

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY
Do I Really Have Internal Monologue?
Ryan Langdon Interview 10:
DES Sampling Day 10

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the July 30 interview with Ryan Langdon that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/saCKph7GQio>. In green are comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

AK = Alek Krumm

Ryan = Ryan Langdon

- 0:00 RTH: I am recording on Screencast and Ryan is recording on Skype, which is good. And we had a conversation, or you all had a conversation, which I don't actually know what you all talked about, but it had something to do with taking the medication halfway through today's sampling. Is that...?
- 0:19 Ryan: Yeah, in one through four I, it was like in the, in the middle of the day when I was on it. And then I saved a few beeps for the night, for the end of the day, where it's worn off. [Alek: Okay, great.]
- 0:32 RTH: Sounds like a reasonable deal to me. [Alek: Yeah. Thanks (inaudible)] [inaudible] enough for us to be able to tell anything interesting. We'll have to wait and see, but
- 0:45 Ryan: Yeah, I think, I think there's a difference. Well, there *is* a difference. You'll see. We ready? [Alek: I am.] [RTH: I am.] We're good?
- 1:01 RTH: Yep. We're good.
- 1:03 Ryan: All right. Um, what are we, 10.1 [inaudible]?
- 1:07 RTH: 10.1 is right, as far as I'm concerned.

SAMPLE 10.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 1:10 Ryan: Uh, I was posting a picture to Instagram, uh, and I was thinking about what I should write for the caption. I said, "written by a fellow PA student" in internal monologue. Uh, while it was muscle memory for the process of going through posting the picture. So I haven't, I didn't even get to the point where you write the caption yet. I was planning it while I was just like quickly clicking the buttons to upload the picture.
- 1:39 RTH: Okay. And so does that mean that the center of my experience is the internal monologue?

- 1:44 Ryan: Yeah, I was, I was focused on thinking about what I should write for the caption.
- 1:51 RTH: And this is in response to a picture.
- 1:55 Ryan: Yeah. So what the picture was is a screenshot of an article that was written by a fellow PA student. And I was posting that to like a PA Instagram page. And I was thinking of a caption to write for it while I was posting it. And that was kind of like muscle memory, the posting part. Um, but me thinking of the caption was internal monologue.
- 2:19 RTH: Okay. And, and so, [sneezes] excuse me, does the internal monologue occupy your entire inner experience?
- 2:27 Ryan: Um, for the most part. I'm, I'm obviously looking at the screen and knowing where to click in and stuff. So I have to obviously be *aiming* at that. So I was doing both at the same time. But most of my brain energy was being used on thinking about the caption.
- 2:43 RTH: Okay. So let me, let me translate that into what I am, what I'm understanding and see whether this, this is right. So I am engaged in a skilled task: I'm going to write this caption and I know how to do that. I know I have to click on that. And I'm somehow processing the picture that I'm going to write the caption to. [Ryan: Mm hm.] But in my direct experience is the words of the caption "written by a fellow PhD student." [Ryan: Yes.] Is that right? [Ryan: Correct.] And so that other stuff is context or ongoing in my bag of bones and neurons somewhere, but not in my direct experience. [Ryan: Correct.] Okay. So in my direct experience is, I'm, is the inner monologue of "written by a fellow PA student." And how does that present itself to you?
- 3:35 Ryan: Um, it was, it was like, I don't know. It's just, however I think about writing, just my writing process is I have the words come across and I usually type to the words, but this, the words came up before I even had to type. So I was,
- 3:51 RTH: And by "came up," do you mean came up in a voice?
- 3:55 Ryan: Yeah. "Written by a fellow PA student" in my, in my thinking voice (whatever we termed it as if I could hear it or not), but in the thinking voice "written by a fellow PA student."
- 4:08 RTH: And, and as if we have never talked about this phenomenon before, could you tell me what this, what this thinking voice is like? Not in general, but on this particular beep, as if we had never had a conversation about thinking voice and you're going to try to tell me what, what this experience was like.
- 4:08 Russ comments: "as if we had never had a conversation about thinking" is an example of what Hurlburt (2011) called "dragging your feet." Ryan at 3:55 implies that we have a shared understanding of the characteristics of his "thinking voice." RTH wants to avoid make this assumption, so he encourages to start over in his thinking-voice description. If Ryan's description turns out to be consonant with previous thinking-voice descriptions, fine—we will have new, relatively independent confirmation of the

phenomenon. But if the description turns out to have some discrepant details, then we will have improved our understanding.

Dragging your feet does not imply disbelief. It simply means not jumping to premature conclusions.

- 4:28 Ryan: It's monotone. I would say it's me. Um, it doesn't sound like me as if I would listen to myself recorded back. Um, just like the tone, I'm saying it's more like a monotone quieter voice of mine. Um, and it has vocal characteristics. Like I could hear the syllables of each word that I'm saying, and it follows time as if I was speaking out loud: it's not like quick, like a full sentence "it's written by a fellow PA student" in my head.
- 5:02 RTH: And so there's that word "hearing" and "feeling" and "saying." All three of those things are in that sentence, I think. So.
- 5:13 Ryan: Um, it was, um, I mean, I was *saying* it because I was, I was thinking about what to write. So I had to say it in my head to see what it would sound like to someone else that was reading it.
- 5:22 RTH: So I'm saying, I'm saying in my own monotone voice, "written by a fellow PA student." [Ryan: Yes.] And that may have hearing qualities and it may not have.
- 5:39 Ryan: Um, it's, it has hearing qualities. I think it's a voice that I've been thinking about it more, and the more I like try to hear my voice before I do, but then I don't know if I'm like attributing my voice to it from memory or whatever, but...
- 5:55 RTH: Alright. Then I think I'm good. Speaking of hearing, I've got an extra dog in my house today. Is, that...
- 6:06 Ryan: It's fine. As long as it's fine for you. [Alek: No biggie.] What kind of dog is it? [RTH: Alright.] What kind of dog is it?
- 6:18 RTH: It's a standard poodle. We have a standard poodle and this is her sister, I guess, who's visiting for a couple days. [Ryan: Alright.] [Alek: Cute.]

SAMPLE 10.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 6:29 Ryan: Alright. Uh, Beep two. Um, I didn't really get a good beep here. Nothing was really going on. I read a name on Facebook and said "Gigi," but that's about it. I didn't, I didn't really get a good capture.
- 6:47 AK: And the "Gigi," is that, are you saying that's sort of just what's going on or is that in your experience?
- 6:54 Ryan: I said "Gigi." Like I was reading it how I normally read. Um, but that's about it. I got it. I don't remember exactly what was going on. It was, it wasn't a good one.
- 7:07 AK: Hmm. So I'm a, did I understand this right? I'm innerly saying "Gigi" as I read it.

7:12 Ryan: Yeah. Okay. And I, there's a last name too, but I don't want to say it [Alek: Okay.] because for obvious reasons. [Alek: Okay.]

7:20 RTH: But you were saying it at the time?

7:22 Ryan: Yeah. The same first name and last name, "Gigi blank," whatever.

7:25 RTH: "Gigi Jones," or whatever. [Ryan: Yeah. "Gigi Jones."]

7:30 AK: That's a good name. And so when you're saying, like, I didn't get a good, I didn't get a good capture here. This isn't a good beep. What do you mean exactly?

7:39 Ryan: Like it beeped and like, I didn't really know what was going on. Like, it wasn't, it wasn't anything remarkable or memorable or anything. So like, I didn't even know what to write. It was almost like I was just sitting there staring at my computer.

7:57 AK: And yet I'm understanding it's not that there was *nothing* going on--or maybe there was? maybe it was?

8:05 Ryan: Post. Just looking at a post on Facebook and someone that commented on it, name was Gigi something. And I was reading the name at like, as it beeps like now,

8:15 AK: But I'm not even really that engaged with that. It's not like I'm thinking about Gigi. I'm kind of, I'm gathering sort of passively reading her name?

8:23 Ryan: Yeah. Just like in passing. To the point where like, nothing else was like differentiated. I don't know. There wasn't any other experiences going on.

8:36 AK: And is there... About the reading? I'm understanding this to be in your voice?

8:44 Ryan: Yeah. Yeah. However, I've, there was another one where we talked about, like a notification popped up on my phone and there was a name and I read name and I stopped halfway through the last name 'cause I couldn't pronounce it. [Alek: Yeah.] It was like that. Except I could pronounce both names.

9:02 AK: So, so same reading phenomenon except here I can continue reading the last name and there I was sort of halted in my tracks. [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay. Your voice, any particular characteristics?

9:16 Ryan: No. Nothing's stand-out-able. [Alek: Okay.] There, there will be one where there's vocal characteristics at beep five. But this was just my normal day-to-day getting through my day, just doing my, my normal activities. [Alek: Okay.]

9:36 RTH: So I would say I'm still not sure that I understand what you meant by "I didn't get a good capture." Does that mean there was just nothing there to capture and therefore I didn't get a good one? Or does it mean,

- 9:46 Ryan: I guess I wasn't really thinking about anything. I don't know. There was not much going on. I don't know.
- 9:53 RTH: So does that mean that most of what I generally perceive as my mental or bodily or interests or whatever, but just weren't weren't any of that stuff going on?
- 10:03 Ryan: I was just on autopilot, just, just hanging out.
- 10:08 RTH: Okay. So this is close to nothing going on [Ryan: Yeah. I...] even though I am saying, "Gigi Jones" or whatever.
- 10:18 Ryan: That was like the only thing that I could pick up on to even write down in my, in my phone. I almost wrote like, nothing was going on, but I was staring at the name of Gigi Jones and said it. And that's that happened like probably a second before the beep, and then it beeped and nothing was going on. So I didn't know what to write. 'Cause nothing was happening. I was just thinking,
- 10:41 RTH: So the saying of "Gigi Jones" is a second before the beep and then at the beep nothing is going on?
- 10:47 Ryan: Yeah. It's, yeah.
- 10:51 RTH: So then I w I guess I would say this is probably a beep where nothing is going on. [Alek: Um hm.] "Gigi Jones" was the last thing before nothing was going on, but at this particular moment, nothing was going on. [Alek: Um hm.]
- 11:00 Ryan: Yeah, I was having trouble to figure out to what, even write in my notes, because like, I, I couldn't discern anything. [Alek: Mm hm.]
- 11:09 RTH: So from our point of view, that's fine. Nothing, [Alek: Mm hm.] nothing. So
- 11:15 Ryan: Probably good brain function. You just sit there and do nothing. Sounds relaxing, but yeah, I would say that's what happened.
- 11:24 AK: More or less nothing going on here? Yeah, it was, it wasn't, it wasn't anything that like I could write down at least. [Alek: Alright.]

11:24 Russ comments: DES participants occasionally report that nothing is ongoing in their direct experience at the moment of the beep. Nothing-in-experience is a novel occurrence for Ryan, one that may challenge his (and commonly-held) presupposition that *If I'm conscious, I must be experiencing something*. Given the likely presupposition, it's not surprising that Ryan is not initially straightforward in telling us that nothing is in his experience; instead, he conveys the nothingness indirectly: "Um, I didn't really get a good beep here. Nothing was really going on" (6:20) and "It was, it wasn't a good one" (6:54).

Part of the art of DES interviewing is to be sensitive to those kinds of utterances, to try to clarify what Ryan intends to convey by saying "nothing was really going on" and "it wasn't a good one" and then going on to describe inner speech while

reading. AK, at 7:30, asks Ryan to explain what he means by “it wasn’t a good capture,” after which we learn that Ryan’s experience is somewhere between nothing and something very passive. RTH, at 9:36, asks again, and further clarifies: The very passive something (reading) was actually *before* the beep whereas, at the beep, there was nothing in experience.

11:36 RTH: Alright. Then I think I’m good.

SAMPLE 10.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

11:38 Ryan: Okay. Three, um, I just finished reading a long comment and it beeped when I clicked “Like.” Pretty boring, not much going on, same thing as the last one. And that long post was written by Gigi. So then.

12:02 RTH: I’m not sure that I followed that. So are you reading it at the moment?

12:05 Ryan: No, no, I just finished it and it beeped as I was clicking “Like” on the comments.

12:16 RTH: Okay. Now I understand that I [Ryan: I wasn’t even like...] I had misconstrued the word “Like.”

12:21 Ryan: I wasn’t even like thinking about what was said in the message at the time when I was clicking it. ‘Cause I probably would have, yeah, I definitely would have wrote that down if I was. But I, I just, it was muscle memory, just clicking “Like.” Kind of like the last one. Not, not much going on. On autopilot. These are the only two that are similar where like, I feel like not, not much is going on.

12:55 RTH: Okay. So I think I’m good. [Alek: Yeah.].

SAMPLE 10.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

12:58 Ryan: All right. Um. Four. I was talking with my roommate, um, and I was saying words out loud about how it’s proven that males that reproduce at older ages have a higher percent chance of having a child with autism. Um, yeah. And I was saying that out loud. We were in a conversation.

13:26 AK: Um hm. And what, if anything is in your direct experience?

13:31 Ryan: Uh, speaking, I guess. Talking to my, my roommate.

13:38 AK: Um hm. So you are in the act of speaking when the beep interrupts? [Ryan: Mm hm.] And then, so just because you *are* speaking doesn’t mean you have to experience that. Y’know, sometimes people describe what we call something like words rolling out. It’s like I’m speaking and I’m making sense, but really speaking is not present to me. It’s, I’m doing it skillfully almost like you have been in the last couple of beeps, you know, I’m, I’m uploading a picture. I’m clicking “Like,” but I’m not really engaged with that. *Or* I’m speaking *and* I, I experienced myself speaking.

- 14:12 Ryan: Yeah. I experienced myself speaking. It was so.... It was a, it wasn't like a normal conversation. It was relatively academic related. So I was, I was engaged with the speaking.
- 14:29 AK: And are you engaged with this conversation in any way beyond speaking? Like, am I thinking about this autism thing or I'm seeing something or is there anything else going on?
- 14:42 Ryan: Before this happened, but it didn't happen, um, at the beep, but we were talking about this and I had a visual of, I used to, um, babysit two autistic brothers. And their dad-- they were both autistic--and the dad was, was relatively older. And I had a visual of that guy when we were talking about it. But that wasn't there at the beep, so I didn't write it down.
- 15:08 AK: Okay. So sometime before the beep I visualize this dad [Ryan: Yeah.] who's related to this, this a statistic or whatever. And now I'm saying the statistic to my friend. [Ryan: Yeah.] And I experienced myself saying it, but otherwise that's it. I'm pretty wrapped up in speaking?
- 15:25 Ryan: Yeah. I it's almost like that, that flash of that guy triggered the words that I said afterwards, which was that.
- 15:36 AK: Okay. But I'm understanding the guy and those kids and all that, that's sort of before the beep. They are, they're no longer present to me. They have spawned this conversation, but
- 15:47 Ryan: Yes, correct.
- 15:50 AK: Okay. Then I think I'm good.
- 15:52 RTH: And you're speaking this to your roommate. [Ryan: Yeah.] And is he, she, whoever part of your direct experience at the moment?
- 16:02 Ryan: I mean, I'm looking at him in the eyes. I don't know if like I am gauging his reaction on his face or anything. I wasn't necessarily concerned with his reaction. I, I *have* been when I'm talking to people, but not this particular [inaudible].
- 16:18 RTH: So I'm not, I don't need to have it be a particular reaction. I would like, what I would like to know is whether your experience seems to be one of *seeing* him, *or* (what's your, what, which obviously you are. Your eyeballs are aimed at him. You're your neurons are processing him. Your LGN or whatever is doing whatever it has to do in order, in order to make this percept. I'm not, I got no problems with that.) The question is whether it rises to your direct experience.
- 16:51 Ryan: I don't know. I have no idea. I've never thought about talking to someone in that manner. So I, I really can't remember. I mean, I guess I, when you talk to someone, I feel like you should be engaged with them in some type of emotional connection of some way, but like, I,

17:08 RTH: Whether you should be, or whether you shouldn't be is....

17:12 Ryan: I didn't write it down. So I don't really remember.

17:15 RTH: ...is a different deal. There...We have lots of beeps where people will say, well, I was, I was engaged in a conversation and the person that I'm talking to is just not present to me at all. I'm thinking about what I'm trying to say. I'm trying to, I'm trying to formulate my words, or I'm thinking about an image and now I'm going to put that into words, or whatever. And I *know* for a fact, my eyeballs are aimed at the guy that I'm talking to, but I'm not [inaudible] [Ryan: He...] before the footlights of consciousness.

17:40 Ryan: He was in the footlights of consciousness. But I don't know if I could like explain my experience with it. But it's not like... I know what you're talking where it's like, you're thinking of something; they're not present, I guess, in your footlights of consciousness. But I don't know. I can't... From, I wouldn't be able to give you a reliable response. [RTH: Okay.] And I don't think that's, that would be fair to assume....

18:08 RTH: Fair enough. Then I'm good. [Alek: Yeah.]

18:12 AK: Yep. And so these were the four, sorry. These were the four where you were, were presumably medication was having an effect. Is that right?

18:18 Ryan: Yup. Correct. And then five and six were not.

SAMPLE 10.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

18:27 Ryan: [continues] Uh, I have to give you context for five because if I just start out by saying what I was thinking, it would not make sense. So there's this game where, um, it it's like a card and it asks you like hypothetical questions. And my friend was in our group chat. He sent a picture of it. And the question was "what sport would be more entertaining if every player was drunk." Alright. Um, and then he said, NASCAR, my other friend said tennis. And I explained why tennis was a bad answer. Then I said the spelling bee, because it's on ESPN, so it counts. Um, it beeped when I had a visual of a little drunk 13-year-old Indian boy on a stage. And I said in internal monologue, in his perspective, as if he was speaking to his mom in the front row, "I didn't even want to do this, *Mom*." And it happened so fast. [they laugh] Do you understand why I had to preface this?

19:35 AK: That would have been a tough one to find a reason.

19:40 Ryan: It was like a movie that I had going on in my head.

19:45 RTH: So let's start with what you see at this particular moment.

19:50 Ryan: I see a, um, a young Indian boy in a green shirt, on a stage, kind of like off balance, holding a microphone, looking down in the front row of the audience.

20:11 RTH: And this is apparently in color--the guy's shirt is green or whatever. [Ryan: Yeah.] And in motion, like I see him wobble?

20:19 Ryan: Not really, but almost like I knew it was wobbling. It wasn't really in motion. It was because, like I said, it all happened so fast. Um, yeah. It almost like the, the, the dialogue, like the monologue. I wasn't really saying it, but I knew that's what he was saying. If that makes sense. That's going to be a tough one to decode. Um, yeah,

20:48 RTH: So let's go with that. There are specific words involved. "I didn't even want to do this, Mom." Is that,

20:53 Ryan: Yeah. "I didn't even want to *do* this *Mom*!"

20:59 RTH: With the "do" being underlined or emphasized or whatever?

21:03 Ryan: Mom being emphasized. I capitalized MOM in, in this.

21:09 RTH: "I didn't even want to *do* this, *Mom*!"

21:12 Ryan: Yeah. Almost like he, uh, was like resistant. Like his, his parents made him do this and like made him work this hard to be this good at spelling words. And he didn't want to do it. And he was saying this because he was drunk. He was like talking back to his parents.

21:28 RTH: And, and so are, how do these words present themselves to you? Obviously they're present in some pretty specific way?

21:38 Ryan: Yeah. It's they, I didn't, I didn't really like hear them, but I, I, I imagined him saying that without actually hearing the sentence. Like even with the emphasis. I knew where he would like emphasize it, but I didn't hear, I didn't hear the words.

21:58 RTH: So I have a quite detailed visual picture.

22:02 Ryan: Yes. In a quite detailed, just a scenario. The whole thing was very, almost like I, it was something that I would see in a movie.

22:14 RTH: Okay. And part of this scenario is what is being said, and what is being said has vocal characteristics to it, emphasis and whatever.

22:25 Ryan: I don't think it had vocal characteristics. I just know that's the sentence that would come out of his mouth in that like tone and cadence. Like if I was writing a movie, I would have to put words to this whole thing that was happening.

22:43 RTH: Hmm. So I didn't mean that to say that about the vocal characteristics that you were hearing them or speaking on or whatever. But that the, but that what you *know* about this sentence *has* what I *called* vocal characteristics. What I meant was emphasis,...
[Alek: Mm hm.]

- 23:00 Ryan: Yes. Correct. Where like the joke would only work if he said it in a certain like slurry, drunk, 14-year-old, Indian boy way.
- 23:10 RTH: And, and what were the, what, were they *said* in your imagination? In the... or *known* in your imagination?
- 23:19 Ryan: They were known that [inaudible] that he was like slurring and saying it like, he was like resisting, like the strictness of his parents.
- 23:19 Russ comments: This sample provides some insight into the hearing(?) phenomenon that we have been wrestling with over the past few interviews. In this sample, it seems pretty clear that words can be *known without* being spoken or heard, and that those words *can be* apprehended with cadence and emphasis. On previous days, it has seemed to Ryan that if a cadence and emphasis was present, it (perhaps) must be being heard. Ryan is discovering that that is apparently not the case.
- 23:30 RTH: Okay. And now the *context* of this is we're playing this game where, where we've been talking about NASCAR and tennis or whatever, and now it's your turn. Is that right?
- 23:40 Ryan: Yes. And I said "the spelling bee," and then, um, I sent that to the group chat. And then as I was like waiting for a response, I had a visual of a drunk kid on a stage yelling at his mom for making him do it.
- 23:58 RTH: So you have taken your turn in the sense of written your response—"a spelling bee." [Ryan: Mm hm.] And now you're waiting. The context is you're waiting for people to say, what the heck, what do you mean by a spelling bee or whatever? And this is...
- 24:13 Ryan: More letting them use their imagination to visualize it themselves. Where in the process I was using my imagination to visualize it. Because I was, I had a visual for drunk people doing NASCAR and then tennis, which was, that's just a horrible answer. They would just hit it into the net every time. That wouldn't even be fun to watch. [they laugh] But, um, yeah,
- 24:40 RTH: But those are gone at this particular moment.
- 24:43 Ryan: Correct. I am very deeply involved with this visual. It's very funny to me in the moment.
- 24:53 RTH: And is that present to you at the moment? The fact that it's funny?
- 24:56 Ryan: I felt like, like, like, like, like laughter, like it was, it was funny. I didn't laugh out loud, but I definitely like felt joy from the thought that I received.
- 25:08 RTH: And how did, how is that present to you?
- 25:10 Ryan: Um, just like, I always explain it in my chest, but I can't like, it's just, it's funny.
- 25:18 RTH: But bodily?

- 25:21 Ryan: Yeah, it's bodily.
- 25:21 RTH: Somehow I am responding to my own joke, basically. [Ryan: Yeah.] And I'm responding in a joyful chesty way.
- 25:30 Ryan: I'm like more laughing at where my brain went with it and it was, it was just like a funny little thing. I swear I'm not on drugs on this.
- 25:42 AK: Can I just double check that I understand the words portion here. So it is not that I experienced myself *saying* these words or, and I don't *hear* the boy saying them either. But I *know* that he is saying in a slurry, whiny yelling-at-my-mom, drunk Indian-boy, voice, "I didn't even want to *do* this, *Mom!*"
- 26:03 Ryan: Yes. But I didn't hear it. That's just how I imagined it would happen if he did say something on stage. Like if it, if it happened.
- 26:14 AK: So it's not like I see his mouth moving either. I see *him*. And I know that this is what he *would say* if he spoke.
- 26:20 Ryan: Correct.
- 26:22 RTH: And he would lurch a little bit while he was saying it. [Ryan: Yes.] But you don't see that, either.
- 26:27 Ryan: Like, you could almost feel the resentment in his voice talking to his mom for making him do this. Like, you know how some parents like force their kids to do certain things against their will. That's kind of what I was envisioning, but the drunkenness made him honest. And he was like resisting that.
- 26:27 Russ comments: Again, notice the clarity of Ryan's description: He says (at 26:03) that he "didn't hear it" and, without flinching (at 26:27), that the boys' voice would sound resentful, drunken, and honest. He is, as we observed above, clarifying for himself that he apparently can apprehend words—including with very specific vocal qualities—without hearing or speaking those words.
- 26:48 AK: That's a great scenario.
- 26:48 RTH: Sounds good to me!
- 26:53 AK: Yeah, I'm good then.

SAMPLE 10.6 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 26:54 Ryan: Whew! [wipes his brow dramatically] That's probably my favorite beep that we've had. [they laugh] Um, the last one, the next one is a little bit different, but uh, I was watching or I was listening to a podcast. I was watching a podcast, um, with a clinical psychologist and an evolutionary biologist. And they were talking about Hitler, which is

obviously a really touchy subject. And one of them said, “I have to mention I’m in no way supporting this behavior.” And I had an unsymbolized thought about that. Uh, I knew he was trying to walk on eggshells. Um, but clearly he was about to say something controversial, but it’s probably something important that no one talks about, and they don’t talk about it because of the taboo nature of the conversation.

26:54 Russ comments: There is reason to worry about Ryan’s use of “unsymbolized thought,” as if we had a shared understanding of that. See the comment at 3:54 or Interview 9.

27:44 AK: And I’m taking it, that, that part—the he’s walking on eggshells but this is probably important—that is the center of my experience?

27:51 Ryan: Yeah. It was like the most careful conversation like, and I was like, noting that. Um, but at the moment the beep, that’s what, I was thinking about how it, he was like clearly trying his best to avoid saying something that can be like used out of context against him, [Alek: Mm hm.] because they were talking about how like the genocide affected genetics, like how it affected that area for genetics. And it’s kind of like a real taboo subject to talk about. So they were walking on eggshells.

28:26 AK: Okay. And how does this thinking present itself to you?

28:32 Ryan: Um, it just happens quick. It’s just something that I knew [Alek: Mm hm.] [inaudible] so that everything that I said was like encapsulated in that.

28:44 AK: Mm hmm. And I, but I’m taking it, there are not like specific words, like quote, he’s walking on eggshells unquote. And I just know that. [Ryan: Yes.] I’m thinking that [Ryan: Yeah.] And no visual here?

28:56 Ryan: Nothing. No.

29:00 AK: Is it fair to call this a thought process? [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay. So I’m understanding this to be like what we would call like a classic unsymbolized thinking, kind of like the, the professor’s kitchen one where like rich people look young. Is it like that?

29:00 Russ comments: From the standpoint of DES footdragging (see the comment at 4:08), AK’s assent that this experience is classic unsymbolized thinking is unfortunate. There are two possibilities: (a) There is some (large or small) discrepancy between Ryan’s and Alek’s understanding of unsymbolized thinking (which is likely, given the difficulty many people have with the concept and given Ryan’s historical interest in internal monologue); and (b) there is no discrepancy. In case (a), Alek and Ryan have entered into a collusive pact to pretend to agree; that will be very difficult to overcome. In case (b), we will have squandered the opportunity to provide new, relatively independent evidence of agreement.

Only an omniscient being knows which has just occurred.

29:17 Ryan: Yes. I didn’t want to use that word just for the sake of, of you guys and not being biased. I just, I wanted to just explain it how I wrote it down. [Alek: Okay.] Well, yeah, I

would class, I would consider this myself, if I'll tell you about this, I would call it an unsymbolized thought. But I just wanted to explain it without using that word, if that makes sense.

29:17 Russ comments: Uh oh. Ryan had indeed introduced the word “unsymbolized thinking” (at 27:24), so his denial here is inconsistent. Only an omniscient being knows what the source of that inconsistency is, but such an inconsistency can “jangle the antennae” (Hurlburt, 2011) of a mere mortal but attentive listener. It suggests that something in the vicinity may not be quite the way it seems.

29:39 AK: Okay. That's great.

29:41 RTH: So can I make sure that I understand what this experience is? So is it, is it that I'm, I'm watching him and somehow skillfully noticing, 'cause I'm a skillful observer of people, that he's walking on eggshells? *Or* is it that I am in some analytical cognitive think-y kind of way saying, well, he's walking (saying without words, but, but cognizing to myself), *well, he's walking on eggshells because he wants to be careful.*

29:41 Russ comments: This is RTH's attempt to rewind the interview, to provide the opportunity to take a new perspective on the experience that has jangled his antennae.

This illustrating one of the many benefits of multiple interviewers: RTH, as the less-involved but equally-earnest third party, is in a better position to notice a potential collusion and can lightly challenge it in a foot-dragging way by introducing potential alternatives (“skillfully noticing”).

Ultimately Ryan will stick to his story that this was indeed an unsymbolized thought, not merely skillful noticing. That could mean that Ryan was, indeed, engaged in a cognitive-analytical (“unsymbolized”) thought process, but it could also mean that the collusion was stronger than RTH's late-arising foot-dragging.

30:16 Ryan: Yeah. So I knew that both of them were walking, like they were being very careful because they mentioned before, because one of them said he was talking about how he was tired and he didn't want to like start this conversation just in case if he said something that was stupid, that he couldn't like backtrack on. Um, but the unsymbolized thought was more about how, what he was about to say is probably something that no one talks about and is probably going to be important and valid and make sense. Um, but people wouldn't speak on it usually because of the taboo nature of Hitler.

30:54 RTH: So I'm *thinking*, in what if, if put into words would be something like “this guy is about to talk about something which is important but of a taboo nature.” [Ryan: Correct.] And that's an explicit, separable-from-listening-to-the-podcast kind of thing.

31:19 Ryan: Yeah. This was, this was like, um, my thought process on kind of like predicting what he was about to talk about, in my head. Not like that. Like, that's kind of a hard way to explain it, but I was noting the direction of the conversation. And I was, I just knew that he was going to say something that is of scientific basis that people don't usually study or talk about.

31:44 RTH: And that I'm gathering (but I want to make sure that I understand) is it's not *just* that my ears have perked up in a scientific-anticipation way, but instead I am analyzing in some way what is about to happen.

32:03 Ryan: Correct. The latter. [RTH: Okay.]

32:07 AK: And how about the podcast itself? Is that still in your experience?

32:11 Ryan: Um, yeah, it happens, it's like a quick, it's quick. So it's, it doesn't pull me out of it really that much. Um, I can't tell you if like I'm watching it. I have the thought it pulls me away from it and then I returned back, or it's happening at the same time. I can't, I can't differentiate it. But I was, I, I was, I wouldn't say I was losing focus of what was going on in the video.

32:39 AK: Okay. So I'm still tracking, maybe it pulled me away for a second, but I'm still following along. [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay. Then I think I'm good for that one. [RTH: I'm good too.] Okay.

SAMPLE 10.7 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

32:54 Ryan: I did a bonus one this morning without medication, too.

32:59 RTH: Alright, let's go for it.

33:00 Ryan: Um, so I was, last night, I watched a Ted Talk on David Blaine. He's a magician, and he held his breath for 17 minutes. Um, and the Ted talk was about how he did it and like the, like his training and stuff. And I was talking to someone about that and I said, "I'm going to try to do it." So I held my breath and, um, while it was, while I was holding my breath, it beeped. And I was thinking about how... I had a visual of Facebook and somehow was thinking about if David Blaine died, because he does all, a bunch of wild stuff like this, about like, he wouldn't really be appreciated until that happened, unfortunately. And like I had a visual of Facebook and this video that I watched the, the 17-minute breath-holding video. Um, and like I posted it on Facebook and like, I had a visual of that when it beeped. But I was also holding my breath, too.

34:05 RTH: So are there basically three things? I'm not sure I understood. Three things going on? I am holding my breath, whatever we'll get to that; I am thinking about he wouldn't be appreciated until he's dead; and I am seeing the Facebook video that I posted.

34:19 Ryan: Okay. Um, let me organize that. So I thought about, um, like if he died *before* the beep. [RTH: Okay.] When it beeped, I had the visual of Facebook and like the square video picture on a feed, a visual of that. Um, I wasn't saying anything. Um, and I also, wasn't really thinking about me holding my breath either. Like I wasn't like gasping for air or wanting to, to breathe at all in that situation. I was more so just like bored and my mind was drifting and I was focusing on that.

35:02 RTH: So as far as my direct experience is concerned, it sounds like I'm, I'm seeing my Facebook visual.

35:10 Ryan: Yes. Correct.

35:13 RTH: And that's it. The rest of it is all context or [inaudible]

35:16 Ryan: Yeah, before I like said in internal monologue, um, I forgot what I said. I didn't write it down, but I said something in internal monologue about like the caption of the video, what I would say like about David Blaine, and then it went away. And then it beeped when I was just like, I had a, of the Facebook feed with the video.

35:40 RTH: Okay. And so what exactly do you see?

35:44 Ryan: Uh, it's like a bunch of white [gestures around with his hands and arms] around and then a dark black, like a, not completely black, but like gray, dark gray of a square in the middle of that. It wasn't like super differentiated, but I knew what it was.

36:04 RTH: And what it was was David Blaine holding his breath.

36:07 Ryan: It was the video that I watched that was like in the feed that like you would just click on, if you would see it in your feed, you know, you click Play.

36:17 AK: So I see the Ted Talk video about him. Is that right? [Ryan: Yes.] Okay.

36:22 RTH: But I don't actually see any of the details of the Ted Talk [Ryan: No.] visually. What I see is a dark gray rectangle [Ryan: Mm hm.] that I somehow recognize or know to be this Ted Talk video. [Ryan: Yep.] And I see a white region [Ryan: Background.] that I know to be, but I don't actually see to be, my Facebook. [Ryan: Correct.]

36:58 AK: And is the context... It's not terribly important, but just I'm trying to follow this. So is the context that like, if he died, I might post this video and say some things about David Blaine. [Ryan: Yes.] Okay.

37:12 Ryan: Because I appreciate him as like a, like what he does. And I feel like a lot of people don't like, know what he's done or anything and... Yeah. And I feel like no one would, until he died, unfortunately. That's sad, but it's true.

37:28 RTH: But that's before the beep, or.

37:30 Ryan: Yes. [Alek: Yeah. Yeah.] My mind was like going on like a roller coaster of just like a stream of thoughts while I was holding my breath because I was bored. I got three minutes and 10 seconds in case you guys were wondering, which is pretty impressive.

37:45 AK: I was gonna ask!

37:47 RTH: That's, that's probably three minutes more than I could do. So,

37:52 AK: But the holding your breath is not at all in your direct experience?

37:53 Ryan: Not at this time. It was early on, so I wasn't really struggling yet. [Alek: Okay.]

38:05 RTH: Alright. [Alek: Yeah. I'm good.] I think I'm good. [Alek: Cool.]

38:11 Ryan: How was that? Was that a good one?

38:14 RTH: I, I don't, I'm interested in that one, But I'm interested in the *nothing* beeps as well. I don't, I don't say that I have any, that I would prefer this kind of beep to that kind of beep. So we at one time said that this should be our last sampling day. That was before we had this on-Adderall-not-on-Adderall idea. Do we still think this should be your last sampling day?

38:36 Ryan: For now, at least. [RTH: Okay.] Unfortunately.

38:41 RTH: Okay. And then we also decided that we would put aside a time that, that you would ask us whatever it is that you wanted to ask us. And maybe you would write us some questions or maybe you wouldn't or whatever, however you wanted to do that.

38:54 Ryan: I'll do that. I'm not sure when yet, but I'll figure it out.

39:01 RTH: Okay. So I will leave that

39:04 AK: So you'll reach out to us about scheduling that?

39:05 Ryan: Yeah. I'll reach out.

39:07 RTH: Okay. And then, is there anything else that we should be talking about at this particular moment?

39:15 Ryan: Um, I don't think so. Unless you have any thoughts or questions about certain beeps that you may want to clarify or something?

INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF THE EFFECT OF MEDICATION ON INNER EXPERIENCE STARTS HERE

39:27 RTH: I think, I think I'm sort of good. [Alek: Yeah.] I guess I, we, we, we have this little like Adderall experiment. [Alek: Yeah.] What do you, what do you make of that? I guess that would...

39:43 Ryan: Me personally? Or.[Alek: Yeah.] I, I mean, there's a clear difference. It's my brain is much more active when I am off Adderall, but like I'm in PA school, and there's not many times where I can not be taking it, so I [inaudible] to schedule my life around that.

40:03 AK: Yeah. And I mean, of course we have like the confounds of, you know, what you were doing. So maybe you were just, you know, just mindlessly reading and scrolling for the

first one. So it's hard to say, but they certainly are different today, these first four in the latter three.

- 40:22 Ryan: Well, the other two, the two beeps that I got last night, I guess I was both, I was still like in the same setting that I was for the other ones. Like I was laying in bed on my computer.
- 40:39 AK: Hmm. Yeah. There, there had been a day where you told us that, um, that your sampling was done at night, like after meds wore off. And I'm looking back at that now, because I kind of want to see what that day looked like. [Ryan: (inaudible)] Some clear inner seeings, some inner speech. Hmm.
- 41:10 RTH: That was my question, too. Are there other days that you can identify other samples that you can identify--these are off Adderall, on Adderall.
- 41:20 Ryan: Most are I'm on it.
- 41:24 AK: That's what I figured. Because you, you told us on the day you were off as if that was like a new thing. [Ryan: Yeah.]
- 41:31 RTH: And did we keep track of that, Alek?
- 41:34 AK: Well, that only happened once. It was day eight. He said, by the way, you know, these were actually last night after. So it would be interesting. I mean, it'd be really interesting if we knew more about that. So it's a cool peek inside.
- 41:51 Ryan: If I have some more time in the future. I could always just do like random beeps for you if that helps, but,
- 41:56 RTH: Well, let's, let's play that by ear. See what happens [inaudible]. And [pause] [Ryan: What?] Well, I guess I was interested in what your general impression is. I mean, the beeps that I can remember while you're on Adderall seem like interesting beeps to me. [Alek: Yeah.] Not particularly distressing beeps to me. Fascinating, interesting, whatever. [Alek: Mm hm.].
- 42:28 Ryan: I feel like I get more, um, like the, the beep about the, the spelling bee. I was like, that was like a, like a movie to me. It was like very, um, encapsulating experience, where usually when I'm on it, it doesn't, I don't get that as much. I do sometimes, but it's definitely more frequent and I'm, uh, I think in a more abstract way, I feel like when I'm off of it than when I am on it. [inaudible] but I feel like it's a content issue, which you're not really concerned about.
- 43:04 AK: Well, what about, you had mentioned in the past, like that sometimes inner speech is distracting, is that right? [Ryan: Yeah.] Does that have any, as far as like your general impression, does that have anything to do with being on Adderall or off? I don't want to assume that that is.

- 43:23 Ryan: On off days, almost everything, all the speech is distracting. Like I can't, I can barely read a book when I'm off of it.
- 43:31 AK: And remind me again, what you mean by distracting, in terms of like, what, how, how is it, how do you experience distraction? Like what is, what is it that's so distracting?
- 43:40 Ryan: It's like a, it's a daydream that goes on and it could be verbal. It could be visual. I could be reading a sentence. I could read a whole page and just be thinking about something else, but my eyes will still be following like the lines and saying it, but I'll be thinking about something else. And that's what I mean by distracting, where I'm trying, if I'm trying to focus on the book, like I'm reading a book for a reason, I'm trying to read it and I can't be having my brain be wandering off. And that's what happens.
- 44:08 RTH: So the three beeps that we have today, they didn't wander off to inner speech. They have wandered off to [Alek: mostly visual] visualizations, I think. Three for three? Two for [inaudible]
- 44:23 AK: Well, one, two for three. One was an unsymbolized, but pretty drawn out thought process, yeah.
- 44:27 Ryan: Yeah. But it's usually, it's usually [inaudible]. It's a combination. Um, and it can happen. It could be either just visual. It could be just words. Could be both. It could be like a movie.
- 44:42 AK: Hmm. Cool.
- 44:42 Russ comments: In this little experiment, the first three samples (when Ryan was presumably experiencing the effects of Adderall) are indeed very different from the last four samples (when that effect had presumably worn off): the non-Adderall samples are much brighter and more differentiated than are the Adderall samples. That might lead to some straightforward speculation about the effect of Adderall. But Interview 8 was also a collection of non-Adderall samples, and they do *not* seem substantially brighter and more differentiated than his other samples. What should we make of that? One could argue that today's comparison is better: both the with and the without samples came from the same day and are thus not confounded by other situational factors. Maybe that is true, but maybe it is just chance that led today's no-Adderall samples to be brighter and more differentiated. Science is hard work, and a main consideration in the scientific method is to develop procedures that limit the likelihood of capitalizing on chance. It is amazing, really, that there are no studies that seek to explore in high fidelity the inner experience of people who are sometimes taking and at other times not taking Adderall (or any other drug, for that matter). You would think that that would be the basic science of the psychoactive drug industry, but it isn't.
- 44:45 RTH: Okay. I appreciate it. I've enjoyed the sampling. I'll look forward to the questions. You and Alek are going to figure out when we're going to do it and she's going to let me know.

44:55 Ryan: Alright, [Alek: You got it.] I appreciate the experience. I hope it was useful in some way. I don't know how, but I'm sure all beeps are.

45:05 AK: Yeah, it really was.

45:06 RTH: I'm sure it was useful. It's hard to know how. We put them all out there for anybody to watch it. And that that's where I think the actual utility is. [Ryan: Yeah.] But you've made yourself, you've made this process available to anybody who wanted to watch it. [Alek: Mm hm.].

45:20 Ryan: The users are dying off, unfortunately, on my, on my page, I was.

45:31 RTH: For now.

45:31 Ryan: Yeah, for now. There's always later.

45:34 AK: We're in it for the long game. We don't know when it's going to be useful.

45:40 Ryan: I'm glad I could be part of the experience.

45:45 RTH: Alright, Good. Well, you're going to let us know when we're going to talk more and uh, we'll look forward to that.

45:51 Ryan: Alright. Sounds good.

45:52 AK: Alright. [Ryan: Alright.] [RTH: See ya later.] Bye.