

Gualtiero 8
Gualtiero Sampling Interview 8

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the July 2 sampling interview 8 with Gualtiero that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/A3Z-u0-OlkE>. 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

0:06 RTH: So this is going to be day 8, I think.

0:09 GP: Yes.

0:11 RTH: And anything we should be talking about before we look at beeps?

0:18 GP: Well, um, I've been continuing to do beeps at night, not the last couple of nights cuz I wasn't feeling good, but before that. And I think that this square wave that lasts for a long time after 60 minutes, um, works well and has the effect that I was hoping for. And, um, I can tell you that my, uh, the, um, there's been, there's been a couple different cases, um, one where I hear the square wave, not, probably not from the beginning, and I don't recall anything prior to that.

0:18 Russ comments: Russ had sent Gualtiero a .mp4 beep that has a one-hour delay and then emits a 700 Hz tone (standard DES frequency) in a square-wave pattern: 0.5 seconds beeping, 0.5 seconds silence, 0.5 seconds beeping, and so on, for a long time.

1:13 And the other (!) one though is that I, um, I do have this recollection of a intermittent, like, kind of flashing thoughts, um, for at least like two or three of them. And *then* I hear the wave, the square wave sound. And my interpretation of that is that at some point the sounds are the intermittent, the sounds are enough for enough stimulation for something in my brain, my cortex, to get activated and like create like a temporary conscious thought, thought-y experience that then fades when the sound goes away, until it wakes me up enough that I can actually hear the sound. So there's like some kind of filter, sensory filter where like, I'm not aware of the sound, but I'm aware of something, but it sort of feels intermittent and I wanna, I wanna keep doing this to like, see if it keeps happening, y'know, to sort of have like validation from repetition. Um, but it's very intriguing, intriguing.

1:13 Russ comments: RE "So there's like some kind of filter, sensory filter where like, I'm not aware of the sound."

Gualtiero's intermittent-thinking observation is interesting and important, but I think his filter explanation is backwards. That statement implies that there is a beep that exists in the physical world and that Gualtiero eliminates (filters out) that beep from the heard environment. I don't think that is the way it works.

In everything DES, we need to keep crystal clear the distinction between experience and all else. Here, we need to keep clear the distinction between an experienced beep and an oscillating pressure wave. That those are very different is obvious in Gualtiero's request for the square-wave beep: when the *standard* DES beeper emitted, for 30 seconds, a 700 Hz pressure oscillation, there was no experienced beep at all.

That is, when he is awake, Gualtiero's bag of bones / neurons *constructs* the beep; but when he is asleep, his bag of bones / neurons does *not* construct the beep. The 700 Hz pressure oscillation is the same in both cases. It is *not* the case that Gualtiero's bag of bones / neurons *filters out* the beep; it is the case that there was no beep to filter out.

I have no idea what Gualtiero's bag has to do to construct a beep. I suspect that it is a complex set of parallel neural activities that take the output of the cochlea and simultaneously process / distribute them to a variety of sensory, motor, and intermediate sites. After this set of processes has been stimulated by some number (5? 20? 100? 200? I don't know) of 700 Hz pulses, some subset of this batch of processes is assemble in some way (that I don't understand) into Gualtiero's heard <beep!>.

Now when Gualtiero is deeply asleep and the .5 sec ON .5 sec OFF square-wave beep tickles his cochlea, those parallel neural activities (or some of them—they may operate differently when he is asleep) do their processing / distributing thing, but in such a way that there is no assembly into an experienced <beep!>. Gualtiero's brain has to some degree been intermittently activated by the processes, apparently enough that, on waking, he senses some sort of train of intermittent thoughts.

The point here is that the beep simply does *not* exist in the physical world—only pressure oscillations exist there. So Gualtiero does *not* filter out the beep; he simply does not create it, even though his brain is responding to some 700-Hz-entrained events.

Gualtiero's basic observation is important because it illustrates that the beep, even while awake, is not an external flash bulb that catches an undisturbed ongoing stream of experience. Instead, the beep is created / constructed by the same (or at least an overlapping) set of experience producers that create the ongoing stream. As a result, even while awake, the DES beep *should* be expected to disturb *to some degree* whatever experience might have been ongoing at the physical time that the pressure oscillations began. The only question is the size of the *to some degree*. There might be very big individual differences in this regard—I don't know.

In the upcoming turns, RTH tries to explain all that, but is not particularly effective.

2:42 RTH: So I guess it's not too surprising to me that, that you might have some kind of an experience which is more or less time-locked, or at least in sync with the beep. I, I wouldn't have said that. I would've predicted that, but it doesn't, that, that doesn't surprise me when you report it.

- 2:59 GP: But without hearing the beep! So this is like deep sleep, presumably, and I don't hear the beep. I just have like, some kind of like vague faint thought-ish experience that, y'know, comes / fades, comes / fades, comes, and then I feel the beep, I hear the beep, and then, and it wakes me up all the way and or whatever, y'know, like, I dunno exactly at what point I, I wake up, but initially I wasn't *hearing* the beep. So I, one thing that would be interesting to do is experience experiment with beeps that are longer. Like instead of half a second, one second, and then see, or something like that. And then see, see if it makes a difference. But we don't have to do that yet.
- 3:47 RTH: So I will make you whatever beeps you want, you tell me what you want and I'll make 'em for you, [GP: Okay. Thank you.] and, and when.
- 3:56 And, but I, but I would also say that what, what your reports are not particularly surprising to me. What you, what you just voiced as being surprising isn't surprising to me because I think there's a big difference between what happens in the external world and what happens in experience. [GP: Yeah.] And the, the fact that a beep is going on and you don't experience it, [GP: Yeah.] well, I, I think experience is, I, I think, I think we're multiprocessors all the way, all the way down. And so I think that your cortex can process the beep at some level. And, and by your cortex, I mean your bag of bones. I don't, I don't want to specifically say I think, I think Gualtiero's systems can process the beep at a variety of different levels. [GP: Yeah.] And those levels do not have to be all in sync with each other.
- 4L45 And this is a, this is, this gives an example of that. So when he recognizes the beep, it's not that there's an external beep and, and he hears it, and that's all there is to it. I don't think that's true. I think what happens is that there are vibrations in the air that happen and, and they vibrate his cochlea and his whatever else, whatever else happens in that system. And that spreads out all through his body, brain, body, whatever. And sooner or later he will recognize that as a conscious experience that there'll beep. But, but in between that time and when, in between when the vibrations began and the recognition, oh, there's a beep. There's a lot of stuff that's going on.
- 5:28 GP: Yeah.
- 5:30 RTH: Which, which I think is, is, is, y'know, I, I, I think the beep is not an instantaneous signal. It, even when you're *awake*, the beep is not an instantaneous signal. The beep is the end of a processing stream that starts some number of milliseconds before you would say you recognize it as a beep. And how many milliseconds that is, is on, on order of hundreds probably, or, but I've never really tried to analyze that.
- 6:04 GP: Yeah, yeah. Alright. I'm, I'm very fascinated by this and I don't, I don't wanna continue trying this, but it, it is also a little taxing, I think, like, to be awake, woken up like in the middle of your deepest sleep. So I only do it if I feel good enough. Like the last couple of nights I wasn't.
- 6:@5 I got some vaccines, uh, two nights, two days ago, and two, I got two, COVID and shingles. And, um, I don't think I had ever gotten the shingles vaccine for whatever reason. Maybe it was the two together. Maybe it was the one was new. It was, it was pretty taxing. It was, it was hard. Um, I got a, like a, my temperature went up to like 100.5. Um, I was really beat up

- 6:52 And I, and so I thought, oh, it would be interesting to see if, when I hear the beeps, I have any kind of awareness of feeling sick, feeling down, feeling tired, feeling exhausted, whatever, y'know, feverish. Um, but the answer is No. I have never detected any awareness of any of that, while when, when the beep beeped, uh, and I, and it beeped, I did all six beeps while, while I was pretty feeling very sick yesterday, I'm very sick. I mean, not like sick as if it was a full-blown infection, but still I was feeling beat up and none of it was, I I wasn't aware of any of it when the beep beeped.
- 7:37 RTH: Okay. So that, that's not too surprising to me, either. I mean, I, I think it can seem like I feel shitty all the time and I probably do feel shitty all the time, but that, y'know, it's boring to think about being shitty or to feel, feel shitty and there's other stuff that, there's other stuff that can occupy you even, even while that kind stuff is going on.
- 7:59 GP: Yeah. Yep. Yep.
- 8:01 RTH: And that, y'know, I, I, I think, I think we dunno nearly enough about that. I think that's true what I just said. But I think, y'know, we need reports like you're given right now. I've just finished, I've pretty much finished sampling with a guy who felt he had pain all the time, a hundred, constant pain, and the beeps almost never caught him in with any kind of pain. And, uh, and I think it's the same [GP: Yeah.] basic, basic deal. There's, there is no doubt something going on in his body pain-wise, and in your body, shitty-feeling-wise. Yes. That's, that's occurring. But that doesn't necessarily mean that you are putting that before the footlights of your consciousness at any, at many particular moments.
- 8:50 GP: Yes. Yes. So, um, shall we start with a beep that I found a little more interesting than the others?
- 9:03 RTH: I think they're probably all interesting. So I'd say go for 1, number 1. But if you wanna start with whatever, that's fine with me.
- 9:08 GP: Okay. The, well, uh, yeah, we haven't spent too much time yet, so hopefully we'll get to that. Okay.

SAMPLE 8.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 9:19 (continues) So the first one was a fairly, some of these were like simpler than my typical experiences. Just one modality, maybe because I was sick, I dunno. Um, the first one was a visual experience, diffuse, of a elegant woman in a dress with long hair, light brown hair, and high heels moving relative to a sports car on a background of people and other stuff. And I don't remember the, the rest of the details. And that's it.
- 9:59 RTH: So is this a seeing into the external world? There is,
- 10:02 GP: It's a video. It was a video.
- 10:04 RTH: Okay. So I'm seeing something which is being played on the, on the video [GP: Mm-hmm.] Okay.

- 10:10 GP: Yeah. And I don't re, I didn't write down if it was my phone or my computer.
- 10:28 RTH: Okay. And, and, and I take it that I'm seeing, I'm taking in this scene, and what I de, what I've described is basically the entire scene. But I'm not zeroing in on any particular aspect of that—not the woman, not the hair, not the heels, not the sports car—any more than any, any other feature.
- 10:49 GP: Yeah. The woman is kind of in the center and she is obviously the, the focus of the video, but I'm sort of taking in the whole scene and of course noticing the woman. But yeah, it's not, it didn't feel like I was specifically seeing the woman as opposed to the rest of the scene. [RTH: Okay.] Or the background of the, y'know, the car. It was more just kind of observing the whole thing.
- 11:21 RTH: Okay. And, and is there anything more to be, to be said about it? Like, I'm, I'm particularly interested in any aspect of it, the color of her hair, the color of the car, the,
- 11:34 GP: I don't think so.
- 11:37 RTH: Okay. So what I got from that is: my phone, or whatever it is, is displaying this visual display and I'm seeing it and I'm not particularizing any aspect of it. The woman is in the center and I'm seeing her in the center, but it's not like I've centered her experientially.
- 12:02 GP: Yeah. That, that sounds accurate.
- 12:06 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm happy with that. Lauren--happy with that? [She nods affirmatively] Okay.

SAMPLE 8.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 12:14 GP: Um, okay. So the next one is a, also visual experience, but it's of text on a phone screen. Uh, and it's about a special kind of fabric that was apparently invented that deflects laser, uh, lasers. Laser beams. Um, but I don't remember anything more specific than that. So I was reading this text and I guess I was experiencing the, the content more than the words themselves, but it was, it, there was something visual about it, cuz I was still, I was reading the text, it was written there.
- 13:08 RTH: So there's clearly something visual about it, but that doesn't necessarily mean that you're experiencing the visual nature of it.
- 13:15 GP: Yeah.
- 13:16 RTH: It doesn't mean that you're *not* experiencing, I'm not, I'm just, I want, I I want us to bracket that, or be agnostic about that, or however you wanna describe it. So the, so it *could be*, I'm reading about this fabric with comprehension and that's all to, that's all to be said about my experience. [GP: Yeah.] Clearly it's a visual thing. These, these

are black and white characters or whatever color characters on the screen, and they're coming in through my retina and being processed by my whatever, LGN goes on the way to my visual system—that no doubt is happening. But as any of that in my, in my experience, other than I'm understanding reading with understanding,

13:57 GP: No, I think that's it. *Reading with understanding* is a good way to put it. And I was trying to capture that in my description.

14:07 RTH: So reading with understanding makes it seem like it's more a semantic experience than a particular visual experience. So, so it's not like I'm noticing the Times New Roman of the text or I'm, I'm interested in the color of the background or... And furthermore, it's not that I have created some parallel understanding of the text, for example. It's not like I am seeing a visual image of a laser shooting at a piece of fabric or something like that, which it some people could do, but I'm gathering that's not what you're doing.

14:44 GP: Yeah.

14:45 RTH: So I'm reading with understanding, and that's basically all that's in my experience.

14:51 GP: Yeah. I mean, including the content of what I was reading at least the, the concept, the idea of this fabric that deflects laser beams.

15:02 RTH: And is that separate from what, what, what might be called reading with understandings? So reading with understanding is reading with understanding about fabric that [GP: Yeah.] deflects laser beams. [GP: Yeah.] As opposed to: I'm reading with understanding *and at the same time* I am contemplating what it means for laser beams to be reflected by fabric or something like that.

15:23 GP: No, no, no, no. Yeah, I was one, one thing.

15:25 RTH: Okay. So I'm reading with understanding about fabric that re, deflects or reflects or whatever, laser beams.

15:37 GP: Yeah. And there was an image below that I looked at, at a separate time and it showed like somebody with this fabric on, on them kind of covering them. And then like there was some image of laser beams that were being deflected around this person.

15:53 RTH: But that was not present at the moment of the beep?

15:56 GP: No, no. Before or after something. That was not in my experience when I, when the beeper beeped, it was just, it was an illustration. It was one of these Facebook things that just pop up in your, in your, um,

16:07 RTH: In your feed.

16:08 GP: Reading your feed, yes. Feed. Thank you.

16:12 RTH: Okay, then. I'm good.

SAMPLE 8.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

16:14 GP: Okay. The next one is that I heard the words "how to" spoken by an Asian man on an Instagram video. And I was seeing the man on the video on the phone screen, and he had a round face and a black short hair. But I wasn't focusing on, y'know, any of these features in particular. This is just some, some salient, um, features of the man. So there was a, there was a auditory component and a visual component to this experience.

16:58 RTH: And do those seem like separable, separate experiences? Like I hear the words and I see the guy, or is it, would it be more fair to say, I am watching this video where a guy's, an Asian guy, is saying "how to," and if you ask me what the characteristics are, I could say, well, there's the auditory characteristic and there's the visual characteristic.

17:22 GP: Yeah. I mean, the second way of put it sounds reasonable.

17:28 RTH: So it's not like I've zoomed in on the "how to"-ness of it. And it's not like I've zoomed in on the black-hair round-face-ness of it.

17:42 GP: No.

17:43 RTH: It's a *fact* that there's a round face and black hair and "how to," that's descriptively accurate, but I'm not, I'm not aimed particularly about that.

17:57 GP: Yeah.

17:57 RTH: Okay. And then about "how to." Is it that I'm aimed at the word, that I'm, I'm, I'm receiving the words "how to"? Or am I receiving the sentence that includes the words "how to," like, the whole sentence might have been, "I'm gonna describe how to put this clock together," or something, and the beep happened to get at the "how to" of that sentence.

18:21 GP: Yeah, I think I, y'know, I was you hearing the, a whole sentence, but the beep happened at "how to," so...

18:32 RTH: So it's not like I have chunkified "how to," and the beep caught me in the middle of having chunked that. It's that I'm processing the sentence and the beep occurs, and because I know Russ is gonna ask me when the beep occurred, I'm gonna say it occurred at the words "how to."

18:49 GP: Yeah. Okay. Right after "how to," yeah. Okay. Might have overlapped with the sound of two, I dunno. Yeah, for sure. But,

19:01 RTH: And that, that's the kind question that I think is not possible to answer for the kinds of reasons that we talked about at the beginning today, which is to say the beep is not really a discrete occurrence in your experience. [See the comment at 1:13] You have to manufacture the beep as, as your, as your example today act, sort of elegantly describes. Y'know, how you have to manufacture the beep out of the raw material of oscillating oscillations in the environment. You have to make a beep by that. [GP: Yeah.] It's not like, [GP: Yeah.] It's not like there's a beep that exists separate from Gualtierio. He's, he's gotta he's gotta make the beep.

19:41 So... what I got about this experience is" I'm watching a video where a guy is speaking a sentence that includes the word "how to," and I'm understanding the sentence and I am visually seeing the scene and this stuff is, I'm, I'm receiving this in a, in semantically and visually receptive kind of way. And the beep comes at "how to," but it's not like I have made a discrete chunk out of "how to," and the which the beep catches. Without the beep, the would've been more about the sentence than about the words "how to."

20:29 GP: Yes.

20:31 RTH: Okay. And the reason that I'm asking those questions is, is that the same guy that I talked about a minute ago with the pain (and, and other people as well, but he happens to be one that's recent), they do chunkify sentences. And so they, he would *he*, in, in, in response to the questioning very similar to what we've just gone through here, he would say, no, I had the, the sentence had actually gone past "high to," "how to," and I was still on "how to," I had taken this "how to" stuffs *chunk* and I was (I forget what he calls it), latched: I'd latched onto that [GP: Mm.] ex, that expression, even though the words had gone on, the sentence had continued on. I'd latched onto the "how to." That's *not* what *you're* saying, that's what *he's* saying. What you're saying is more common, what he's saying is less common, [GP: Mm-hmm.] But you don't know about the less common until you ask, ask about it carefully enough to see whether that was what Gualtierio was saying, too, as well, which it looks like it wasn't.

21:38 GP: Right.

21:40 RTH: So I'm good about that. Number 4, unless less, less, Lauren had more to...

SAMPLE 8.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

21:46 GP: More to say. Um, so number 4 was more interesting to me because I was reading the word "DOING" in all caps because the whole piece of text was written in all caps on a computer screen while feeling the echo or the residue of a previous thought. And the previous thought I remembered what it was about. It was about adding the need for analysis to what was already written on the page. Um, so this was something that I had written in a, in a sort of form, uh, about a book project, (uh, that wasn't in my experience, I'm just explaining). And so I was revising sort of, y'know, I was going through reading what I had written, and as I reached the word "DOING" I was still like, at least there was some kind of residue or, or memory, or *echo* I call it of the, of the thought that I should add something to the text to the effect that we need, I know we also need to do analysis of this, um, concept, not just do what was already written

there. Um, so yeah, so there was this visual aspect of seeing the word “DOING” and also this, uh, thought that was related. And, and I think the thought was one had already occurred, but there was still a little bit of a residue of doing that, and I was gonna get to that because, y’know, at some point I was gonna insert new text, so it was part of a task, y’know, that I was assigning myself.

23:44 RTH: So I’m gathering there are two aspects of the experience. There’s the seeing of “DOING” and there’s the echoey or whatever.

23:52 GP: Yeah. And

23:53 RTH: I’m also gathering that the seeing is more prominent, but I’m not at all sure about that. Is that true?

23:59 GP: Yes, it is more prominent, yes.

24:02 RTH: Okay. And is this is the do, so let’s start with the “DOING” portion. Yeah. Is the “DOING” portion primarily a visual thing or primarily I’m reading this capitalized line that has the word “DOING” in it.

24:21 GP: Um, it’s, I mean, it’s part of reading the whole sentence, and this sentence is about, um, y’know, giving an account of a phenomenon. So yeah, I know I am reading with comprehension, but it’s primarily visual and seeing the word, that one, that word was what was what I was seeing what I was reading right before the beep. Um, yeah. But I mean, y’know, it was part of a task of revising the text. So there was also this focus on what I might need to add. And I had had a thought about that, and that’s the second part of the experience.

25:05 RTH: Okay. So let’s stick with the first one for.. So there, there are two, we had two samples today, the second one, and this one in which you are reading something on a screen of some sort [GP: Mm-hmm.] And the first one I understood you to be saying, I was reading a sentence about fabric and laser reflection and whatever, and it happened at the words, I forget what the words were now, but the, you could tell me what the words were, but they, but it wasn’t like I chunkified those words.

25:05 Russ comments: RTH has mistakenly conflated samples 8.2 and 8.3. They will sort it out below.

25:39 GP: Yeah. The words. No, the words I didn’t re I don’t remember the word.

25:47 RTH: Yeah. So they, so actually I’ve con I’ve conflated and what I just said, I’ve conflated three samples rather than two. So in the *third* sample there were words “how to,” but the “how to” was a part of a sentence.

25:58 GP: Yes.

25:59 RTH: And now, so what I’m asking here is whether “DOING” is a part of the sentence in the same way that “how to” was part of the sentence.

- 26:07 GP: [Gestures thumbs up] Yes, it is.
- 26:08 RTH: Okay. Yes. So I'm, so, and, and what, what I, on my understanding of number 3 was that we ended up that, that we ended up thinking that this was not so much an *auditory* experience as a *semantic* experience. I'm hearing what these guys saying, I'm not, I'm not particularly paying attention to the auditory characteristics of it. I'm processing the, *primarily* processing what the meaning of the guy's sentence.
- 26:43 GP: Yeah, yeah. I'm definitely understanding and processing the meaning, but I'm also seeing the word in this case.
- 26:50 RTH: Okay. So this is different from... Number 4 is different from number 3 in the sense that not only am I processing it semantically—understanding what this sentence, sentence -s—but I'm also visually,
- 27:08 GP: No, I don't think it's different because number 3, I was hearing it, so it wasn't, it wasn't visual, it was auditory. The word, the words were spoken. So I was also hearing the sounds, well the words, the sound of the words. And so I think it's analogous, like the way I was seeing the word "DOING".
- 27:37 RTH: So the, the distinction that I want to be as clear about as as we can get is whether... [pause] So I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm accepting that there is visual processing going on here. [GP: Mm-hmm.] These, this, these pixels are falling on my retina and I'm processing them, and I'm, I'm seeing the word "DOING". There's no question about that. As, as a, as a process, I am processing, visually processing these words. The question is whether I am, whether *experientially* I am noticing the visual characteristics of these, of this processing, or noticing the semantic meaning of it. Cuz I'm really, I got two processes going on. I'm processing the visual and I'm processing the semantics. The question is whether it's *experientially*, I'm more understanding what these words *mean*, or I am experientially seeing how these words *look*. Or maybe that's not possible to answer.
- 28:56 GP: Um, yeah, I mean, to the best of my ability to answer, I would say there's both aspects. There's this seeing of the word itself and processing the meaning or understanding the meaning. It's a meaningful word. It's not, it's definitely not just a bunch of shapes on the page, and I'm re and I'm reading to understand what it says. I mean, I'm actually reading to figure out what to add or change in it, y'know, I'm editing. So that's, that's the task. So it definitely requires comprehension.
- 28:56 Russ comments: That answer is, to me, ambiguous about the level of experiencing the visual. There is no doubt visual processing going on, but how much (or any) of that is before the footlights of consciousness is not yet clear to me. (See the comment at 31:04.)
- 29:35 RTH: Okay. So it, it really, it comes back to the sort of the same thing as, as we talked about in the, at the beginning about the intermittent beep. The, your bag of bones processes a lot of stuff that you don't experience. So you were processing the

intermittent beep enough so that you were having a sort of an on / off think / not think think / not think kind of a process, without experiencing it as a beep. Then, sometime later, you experienced it as a beep. And so this is, so this is in, in that same ballpark, at least in the world according to Hurlburt, and that is: I'm *processing* this word, I'm, I'm, I'm processing the pixel array on the page, which could be said to be the word "DOING," certainly is the word "DOING" from that perspective. But the question is whether I *experience* that as a *visual* processing or I experience it as a *semantic understanding*, or, or both, or, or neither one, it could be that that's, that's what my, my processing systems are doing. And now I'm *really* paying attention to this echoey a thought about I gotta editing to do.

31:04 GP: Yeah. I, I'd say it's certainly has a visual component, um, but it's also reading, y'know, it's got a semantic aspect to it.

31:04 Russ comments: RE "I'd say it's certainly has a visual component"

That sentence (and the rest of the turn) is exquisitely ambiguous about whether he means to be describing experience. For example, he *doesn't* say "I'm seeing the words, and I'm directly experiencing the visual aspects of those words"—that would be compellingly experiential. And he doesn't say "I'm obviously visually processing the words, (uh, that wasn't in my experience, I'm just explaining)," (he knows how to use that parenthetical phrase—I'm quoting from 21:46). The words he uses at 31:04 are midway between those alternatives. I don't know why that is; I notice that he is consistent about this (see the comment at 28:56). Sooner or later we may figure this out.

In passing, I should emphasize that DES is *not* about the words. It doesn't matter a whit to me what Gualtierio says, nor what words he uses to say it (or what I say nor what words I use to say it). So I do not try to teach Gualtierio to use a particular set of words, nor do I require of myself that I use any particular set of words. I try to understand what Gualtierio intends to describe, and of course the words that he uses are important clues to that. And I try to make myself understandable to Gualtierio, and words are important clues there, too. But in neither direction is a particular word choice determinative or necessary. Furthermore, I am not a psychoanalytic or otherwise semiotic interpreter—I do *not* try to glean some hidden or deeper meaning from the words he uses.

I do notice ambiguity, and I try (mostly iteratively) to help us clarify it. This is not a matter of blaming Gualtierio or providing remediation to Gualtierio, any more than it is a matter of blaming Russ. It is an acceptance of the difficulty of the task at hand, and trying, over time, to get us in a position where we are no more ambiguous than is necessary. If the iterative process is successful, I will try to ask questions using different words in different contexts, and Gualtierio will try to answer those questions using different words in the different contexts, and the variability of the contexts (different samples) might provide perspectives that allow us to triangulate and (eventually, perhaps) figure out what we are asking/saying to each other and how then to clarify for each other what we mean.

I have written that much of DES is about disambiguation, and that is in a sense true. But in a deeper sense, DES is more about clarifying ambiguity than about disambiguation. One way to clarify ambiguity is to disambiguate—it may be that sometime Gualtierio and I will be able to disambiguate our interchanges. But another

way to clarify ambiguity is to refine for each other the source of the ambiguity, not necessarily so that we can disambiguate, but so that we can understand its genesis and extent.

31:29 RTH: Okay. And, and is, is, should, should we say it? Does, does that mean that, I guess, does that mean that this does not have a *vocal* aspect? So I'm not *saying* this sentence to myself

31:44 GP: Mm-hmm. No, I'm not.

31:48 RTH: Okay. So there's a visual processing aspect that seems like it's somehow present and there's a semantic processing aspect that seems like it's somehow present.

31:56 GP: Yeah. And I mean, I'm even seeing that the word is written in all caps. So that's a visual for sure. Of course I'm seeing that the whole text is in all caps, not just that word, but, and since at that moment I was reading that word, I was seeing the word in all caps.

32:18 RTH: And would you say that the all-caps-ness is present as a part of your experience?

32:25 GP: Yeah

32:34 RTH: So for example, you could be reading another word and that would be all lower case. It's a fact that those words are all lowercase, but I'm not processing the all-lowercase-ness of it as this sort of normal everyday reading.

32:48 GP: Yeah. Right, right. Because that's what you normally expect, y'know, normal text is lowercase. [RTH: Right.] This, for whatever reason, this form was set up so that, that, that part of it, the text would be all caps and yeah, that's unusual.

33:04 RTH: And so is the unusualness present to you?

33:09 GP: No, I wouldn't say that, but I would say that the all-caps-ness is, was present.

33:09 RTH comments: There is no question that as a fact of the universe the text is in all caps. And there is no question that Gualtierio is seeing the text (which is in fact in all caps). And there is no question that Gualtierio is in some way processing the all-caps-ness of the text, in at least a similar way to his processing the other semantic aspects of the word (e.g., that it *doing* means performing an action). The question is how much of that is directly experienced before the footlights of consciousness. Is he explicitly recognizing that *doing* means performing an action? Or does that meaning / significance inhere automatically to the seeing/reading of the word? Parallely, is he explicitly recognizing that *DOING* is in all caps? Or does that all-caps-ness significance inhere automatically in the seeing/reading of the word?

33:16 RTH: Okay. Okay. So what I've got out of that aspect is: I am seeing in all caps and somehow visually processing, which is not just automatic, but somehow present to me the visual aspect of what I'm reading. While at the same time I'm also understanding it, I'm

reading with comprehending, comprehension, and that's somehow present to me as well. Not in a meta sense, but I am reading this with comprehension.

33:56 GP: Mm-hmm.

33:59 RTH: *But* I have *not* aimed my experience, I have not particularized or centralized or whatever the caps-ness of it. It's *not* like I'm somehow, *Wow! This is in all caps!* That is not part of it. It *is* in all caps. And I'm no doubt *processing* the unusual aspect of the all caps, but I'm not making that any, in any sense, the figure of my experience.

34:32 GP: Yeah. That's a fair characterization.

34:37 RTH: And then there's the echo.

34:39 GP: Yes.

34:50 RTH: [pause] And, and I, I'm, I'm worried that I've sort of conflated this with the, with the beginning conversation. Was, was this a series of echoes or just one echo? [GP: One. (holds up one finger)] One echo.

35:02 GP: Yeah. I mean that *echo* is my word for trying to capture this sense that the, the main thrust of the thought has already passed and, and it's still being kind of held either from there being like a buffer, like a memory buffer that still holds some, some of that signal. *Or*, in *this* case, I'd say maybe it was actively, or at least to some degree, actively maintained because I needed to *get*, *get to* that task. Like I needed to *execute* that thought, y'know, that thought was about something that I was supposed to do. So for me to do, it needs to be remembered.

35:53 RTH: So some of the, some of the prior, previous echoes have been sort of mindless, I guess you could say. [GP: Mm-mmm.] They were just, they're, they're there, but receding and who cares kind of a deal.

36:06 GP: Yeah. It's fading and can be forgotten, no problem.

36:09 RTH: Right. Whereas this one seems like it's fading, but I'm not gonna let it fade. I'm gonna

36:16 GP: Yeah! I mean, or at least like, I *shouldn't* let it fade. I need to get to it.

36:20 RTH: Okay.

36:24 RTH: And I would say you, you, the word, the words that you described as echo to my ear were different from the words that you described, other echoes. I think you said this time that it was, "I was feeling the residue," which I don't, which seemed like an, seemed like new words to me to describe this phenomenon. [GP: Mm-hmm.] And maybe that's, maybe this is what we're, so, I, I don't think you've, I don't think you've said you'd felt this, that says in previous echoes, I don't believe you've described it as a feeling, maybe I'm mistaken about that. But it's like you, they were mostly cognitive echoes, where this was somehow,

37:09 GP: Well, it, I, this is, there, there were word feeling I'm using here is just in a very general sense to mean awareness, yknow, I was aware of it. And so it was, yeah, it was definitely, y'know, what I would call cognitive, y'know, a cognitive, uh, experience. [RTH: Okay.] But it, it had a *directed* aspect to it or, y'know, imperative aspect. Um, like it's some, it's something I need to do myself, not just an observation or, or a, y'know, like a generic thought about something. It's not, it's not like, it's not like a belief. It's more like a, like a command, y'know, like, I need to do

37:59 RTH: This, do, do this. Okay. Then I think I'm good about that.

SAMPLE 8.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

38:10 GP: Good. Then the next one, uh, has a similar structure. They happen only a few, a few, uh, minutes later. And I was still editing the same document, in fact the same part of the same document. And I was shifting attention between the word "CONTROL" in all caps and the words parenthesis "(OF BODY)" and, y'know, end the parenthesis also in all caps, because the whole text was in all caps. Um, while trying to think about whether the word "CONTROL" occurs elsewhere in the list that I was reading, and therefore the words parenthesis "(OF BODY)" end of the parenthesis is a needed qualifier to distinguish this from the other type of control. This was not verbalized, it wasn't inner speech. It was just a, uh, attempt to think about the structure of how the, how the, these words, y'know, CONTROL OF BODY relate to another possible occurrence of the word CONTROL that has a different qualifier elsewhere in the text. So, um, so it's an unsymbolized thought, um, but it pertains to what I was reading, and because of that, my attention was shifting between the word CONTROL and the word (OF BODY) parenthesis, which were next to each other.

40:01 RTH: So when, when you say shifting, do you mean shifting back and forth? Control of body? Control of body control of body?

40:07 GP: Yeah. There was a, there was some, I think there was some back and forth, y'know, like even my eyes went back and forth between those words. [RTH: Okay.] A couple times.

40:21 RTH: And I gather the, the meaning, the semantics of it. Uh, the task of do I is something like, do I need the (OF BODY) here because of other uses of the CONTROL, of the word CONTROL elsewhere in the body?

40:37 GP: Yes. Well, the contrast would've been [gestures with one hand] CONTROL OF BODY [gestures with the other hand] CONTROL OF THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS. So those are the two types of control.

40:48 RTH: Mm-hmm.

40:50 GP: Um, but, but the, the second one, I wasn't reading and I, it was somewhere else in the list, so that's not what I was focusing on.

40:57 RTH: So do I need it here? Do I need the parenthesized of body here

41:02 GP: Yeah. To qualify the kind of control that I'm talking about. Right. Yeah.

41:09 RTH: And so I'm, I I'm under, I think I'm understanding the what's happening here. I'm editing, I'm looking at (OF BODY) in parenthesis and deciding whether I need it or not by comparison to the other usage of control elsewhere in the document.

41:28 GP: Yeah.

41:31 RTH: And, and the question is, how specific is, is this cognitive decision-making going on? Like at one end, it should, it could be do it, it could be, we could state it in words, "do I need parenthesis (OF BODY) here?" unquote. That would be the [inaudible] word. Or there could be a thought that would be every bit as specific as that, but not in words. Or it could be at some lesser level of specificity, of *do I really need this?* Do you have a thought about that.

42:22 GP: [pause] Um, I'm not, I'm not sure I understand the difference there. Can you, can you say it again?

42:34 RTH: So in your, in in the background paragraph that you gave, you said that the alternative was "of consciousness," there was CONTROL (OF BODY) and CONTROL (OF CONSCIOUSNESS), er, (STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS). [GP: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.] If I understood you correctly.

42:49 GP: Yeah, yeah.

42:50 RTH: So a, a very specific un, a very specific *verbalized* thought would be, "do I need parenthesis (OF BODY) by comparison to parenthesis (OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS?" [GP: Mm-hmm.] That would be in words. [GP: Mm-hmm.] Or unsymbolized, you could have the same, the same level of specificity, but without, so you could, it could be, uhuhuh uhuhuh [makes two nonsense sounds], and the first one would be (OF BODY) and the second one would be (OF, (OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS). But the, the entire specific thought would be, I'm comparing this one to that one. Or there could be some cognitive analysis, which isn't that specific. It's like, I'm looking at that and it doesn't look right or it's not right. And the, the background would be well, y'know, got the stream attention and stuff. [GP: Yeah.] But that's not [inaudible]

43:52 GP: Okay. Yeah. I understand. It's, uh, it's closer to the second kind of description that you gave. It was, um, it was more of an effort to connect this, uh, occurrence of CONTROL, the word control followed by dis qualifier to possibly another one. Like it was, I was asking myself a question and it was still fairly vague and I, it was actually like an more, more like an effort, a formulated question in my head then, y'know, a definite comparison. There was definitely not, the other part of the comparison was not in my experience at all, the other occurrence of, y'know, CONTROL OF THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS that was, I wasn't thinking about that.

- 44:53 RTH: So it's a cognitive mulling or consideration or something like that, or [GP: Yeah.] There doesn't seem to be any question about that.
- 45:00 GP: Yeah. I was asking myself, or I was *trying* to ask myself, is this (OF BODY) there as a qualifier because it's needed because I'm using the same word CONTROL somewhere else in the same list and, and it needs to be qualified diff in two different ways, something like that. But it was sort of just the beginning of asking that question. It wasn't fully formulated.
- 45:33 RTH: Okay. I think I got it.
- 45:35 GP: Yeah.
- 45:36 RTH: And, and, and what I would, what I would say as a sort of an aside, I would, I would say I think there's a range of specificity of unsymbolized thinking. And this is, this is not at the most specified end of that.
- 45:51 GP: No, because it, I feel like it, I hadn't even formulated a full thought yet. It was sort of starting to try to formulate it.
- 46:03 RTH: So I would probably call this *cognitive awareness* rather than *unsymbolized thinking*, because I like the reserve un symbolized thinking for a pretty specific end of it. GP: Mm-hmm.] But that's, that's a rhetorical thing that comes from my history, I think, and, and not Gualtiero's experience. I, I am, I'm sensitive to the term *unsymbolized thinking* because most people, when, when they hear me talk about unsymbolized thinking, think about something like a gist. And that's not what unsymbolized thinking is. Unsymbolized thinking is very specific. What you're talking about is more than a gist, but less than an unsymbolized thinking. So I can call that like *cognitive awareness* like that. But, uh, but it, but it, it's not of particular interest to me to distinguish between as if it was possible to distinguish between unsymbolized thinking and, and, uh, cognitive awareness in, in a reliable sense. I, I don't think that's probably possible.
- 47:00 GP: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And my aside is that I find very fascinating, these glimpses of what really are co, co, thought or cognitive processes occurring in while I'm also reading or hearing something. And, um, so yeah. And that's part of intellectual exercise in this case, right? Like I'm editing a, a piece of writing and so I have to read it, but I also have to think about it while I read it. And the beep helps me kind of crystallize these moments where there's some thought going on in parallel to the reading so that I can figure out if I have to change something.
- 47:52 RTH: And I think that's right. And, and I think that, I think we are multiprocessors. I believe I've said that repeatedly here, and I think we are multiprocessors, and this is an example of that. And I would also say it's, it's quite difficult to notice this kind of multiprocessing in an armchair introspection environment. You need something like a beep [GP: Yeah!] to, uh, to notice, to notice that it's happening.
- 48:16 GP: Yeah.

48:16 RTH: And, *and* I think, I think the description that we have given is a pretty high quality description. It's not perfect. I don't think we need to get it perfect, but I'm reading, I'm reading with comprehension. I know that I'm editing, I'm looking at the words, and at the same time I'm somehow processing something about it.

48:41 GP: Yeah. Yeah.

48:45 RTH: So I'm good about that, I think. On to number 6?

SAMPLE 8.6 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

48:50 GP: Yeah, number 6 was, it wasn't near as interesting. It was just a visual experience of a customer service window for some website that was scrolling down on the screen of my computer. And it was scrolling because I was getting it to scroll down, but I don't even remember anything else about it. So it was one of those like pop-up windows for like a chat or something. But y'know, at first you have a million options that are just, y'know, like an attempt [inaudible] to you with some automatic question and answer system, and you can scroll down and get the, the various questions and see if you can select one.

49:41 RTH: So, is the customer-service-window-ness of this experience part of your experience, or is that, that would be in a, in the real world, I could say this is a customer service window, but what my experience was, was of *whatever it is that's being displayed*, scrolling down, moving downwards.

50:03 GP: Yeah. If it's possible, if it's, I think if it's possible, it's for the customer-service-ness of it to be present, then it was,

50:17 RTH: It's definitely possible. So, so it, it could be that I absolutely know that this is a customer service window and I'm scrolling it down and I'm seeing the customer service window going down. I'm not trying to talk you to talk you out of that. [GP: Yeah.] But, but I, but I think, I think what you said was consonant with several different descriptions, and I'm trying to figure out which one it is. So what you said was that there's a lot of different windows that have been that, that are up and I'm scrolling down through 'em and, and it doesn't, at the moment of the beep, it doesn't, as far as my experience is concerned, doesn't matter a whit whether it's a customer service window or a, um, buy this product window, I'm just scrolling down through it. [GP: Yeah.] Or it could be, well, I've noticed this is a customer service window and I'm scrolling the customer service window down.

51:04 GP: Yeah. I'd say, yeah, I'd say I was aware that it's a customer-service window and that the scrolling is the scrolling of the options for the customer-service questions. Um mm-hmm.

51:20 RTH: And, and does it, so scrolling down, does that mean that this window is going downwards on the screen?

51:29 GP: Uuuhhh, no, that the text *within* that window is scrolling so that, y'know, more options appear that you could select. But the window itself is not moving.

51:46 RTH: So I'm watching texts scroll downwards within a window within a customer service window.

51:52 GP: Yeah. Texts and lines, y'know, like boxes with the text. [RTH: Okay.] Yeah.

51:57 RTH: And I don't know what those are. I'm not reading them. I'm noticing their for,. I guess I, I, I recognize, is this the kind of shit that that happens in, [GP: Yeah.] in customer service boxes or whatever. [GP: Yeah.] And I'm scrolling down through it and watching it, seeing it go by.

52:16 GP: Yes.

52:18 RTH: And I'm doing it. I'm causing this to happen. [GP: Yes.] And is that in my experience, or is that, uh, so automatic? I'm just watching it go. It's

52:30 GP: Maybe barely, but not prominently.

52:34 RTH: So more prominently I'm watching it scroll downwards. [GP: Yes.] Probably I'm understanding myself to be making it happen. Yes. But, but it's not, I don't, I don't feel my fingers on the screen, I don't feel my arm moving. [GP: No.] It's no doubt all that stuff is happening, but ...

52:51 GP: Yeah. [laughs] Okay. Right.

52:56 RTH: So my, my experience is of seeing text scrolling downwards on my screen, and I guess I should say seeing customer-service-like text scrolling down on my screen

53:11 GP: On this, on this particular box or window, y'know, it's like a, it's a, it's a pop-up window that contains the customer service options or chat, but that doesn't cover the whole screen of my computer. It's only part of, part of the, it covers part of the screen on the right side, but, and that's what I'm focusing on. I'm not looking at the rest of the screen.

53:37 RTH: And so as far as my experience is concerned, is the rest of the screen there? O have I have, I sort of just obliterated that for,

53:43 GP: It's in the weeds.

53:45 RTH: Okay. So for the *most* part of my experience, I am watching text, scroll down, watching customer-servicey text, scroll down within this window.

53:57 GP: Yeah.

53:59 RTH: And in the weeds is my action of making it happen.

54:04 GP: Yeah.

54:04 RTH: And the rest of the screen, and no doubt the political situation and the weather and uh, rest, rest of the other stuff, which is, that's

54:15 GP: Not even in the weeds! That's like...

54:16 RTH: Like, that's that's beyond the weeds. [they laugh] [GP: Yeah.] All right then. I think I'm good.

CONVERSATION AFTER SAMPLES

54:27 GP: Okay! We, we went through all six today.

54:30 RTH: Yeah, we did. They were more or less more straightforward than some, and I think we're getting more efficient at talking about 'em.

54:38 GP: Yeah.

54:40 RTH: So the future! [GP: Yes.] We have sent, I have sent Evan a beeper.

54:51 GP: Right.

54:52 RTH: And he should, he's supposed to get that tomorrow. And uh, and *you* are going to Italy soon.

55:02 GP: On Monday. On Monday.

55:09 RTH: Okay. So there, I guess we got, we got, we got two issues, two issues here. One, do we wanna sample, continue to sample with Gualtiero, the three of us while Gualtiero's in Italy? That's one question. And the other question is, do we wanna get started with Evan?

55:31 GP: We can definitely get started with Evan. Um,

[They compare calendars]

57:39 RTH: I'll leave that up to Evan about that. And then about, about the sampling with Gualtiero. [GP: Yes.] Do we want to continue, having a few more days of that and if so, do we wanna pick a date now? And...

58:01 GP: So I, here's what I say. I would say I am pretty satisfied with at least the, uh, samples we got, uh, for the time being. But this has been an extremely stimulating experience and I have now built it into a book project on consciousness that has really come together in the last few months. And it does involve, um, talking about descriptive experience sampling, my, my own experience with it, maybe what we will learn from E, y'know, doing, doing it with Evan. Um, and, and also including the stuff that I'm

doing when I'm sleeping, and which I will continue to do on my own (and to some degree at least).

58:58 And so I think it might be really helpful if I could continue to borrow the beeper, even if we don't do any more sessions like this, interviews like this, at least for the time being. Because if and when I do get to write this book, or at least the relevant parts of it, it might be helpful to like, repeat some of these be beep experience or like do more descriptive experience sampling just to refresh my memory or like see if I experience other things or I dunno. Or like maybe see if I, if some of these things happen again, y'know, or have fresh data, I don't know. It's, it's just a possibility that I would like to have open, um, if I could keep the beeper for a while.

59:49 RTH: Yeah. So, so what I would say about that is I think it would be interesting to sample with Gualtierio after we sample with Evan. And so I, I have no idea what the, what the sampling with Evan is going to be like, but the chances are pretty good that it's gonna be different from Gualtierio. And that's not because I know anything about him or, but only because, because people are generally different. And, and I think it's, it is *enlightening*, I guess I would say, to, to, [GP: Mm-hmm.] to watch it from the other side and then come back and, and watch it from the first side again. I think that might be enlightening. I think you might find that enlightening, and I might, and I might find that enlightening.

1:00:38 GP: Yeah. Okay.

1:00:39 RTH: And that might be the same, the same issue that you were describing about keeping the beeper and trying it later on, except I'm making it a little bit more concrete by saying that "later on" would be "after Evan."

1:00:56 GP: Yeah. Okay. Sure. Yeah.

1:00:58 RTH: Cuz y'know, we've, we've debated, we, we've debated things like, y'know, how present things are and what's, what, what's, what's the difference between a process and a content and, uh, what, what's directly apprehended. And we, we've, we have beat that subject [they laugh] bat, batted that subject back and forth. And, and I think we can, I, I, I think it's, it's *likely* that the conversations that we have with Evan will cast some light on that. And, and I don't, I don't, I'm not clairvoyant, I don't have any reason to, specific reason to believe, but I, but I, but I think his experience is going to, will, will be somewhat different in that regard and that difference will provide a perspective that will untie a knot in the conversations that we've been having. I think that's likely (or at least possible). And so I think we had, we had to sort a plan for that. So with, so I think both of us are suggesting that what we really ought to do is we ought to do our Evan thing for a while and then we ought to consider the possibility of coming back and doing some more Gualtierio-and-Lauren thing.

1:01:15 Russ comments: Here's why sampling with Evan might be enlightening for Gualtierio.
 Let's suppose that Gualtierio has some set of presuppositions. We don't have to have diagnosed the nature of those presuppositions—all we need to suppose is that Gualtierio has not attained a presupposition-free status (which I associate with nirvana).

That set of Gualtiero-presuppositions, whatever they are, has unknowingly shaped all of Gualtiero's apprehensions and descriptions of his experience. That is, there has been an intimate connection between the presuppositions and experiences for every single experience sample we have discussed. But when we discuss Evan's samples, there will be no intimate connection between Gualtiero's presuppositions and Evan's experience. That lack of alignment between his own presuppositions and Evan's experiences may provide Gualtiero with a very different perspective on his own presuppositions and his experiences.

1:02:17 GP: Yeah. Sounds good.

1:02:21 RTH: Does that sound like a plan for everybody? Yeah.

1:02:26 RTH: Okay. And, and so if I have time, I, I, I might apply myself to making the first half of a Gualtiero website. We can, um, I've got a couple of things in the queue ahead of that, but, but we would, if I do, I will, I will let you know.

1:02:46 So, concretely, I will contact Evan and say the beeper's supposed to be there on tomorrow, and we could plan on meeting on Friday the fourth at, in the afternoon on his time. And would be like nine o'clock my time in the morning on the fourth, which I think is 11 o'clock your time, something like that. And that's like his six o'clock in the evening and the 4th of July.

1:03:15 GP: Yeah. Okay.

1:03:16 RTH: Right. All right. Sounds like a plan

1:03:24 GP: Deal. Thanks Russ. Thanks Lauren.

1:03:28 RTH: See you later.

1:03:29 GP: Bye.