
- 56:58 GP: Yes.
- 56:59 RTH: 60—40? 90—10? Primarily...
- 57:02 GP: Uh, 70—30.
- 57:03 RTH: 70—30. [GP: Mm-hmm.] And so the fact of the universe is there are three receipts on the table. [GP: Yeah.] And, uh, my experience is of three receipts on the table or on the...
- 57:20 GP: Yeah. It's three receipts. They're all a bit like bent and merging into each other. One, y'know, some one is covering another in part and so forth. They, but they're in front of me. There's three receipts, like two are from a hardware store and one is a CVS, but that's not really in the visual experience.
- 57:44 RTH: And is the visual, it is the visual experience that I am taking in what my eyeballs are aimed at? Or is it I'm looking at these receipts, I'm seeing these receipts?
- 57:56 GP: I think I'm just taking it in. Yeah, so I was in the middle of starting to sort out the various documents and things, and, and at that point my, I happened to be looking right in front of me at these receipts. I was probably gonna do something with the receipts, spending them in the, in an envelope of receipts or something like that.

58:17 RTH: But it's not, I'm gathering that this experience is *not* so much I'm seeing the receipts. This is, I'm seeing what my eyeballs are aimed at. Like, I haven't made a *figure* out of the receipts or out of the, not out of the CVS receipt, not out of the hardware store receipt, not out of the crumpled pile of receipts.

58:38 GP: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But I mean, I am aware that those are receipts and there's three of them.

58:54 RTH: [pause] So the question is what that does to your, or take that back. The question is what is your experience as it presents itself at that, [snaps fingers] at that particular moment? And the, then the,

59:16 GP: Well, I'd say it's an experience of there being three receipts, three paper receipts, y'know, white long paper strips, receipts, a little bit bent, a little bit on top of each other in front of me on the table. But that's because that's, y'know, that's what's in front of me. And I'm looking in front of me, not because I was like trying to find the receipts or look at the receipts or examine them. It was sort of just, that's what's there right now.

59:16 Russ comments: RE "there being three receipts, three paper receipts, y'know, white long paper strips, receipts, a little bit bent, a little bit on top of each other in front of me on the table"

As a fact of the universe, the three receipts have a nearly infinite batch of specifiable characteristics: physically, the first hardware strip is white, bent, and long; and it is white with gray letters, bent in three places, and 6.47 inches long; and its top is at a 31.3 degree angle from Gualtiero's perspective, and at the first fold (which is more rounded than creased) the angle changes to 47.2 degrees.... Historically, that receipt came from Home Depot, and it came from the self-check at Home Depot, and it came from the second-from-the-left self-check.... Temporally, it came from yesterday's trip to Home Depot, and that trip was before dinner, and that trip was on Gualtiero's way home from the university, and the checkout was at 4:17:25 after having entered the store at 3:58:21.... Interpersonally, the purchase was the result of advice given by a store employee, and the employee gave advice about this part and not that one, and the employee at the check-out was pleasantly helpful when Gualtiero's receipt was stuck in the machine.... And so on and on and on. And the same for the other two receipts. And then for the interaction between them (the CVS receipt was printed after the Home Depot receipt, and it was printed 48:12 minutes after the Home Depot receipt, and Gualtiero had put both receipts in his pocket, and the Home Depot receipt was on top of the CVS receipt.... And so on and on.

I happily accept that all those things contribute in some (very remote) way to Gualtiero's experience at the moment of beep 7.5.

The point that I am heavy-handedly trying to make is that I don't care a whit about facts of the universe or Gualtiero's description thereof. Gualtiero can *never*, no matter how long we both shall live, give a satisfactory account of those receipt-bits of the universe. But he *can*, perhaps, give a satisfactory account of *his experience* at the moment of beep 7.5, because *his experience* has (or at least, may have) selected, filtered out, amplified, simplified, created, ignored (and so on) most of the semi-

infinite number of facts of the universe—his experience, by Gualtiero, for Gualtiero, as it presents itself to Gualtiero.

But if Gualtiero is to tell Russ and Lauren about his experience at beep 7.5 in a way that Russ and Lauren can understand it, he has to limit himself to telling us about his experience and refrain from giving an account of the universe (DES says he has to *cleave to experience*). If his experience at that moment *had been* of (say) the pleasant helpfulness of the check-out clerk, the fantasized Gualtiero having this experience might describe it by saying “at the moment of the beep I was recalling the pleasant voice of the check-out lady.” Or if his experience was of the CVS receipt, the fantasized Gualtiero having *this* experience might describe it by saying “at the moment of the beep I was seeing the long-ness of the CVS receipt (which was, as a fact of the universe, partially obscured by the two Home Depot receipts).” The physics of Gualtiero’s sensory input was (at least largely) the same in both those cases—the retina was excited in the same way, etc. But the fantasized Gualtiero’s *experiences* were very different in those cases—in one he had made the check-out clerk the figure and essentially destroyed the CVS-ness of receipts (and most other features); in the other, he had made the CVS-ness the figure and essentially destroyed the clerk-ness (and most other features).

Both those fantasized examples involved a figure/ground kind of experience: the Gualtiero as fantasized made either the clerk or the CVS the figure. Most experiences (in my practice) have this kind of figure/ground characteristic. But such figure/ground-ness *may not be* a characteristic of Gualtiero’s actual experience. It may be that Gualtiero’s eyeballs aim at the pile of receipts on the tabletop and he experiences what his eyeballs take in—the pile of receipts on the tabletop, which would be just as aptly described as a tabletop on which is a pile of receipts. That would be unusual in the sense that (Russ thinks that) most people make some kind of figure out of their visual perception (or ignore it completely).

So somehow we have to learn to communicate about Gualtiero’s *experience* and not confuse it (or us) with characteristics of the universe.

59:51 RTH: So the, the question that I’m trying to understand is: at the moment of this beep, is it the case that I am, that I have made the receipts the figure of my visual phenomenon? Or (which would mean I guess that the receipts are somewhat more present to me than the table, for example). Or is it the case that I am more or less non-figurally seeing what my eyeballs are aimed at, in which case the table and the receipts are more-or-less equally present to me?

1:00:32 GP: Uh, I think it’s more, a little more the former. So the, the receipts themselves are more the, the more salient object.

1:00:44 RTH: But he doesn’t sound too sure.

1:00:44 Russ comments: I’m not a mind-reader, so I have to help Gualtiero and me get to a place (if possible) where I can be confident that Gualtiero and I know what we’re talking about. Here, I will point out why I do not yet have that confidence. This is GP’s 1:00:32 utterance, and I will highlight the signals (DES calls them subjunctifiers) that suggest that Gualtiero is not confident: “Uh, I think it’s more, a little more the former. So the, the receipts themselves are more the, the more salient object.” That’s 11

subjunctifiers in 21 words, which is a lot! We can quibble about one or another of those highlights, whether they truly deserve to be noticed as potential subjunctifiers, but, 5 or 2 subjunctifiers in 21 words would be worth noticing.

So RTH says (1:00:24) “But he [Gualtiero] doesn’t sound too sure” which is a light-hearted way of saying *my subjunctifier antennae are jangling*. (Here, by way of contrast, is what Gualtiero might say if he were confidently describing a figure/ground kind of experience: “I’m seeing the receipts—the table doesn’t matter.” That is *not* what Gualtiero said, so RTH has to continue to work at discovering the experience that Gualtiero is trying to describe.

BTW: I think attending to subjunctification (among all other aspects of talk) is a high form of respect. Recall that in the comment at 26:56 on Gualtiero’s sampling day 5, I wrote that “subjunctification, in my understanding, is the soul (whatever that is; call it the grammar producer, if you prefer) conveying that what is being said should, perhaps, not be taken at face value.” Honoring what Gualtiero says including how he says it and what he doesn’t say is respecting the humanness of the communication.

1:00:46 GP: [they laugh] , I, I’m sure, I’m sure the table is more the, just the background and the receipts are the, the, the thing that I’m seeing.

1:00:46 Russ comments: The subjunctifying continues.

1:01:04 RTH: So this is a, this is a good example of why the, why the conversations that we have are (a) interesting and (b) difficult. And that, and that is that most people, I *think*, in this kind of a situation would say [GP: Mm-hmm.] “I’m seeing the three receipts on the table.”

1:01:21 GP: Yeah.

1:01:22 RTH: And they’re, and to, when you press them about it, they would, they would, without any equivocation at all, say, “well, for whatever reason, I don’t know, don’t have to know the reason, but for whatever reason, I was visually fixated on the receipts. And the table was, the table was there, but was not at all interesting to me. So I had made a clear figure out of the receipts.”

1:01:49 GP: Yeah.

1:01:50 RTH: But that is not what you say. You say, “we-e-e-ll, maybe I was seeing the receipts more than the table. Probably, probably was,” [GP: Yeah.] but with some misgivings or hedgings, hedges, hedges, or, or whatever. And so the question is: I don’t really care what Gualtiero *says* or what anybody else says. I’m, I’m interested in Gualtiero’s experience. And the question is whether Gualtiero and these other people that I’m thinking about have the same kind of experience, but Gualtiero is more guarded or careful or whatever when he talks about it, *or* whether the experience is actually, his experience is less figural.

1:02:34 GP: Yeah. I think it might be a little less figu, but y’know, it might, it might come somewhat in degrees.

- 1:02:42 RTH: And I totally, so that, that's pretty, what you just said is pretty much exactly how I understand it. Probably less figural, but it's not, this is not an all or none thing.
- 1:02:55 GP: Yeah. Because it fits with the stuff that we've been talking about earlier about how, y'know, this whole Tai Chi practice trains you to diffuse your attention more broadly and just be aware of things that are happening around you more broadly than just like, oh, I'm, I'm, y'know, I can only focus on this one thing and the rest I don't notice.
- 1:02:55 Russ comments: Notice that this is an explanation ("Because it fits...") rather than a description, and that it rests on plausibility rather than observation. But I don't trust explanation or plausibility. Stealing from Stephen Colbert, I called (in my 2011 book) such talk *truthy*; I don't think science should rest on truthiness.
- 1:03:18 RTH: And I don't doubt that at all. I also don't, I, I would, I'm, I'm skeptical as.... My middle name is Thomas, y'know, [they laugh] and so I'm pretty skeptical kind of a guy.
- 1:03:34 GP: Yeah. That, that, that's fair!
- 1:03:37 RTH: And, and so I would have to, y'know, it would be interesting to sample with a bunch of people who are, who were adept Tai Chi practitioners or whatever, and, and it would be even *more* interesting to sample with them before and after they did Tai Chi. [GP: Yeah.] Because what, what you attribute to the Tai Chi practice might have, might really be attributable to whatever was going on with Gualtiero before he *began* the Tai Chi practice, that led him to do that in the first place. And, y'know, hundreds of thousands of events that had taken place in Tai Chi [inaudible]
- 1:04:08 GP: And also it might have to do with *how* you practice Tai Chi, how much, y'know, effort you put into it, how y'know,
- 1:04:17 RTH: Absolutely!
- 1:04:18 GP: So many variables,
- 1:04:19 RTH: Which absolutely. Which from, from my point of view is, is why I have said fairly consistently, repeatedly, I think, *I don't really care about the why aspect or the how aspect* or the whatever, because I think that's just not—for reasons that you just articulated—it's not possible to answer that. [GP: Yeah.] We can, we can spin a yarn about that and maybe even agree with each other about the *likelihood* of that yarn, but it's not of the same quality as trying to look at what Gualtiero's experience, like without trying to explain it or attribute it or whatever, and just trying to get it.
- 1:05:00 And that's, that's where I, where I *believe* that a science of inner experience can be really interesting. But it's, as we are finding out, it's fairly hard work. We have to, we have to work at it. Now we've been at this for seven days, pretty heavily invested in, in it, and we're still pretty much debating important aspects, pretty fundamental aspects of his, his experience! And the, and, and we're not done with it. I mean, we haven't yet, we haven't yet answered the question about this figure/ground phenomenon in visual experience or whatever, which, which you would think would be pretty fundamentally easy to talk about. Turns out it's not that easy to talk about

it. [GP: Yeah.] And, uh, and the only way that, the *only* way that I know of that we can get to an to know something that's really sort of interesting about it is, is to bash it around, confront it on many different kinds of occasions and different kinds of experiences. And out of those maybe we'll be able to distill something that's interesting.

1:06:10 GP: Yeah.

1:06:11 RTH: And it's hard work and, and yet pretty interesting from my point of view. So, so we've passed our hour, shall we, uh, do it again?

1:06:24 GP: Um, if you're willing,

[They compare calendars]

1:07:47 LG: Thank you both.

1:07:48 RTH: Alrighty. Sounds like a plan. And, and I will do the same things which I have been doing, which is basically prepare a transcript and prepare a, and write some comments to it, and you can respond or not. And I will send out a calendar invite and a reminder on the 1st

1:08:11GP: Thank you. And, and yeah.

1:08:12 RTH: And a beep! And a beep, and a

1:08:12 Russ comments: Russ had agreed (see 7:10) to make a new beep for Gualtiero's sleep interest and send it to him.

1:07:03 GP: Yeah.

1:07:03 RTH: And a beep.

1:07:04 GP: Okay, great. Thanks Russ.

1:07:06 RTH: Sounds like a plan. See you.