

Transcript for Interview 6 (Chapter 9) of
Describing Inner Experience?
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Russell T. Hurlburt
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
<http://www.nevada.edu/~russ/>

Eric Schwitzgebel
University of California, Riverside
<http://www.faculty.ucr.edu/~eschwitz/>

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Text printed in black appears word for word in both the interviews and in the book. Text printed in gray occurred in the interviews, but was deleted from the book for the reasons of economy of space. Text printed in green did not appear in the original interviews but was added for intelligibility.

Discussion between Russ, Eric, and Melanie before first beep
[\[The audio is available at \[http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience\]\(http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience\)\]](http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience)

Russ: Okay, there's one [tape recorder]...there's the backup so hopefully we won't lose anything.

Eric: Okay.

Russ: So I'm ready whenever everybody else is ready.

Eric: Okay.

Russ: Do we have anything we ought to be talking about before we talk about Melanie's beeps?

Eric: Um...I was curious, I wanted to ask Melanie; I know she had to dash off at the end of our conversation last time...

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: ...and Russ had said that you had taken some notes. And I was curious whether there was anything in your mind from that that you wanted to say.

Melanie: Oh, no. I was just taking notes on what you and he were talking about.

Eric: Okay.

Melanie: Nothing more than that...

Eric: Alright.

Melanie: ...just for my own benefit.

Eric: Okay, that's fine. Then I'm happy to do the first beep.

[1:00]

Russ: Okay, me too.

Beep 6.1

[The audio is available at http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience]

Melanie: Okay. These were taken from last night, and some were from today. I was sitting... I was in a restaurant with my boyfriend having dinner. We were talking about the All Star game that was on last night, and we were discussing how this year is this whole new thing where whichever team, National or American, that won the All Star game would get home field advantage for the World Series. And we were trying to remember how they divide up the games in the World Series between the National and the American fields. He said, although he thought it was wrong, that they did it three games in one place, two games in another place, and then two games somewhere else. And then... and right when the beep... and then I said, "But that doesn't make any sense because that means that one stadium gets the World Series games five times if you play all seven games." And then the beep went off. So that came... the beep happened right when I said "that means one stadium gets the World Series five times" beep.

[1:00]

Russ: So you were saying that out loud?

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: You were in the midst of saying "that means..." And what, if anything, is in your experience other than your saying this?

Melanie: A feeling of conviction that that's **what he said was** wrong.

Russ: And can you tell us more about this, how you know this is a feeling of conviction, what it feels like, and...?

Melanie: Um... I think probably being a little bit more assertive in what I'm saying is part of it, and just a certainty that I'm right.

Russ: Okay. So if an unbiased observer were watching your conversation, would that observer be able to say, “Well she’s being definitive here”? Are you saying that there are characteristics of your voice that...?

[2:00]

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: Okay. So these are externally observable characteristics.

Melanie: Um hm. And I probably although it certainly wasn’t in my awareness at the time, I probably leaned forward a little bit, kind of, so there was body language.

Russ: Okay. And was there anything other – I think you said that there was but I don’t remember what it was now – anything other than the certainty in your voice that led you to...?

Melanie: Just... I can’t really get any more specific than this, just the feeling of knowing that what I was saying was correct.

Russ: And is that feeling of knowing, is that describable in any more detail? Mental? Physical? Bodily...?

Melanie: It’s mental. It’s not physical or bodily. It’s definitely mental but... beyond that, no.

[3:00]

Russ: So it’s not just that your voice is more definitive. There is some awareness beyond just the recognition of the characteristics of your voice that you are right about this.

Melanie: Yes. Um hm.

Russ: Okay. But we’re not finding any way to describe that **it** other than this is some kind of a mental event.

Melanie: No.

Russ: Okay. So let me make sure I’m understanding what it is that you’re saying here. So you’re saying, “That wouldn’t ... That means one stadium gets five games and the other gets two.”

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: And at the same time that you’re saying that, you’re aware that you’re right about this.

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: Is that right?

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: So it's not just that you're saying it and it's right...

Melanie: No, it's a knowing that it's right.

Russ: You're saying it and you know this is right while you're saying it.

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: Okay. And is there anything else going on at this particular moment in your awareness?

[4:00]

Melanie: I was looking at the person I was speaking to, but and I was aware that I was looking at him, but there wasn't anything else, like I couldn't tell you what particular part of his face I was looking at, and I couldn't... and I wasn't... there wasn't some bit of me noticing what I was seeing. I just know that I was looking at him.

Russ: And when you say "you know that you're looking at him," does that mean in a retrospective sense?

Melanie: No it means that I know that my eyes are pointed straight forward.

Russ: At the moment of the beep you know that your eyes are on him.

Melanie: Yeah, I'm not looking down and I'm not looking up, I'm looking straight ahead.

Russ: Okay.

Melanie: Which ties into the whole feeling of certainty...

Russ: ... leaning forward looking at him.

Melanie: Yeah, and feeling of asserting something.

Russ: Okay. So there is at the moment of the beep some awareness of looking straight ahead...

Melanie: Straight ahead.

Russ: ...at this guy. Okay, and anything else?

[5:00]

Melanie: That's it.

Russ: Eric?

Eric: So you said that you knew your eyes were pointing straight forward. Would you describe this as more knowledge about your eyes, then, or knowledge about the thing you're seeing? Or...

Melanie: Probably knowledge about the eyes as opposed to what I'm seeing, because....

Eric: So in a way it sounds like, it would be analogous to, say, bodily knowledge that you're faced a certain direction or something?

Melanie: Yeah. More like that than looking directly at something. And picking up what I was looking at. Because I could have been staring at anything, or looking at anything, but I just knew that I was looking straight ahead. [See Box 9.1 on whether she was having visual experience.]

Russ: And is that part of the feeling of leaning forward, leaning into these words in some...

[6:00]

Melanie: Um hm, definitely.

Russ: So it's not like you knew that your body was intensely focused forwards, and, separately from that, you knew that you were looking forwards.

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: It was that those things were the same or those were coordinated?

Melanie: Coordinated, yeah.

Russ: Coordinated processes.

Eric: Oh, that's funny. Maybe I misheard what you said before. But I thought that you had said that it was only after the beep that you realized that you had this kind of... you were leaning forward, that that wasn't part of your experience at the time of the beep.

Melanie: Well, no, that's right. I didn't know that I was leaning forward; I did know that I was looking straight ahead and I assumed that I was looking **leaning** forward.

Russ: Assumed you were leaning forward?

Melanie: Yes. Sorry about that.

Eric: Uh huh. So you say, then, that you had an experience then having to do with, maybe your eyes being pointed forward at the time of the beep, and then after the beep you had an experience of which that was a part, which is a kind of general kind of feeling of leaning forward. Is that what you're conveying?

[7:00]

Melanie: Yes, that expresses it exactly.

Russ: So the center of the experience of leaning forward is the eye part?

Melanie: Right.

Russ: And then when you elaborate that at the moment of the beep it includes the body part?

Melanie: Yes.

Eric: I don't think in previous beeps you've described an experience of feeling certainty or feeling uncertainty about anything you've said.

Russ: I'm agreeing with that.

Melanie: Yeah.

Eric: So I'm not sure whether this is procedurally fair game or not, [laughs] but is your sense that this is different from your reports about other things that you said in that respect?

[8:00]

Melanie: I think most of the other times that I've... Well, there aren't many other times when I report that I've actually said something. [Beep 1.3 is the only case.]

Russ: Right.

Melanie: Usually it's inner speech or inner hearing.

Eric: Right.

Melanie: And when it's inner speech or inner hearing there isn't certainty or uncertainty, one way or the other. It's just kind of a thought meandering through my head, for lack of a better word. [See Box 9.2 on Melanie's statement here.]

Eric: Well I think you have at least once... didn't you at least at one point have a beep where you said... Now I can't remember what it was.

Russ: There may very well have been. I can't think of any....

Eric: There's no reason that your memory would be very good now either, so [inaudible]. It would be interesting to notice... I don't know whether we'll meet again, or maybe this will even come up in another sample in this session, but it would be interesting to notice see whether that's a feature... a general feature of your experience of talking, that was maybe particularly salient in this case because it was so strong, or whether it's something that is generally absent.

[9:00]

Russ: Melanie has said sort of all along that she has a something like an analytical portion of her, which is watching what she's doing while she's doing it.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And it seems like this is part of that, or similar to that kind of a process to me. and She's nodding to that.

Eric: Huh.

Russ: And When you said, Melanie, that this is "I'm right," is there an affect that goes along with that? Like "I'm right" triumphantly? Or is it "I'm right" declaratively? As a matter of the fact of the world, this happens to be one fact that's right...

[10:00]

Melanie: Yeah, declaratively more than... I don't feel like I won anything and I don't feel superior or anything. It's just a fact. [laughs]

Russ: So this is a stamp of correctness...

Melanie: Right.

Russ: ...more than a stamp of victory.

Melanie: Yeah, it has nothing to do with anything victorious at all.

Russ: Okay. Do you have other questions about this piece, Eric?

[The portion below was excised because of some confusion between Russ and Eric regarding Melanie's purported self-analyticity.]

Eric: Um...I guess I was wondering, I was slightly surprised that you guys both thought of this feeling of conviction as kind of analytical, right. It seems to me like you could, I don't know, maybe there are two ways in which a feeling of conviction, at least two ways maybe, in which a feeling of conviction could go along with something you're saying, right. One is this kind of self-observational way where you kind of notice what you're

saying and then you say “oh, that’s right” to yourself in some sense, right, although not in inner speech maybe, right but there’s a kind of...

[11:00]

Russ: Knowing that that’s right.

Eric: ...knowing what you’re saying, kind of observing the fact that what you’re saying is right in some sense. And then that seems to me that might be a little different from a kind of feeling of conviction which is more like an emotion that maybe comes along with the statement but isn’t a kind of result of reflecting on the statement if you know what I mean.

[12:00]

Russ: And do you see that distinction as being different from the distinction that I was making a second ago about, is this a, I forget what it was that I said, is this a self-observational thing or is this a...I guess, I don’t know what...an affectively loaded thing? So it seems like what you were saying and what I was saying were somehow related if not the same.

Eric: Huh, well yeah probably related but I didn’t mean to be... You said something I think like you know, is it affectively loaded, you know, a triumphant or superior feeling or is it kind of more just a statement.

Russ: Right, and that’s different from yours in what way?

Eric: Um...I guess...hmm...I’m having trouble, I have a sense that there’s some difference but I’m having trouble articulating what...

[13:00]

Russ: So try, maybe, let’ try this. Triumphant: there’s an interpersonalness to it. Whereas yours doesn’t necessarily mean, have an interpersonal implication...

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...that there could be a feeling of conviction...

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...that isn’t “I’m right, ha ha” just “I’m right.”

Eric: Right, yeah...um...yeah...I think that, maybe what you were trying to get at was, was this kind of emotionally cool or was it emotionally hot...

Russ: Right.

Eric: ...and what I was trying to get at was, was this kind of self-observational or was it just kind of something that tags along without your having to be noticing anything about what you're... about yourself.

[14:00]

Russ: So is the distinction there that in the self-observational is it one process is happening and another one is observing it and in the other one process is happening and another process is also happening in parallel?

Eric: Right, and related obviously yeah, but without the kind of...

Russ: Self-analytical...

Eric: ...self-analytical aspect, yeah.

Russ: Okay, have you got a comment?

Melanie: Well, I think, if I'm understanding you right, that I was feeling both. There was emotion in the words that wasn't interpersonal at all, so it was kind of just declarative of knowing that I was right and of conviction. But at the same time there was also this part of me I guess you could say that knew that what I was saying was right.

[15:00]

Eric: Um hm, right, we probably shouldn't get too fancy about what caused what and all that.

Russ: Yeah.

Eric: Yeah, right, I'm struck by, Melanie, in most of your beeps there's more than one thing going on...

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: And I wonder about the timing...

Melanie: Okay.

Eric: ...we talked about this briefly before where you had, it seemed like the beeps happened commonly kind of with the completion of thoughts...

Melanie: Right.

Eric: ...rather than in the middle of a thought...

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: And that might be another kind of timing thing. So one possibility is that the..., When I was doing my own beeping, especially at the beginning, I was totally... I think I was quite bad at this. I was having a lot of trouble with figuring out what precisely was going on at **the exact moment** of the beep, right. So I'm wondering what your feeling is about the preciseness **precision** with which you're locating what's going on immediately before the beep. Or **I'm wondering** whether you're kind of gathering up a bunch of stuff that's in the general time vicinity of the beep and putting it all together as the thing that's going on at the moment of the beep. [See Box 4.13.]

[16:00]

Melanie: Well... I'd certainly like to say that... I certainly tried to be as accurate as possible. I mean, that's probably the only answer I can kind of give with any certainty. But beyond that, I think that there is... if I were just doing that kind of "sum up" process, I could add a lot more to it. 'Cause there is a lot more going on in those seconds right before the beep, I mean because I was looking around the restaurant and I could add in little bits and pieces about that too, or things that caught my eye, or things that I was aware of hearing in the din of the other people there. But I can say with certainty that at the moment of the beep I wasn't hearing the other people in the restaurant; that wasn't in my awareness, although it had been at one time before. [See Box 4.8 for comments on the possibility of a periphery of experience.]

[17:00]

Eric: Um hm.

Melanie: And I wasn't aware of what was on the TV screens around us, even though I had been just a moment before that because it had something to do with what we were talking about. But right in that moment before the beep it, none of that was there, and I know that.

Russ: So is your question, Eric, something like this: "Is it your opinion, as best that you can do it, Melanie, give your opinion (and we recognize there's limitations to this), that it seems that if we could take some kind of recording of your experience and then play back this experience, there would be sort of two things going on simultaneously in this recording?..."

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: "...There would be the speaking, and conviction... the analysis of **or** the conviction?"

[18:00]

Melanie: Yeah. Especially that I think that even if... at whatever **any** time you might try to record of my experiences that you would have that... specific that duality between what I'm doing or what I'm thinking or what I'm saying, and this analytical part of me that's watching what I'm doing or what I'm thinking or what I'm saying. [See Box 9.3 on Melanie's possible attachment to seeing herself as self-analytical.]

Russ: Okay, and those seem like contemporaneous things.

Melanie: Yes, definitely.

Russ: And so when Eric is asking about the gathering up, and Eric you can correct this question if I'm not faithfully replaying it here...

Eric: Um hm.

Russ:...the alternative would be as far as you know you're not... there are a couple of things that might be an eighth of a second apart or two seconds apart, or something like that, and you're coalescing them together and reporting them as if they were simultaneous....

Melanie: No.

Russ: ...as best you can they seem to be...

Melanie: They're contemporaneous.

Russ: ...they seem to thinking... seem to be contemporaneous.

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: Um hm, right. I'm remembering also now something that you had said when we caught a... when we sampled the speech act by you before [Beep 1.3], which was that you... At that time you said that you had the experience – now I'm not going to remember exactly what it was – something like of **your closing** your mouth moving or the feeling of vibrations in your throat or...

[19:00]

Melanie: Oh right. Yes.

Eric: At that time I think you made a generalization that you thought that was fairly typical for you.

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: Would you say in this case there was also that kind of stuff going on?

Melanie: No, not here.

Eric: Do you still accept that generalization though?

Melanie: I would certainly say it happens pretty often.

Eric: Uh huh.

Russ: Let me ask a related question because that's... because I'd like to ask a related question [laughs]. Does the what **thing** we are calling the analytic process, the "I'm right" part, seem like the same kind of a process as the noting the feelings **sensations** in your mouth ...

[20:00]

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ... or does it seem like a different kind of a process?

Melanie: A similar process, if not the same [inaudible].

Russ: So if that's true, then that's **seems like** the answer to your question, it seems like it would be, Eric.

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: When she said, back awhile ago [Beep 1.2], "It seems to me like I do this kind of thing a lot," [she actually said at Beep 1.2, "...often. Quite often."] you and I thought that what she meant by that was she pays attention to the vibrations in her mouth or whatever it was that she was talking about. But what she really meant was a somewhat more broader thing, which would include things like monitoring herself for correctness, or whatever.

Eric: Um hm, right.

Russ: So that would make her generalization correct.

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: And our understanding of it slightly too narrow.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And to rewind back to our conversation just a minute ago, I don't think that we have the ability in this method, or probably any other in the state of the art at the moment, to determine whether things are actually, physiologically concurrent. The best we can do is to be very careful to get our people to tell us whether, as best they can pin it down, that they seem to be concurrent.

[21:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: Whether they actually are one right after another but they happen so fast that you can't tell the difference, we've got no way of knowing that but...

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...so if I you know, sometimes I probably loosely say, "well these events were concurrent," I mean the events in awareness not the events in the physiology of the body.

Eric: Right.

Russ: I actually do think that they can be concurrent in the physiology of the body, I don't think that there's any reason to think that one thing has to happen at a time.

Eric: Right.

Russ: But I don't have any way of really knowing that, so that's just some idle speculation.

Eric: Uh huh. Okay, alright, well I'm ready to move to beep two.
[22:00]

Beep 6.2

[The audio is available at http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience]

Russ: Number two.

Melanie: Okay, um...this came...I told this to Russ already and I'll apologize to you, Eric. The next two beeps caught me when I was playing a video game. I haven't played a video game since I was 12, so...

Eric: You don't have to apologize. I play them too.

Melanie: All right, this was a rare experience, anyway.

Russ: I told her I didn't care whether it was rare or not. It's the nature of randomness that we get some rare things and we get some common things.

Melanie: But I did say it was an intellectual video game, not just one of those zoning out ones. Anyway, **I was playing it with someone**, the beep came right after – I was playing with someone – and I said, "You're crowding me" in a joking manner. And then the beep came right after I finished saying that. And at the moment of the beep I was still smiling from having said that remark in a joking manner, and I felt just happy. I was just very happy.

Russ: And when you say that you were still smiling...
[1:00]

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: ...is that smiling in your awareness?

Melanie: Yes, I knew I was smiling.

Russ: So you were aware of the smiling.

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: And when you say you felt happy, is that also in your awareness at the moment of the beep?

Melanie: Yes, definitely.

Russ: So this is not looking back when the beep goes **off** and saying, “what’s going on with me?”

Melanie: No. I knew that...

Russ: It’s “I’m happy and I know it.” [See Box 9.4 for a comment on this exchange.]

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And how do you feel, what is this happy feeling?

Melanie: Very kind of lightweight inside, you know, just no pressures, nothing to worry about, just feeling good and feeling happy and almost feeling healthy in a way.

Russ: And when you said “lightweight inside,” you went like this, sort of referring to your chest?

Melanie: Yeah, it’s like in your lungs, almost like when you have a balloon in your lungs or something like that. Not when you feel choked up, because you can also use that to express that, but just really lightweight, like there’s no pressure. It’s easy to breathe, it’s easy to think and to talk all at the...

[2:00]

Russ: But sort of mostly in your upper torso, does that **mean**...

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...neck to midsection?

Melanie: Yeah, um hm.

Russ: So in some other places you've said that you have feelings that were in your head [maybe Beeps 1.1 and 5.1, depending on how you interpret them]. This one wasn't so much in your head?

Melanie: No. This felt all over. But at the same time if I had to just give it a place where it was, it started like around, you know, midsection or upper torso.

Russ: And now it sounds like we're maybe confusing what was happening in the physiology and what was happening in the experience. So at the moment of the beep [snaps fingers], are you more aware of your midsection as opposed to other portions of your body?

Melanie: Yeah, yes.

Russ: So you're feeling this lightness from...

Melanie: Upper torso.

Russ: ...upper torso-ness in your awareness.

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And anything else going on in your experience?

Melanie: Just that.

[3:00]

Russ: You're playing the game but you're not really paying attention to the game?

Melanie: Well, we weren't playing. It was kind of... We were switching off taking turns, so there was like a pause, you know, and so I was kidding around to the person I was playing with. And at the moment we didn't have to punch a button or something like that, and so it was just like a little break

Russ: Okay, and are your eyes aimed at the computer screen still?

Melanie: They were down, but I wasn't really paying attention to where they were located.

Russ: And by "down" do you mean at the computer screen? Or...

Melanie: No. It was like an arcade game, so I would say that the screen was kind of straight ahead and the controls were downward, so I was looking toward the controls.

Russ: But they weren't really in your awareness?

Melanie: No.

Russ: Your eyes were aimed at them but you weren't really paying much attention to what your eyes were...

Melanie: ...doing.

Russ: Your witness.

Eric: Were you doing anything physically, like handing the controls over or...

Melanie: No. I was just... I mean I was... I kind of had... In saying "you're crowding me" jokingly, I had kind of jokingly pushed the person aside.

[4:00]

Eric: Um hm.

Melanie: Um, so...

Russ: You meant the real person?

Melanie: Yes, physically. But I was just kind of standing, not really doing anything.

Eric: That pushing was in the past.

Melanie: Yes, that happened before the beep.

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: And is the "you're crowding me" a reference to the physical person or the thing on the screen?

Melanie: Physical person.

Russ: So when you say, "you're crowding me," you mean "your body is in my space" kind of a deal.

Melanie: Yes! Kind of, but again in a joking manner, not serious.

Russ: Right, Okay.

Eric: So I think that we had said that it was at least conceivable at one point that you could have an emotional experience but not have knowledge at the time that you're having the experience, or attentiveness to the experience at the time it's going on.

[5:00]

Melanie: Okay, yeah.

Eric: And you would say this would be a case in which you were having the experience and you were kind of attending to the experience.

Melanie: Yeah. I was happy, and I knew I was happy.

Eric: How about the... So you... And you said you knew you were smiling. Is this a kind of **an** awareness of your facial posture...

Melanie: Yeah.

Eric: ...or it's **is it** kind of like it's...

Melanie: It was more like I could feel the smile.

Eric: ...a certain way **It's an awareness** of having your face in that position kind of awareness or...

Melanie: Yes, I think the latter. I could feel that I was smiling, like feel a little tightness in my cheeks – that whole sort of thing that I go through with smiling.

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: And is that part of the awareness of the lightness in your upper torso? Or does that seem like it's different for you?

[6:00]

Melanie: Similar, again.

Russ: And in the beep that we were just talking about, when you were talking aloud, you were aware of facial, mouthful things, oral things. Is this the same or different from that?

Melanie: It's the same.

Russ: So there's, but that **what** we were talking about as being a sort of an analytical kind of a thing.

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: So the noticing of the smile is part of the analytical, part of the self-aware...

Melanie: Part, yeah.

Russ: ...part. And is the awareness of the body also part of the self-aware part? Or...

Melanie: Um hm, it's like I'm monitoring what's going on at that moment in my body.

Russ: Okay. So it's not just that it's going on in your body and you're noticing it, but you're noticing it in an analytical sense. Is that correct? Kind of self-awareness...

Melanie: Yeah. Almost [laughs wryly] like there's this other little being that's taking notes about what's going on.

[7:00]

Russ: Um hm.

Melanie: That sort of awareness.

Russ: So theoretically, but apparently not for you or at least not very often, it might be possible for a lightness feeling in your body and a smile to take place, and you might know that it would be happening, and you could recognize it and feel it happen, so to speak. But this experience has something on top of that which is...

Melanie: A knowledge of what's going on.

Russ: ...and it's sort of in an analytical or self-monitoring kind of way?

[1:00]

Melanie: Yeah. Um hm.

Russ: Okay. [For Eric's concerns about this exchange see Box 9.5]

Eric: Is there anything, do you think, experientially part of the feeling of happiness besides this kind of bodily feeling of lightweightness in your upper torso?

Melanie: No, that's it.

Eric: I think when we were talking about some other emotions – it's a shame that there have been such long intervals between our interview sessions – it would be easier to remember if they had been closer together. I think you had given a kind of physiological characterization. Maybe it was an anxiety. And then had said something like you didn't think that that exhausted the experience, if I'm recalling correctly.

[8:00]

Melanie: Yeah, I think I remember thinking that, yeah.

Eric: But in this case you think the kind of the bodily description here does exhaust the experience of happiness for you as you were feeling it at that moment.

Melanie: Or as I was aware of feeling at that moment, yeah.

Eric: Uh huh...yeah, that's different in my... kind of in my way of thinking about things, at least. It seems possible to me that the bodily feeling might not exhaust the feeling of happiness you had at the moment, but it might exhaust the feeling of happiness that you were analytically aware of at the moment. Do you want to say that it exhausts both?

[9:00]

Melanie: Yeah, it did.

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: I'm not sure that I totally understand this thread here. Certainly there are other things going on in Melanie's body that she wasn't aware of.

Eric: Right.

Russ: I guess that question assumes that the bodily lightness has some physiological referent, which it may or may not actually have.

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: But there's other things going on in her body, in her left wrist, in her right ankle, in her scalp upper quadrant just below the part and all that kind of stuff that she may or may not be paying attention to but probably are affected by whatever the physiological response that is causing this lightness to be experienced. I don't think we're in a position to deny that the body is a complex thing, and she's only paying attention to a piece of it. I think that's certainly true.

[10:00]

Eric: Right. I was thinking more along the lines of, you know, we were saying... if we're comfortable saying that there's a difference between just feeling an emotion and having an analytic awareness of the emotion that you're feeling, then it seems possible that there would be an intermediate case in which you were feeling the emotion and you had an analytic awareness of part of it but not of all of it, if the emotion is composed of say multiple kinds of things going on at once.

[11:00]

Russ: Yeah. Melanie's reports are different from most people's reports, in my experience of emotions, in that most people don't say what Melanie is saying, that there is some kind of a self-analytical "skin" on the awareness, or "sheath" or "piece" or whatever.

Eric: Right.

Russ: Most people who are reporting emotional experiences report the emotional experiences as if they're aware of it in their body, that something is going on in their body and they feel it, and that's it.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And Melanie is saying that and there seems to be some self- (I don't want to say self-criticalness), but some self-conceptualization that goes beyond just the experience. [12:00]

Eric: Um hm, right. I may be trying to put too fine a point on it by asking the question that I did. That probably is the case, actually.

Russ: Yeah. Melanie may be somewhat unusual. This may be one of the features of Melanie's experience that makes Melanie's particular idiographic way of being Melanie different from Mary's particular idiographic way of being Mary and Jill's way of being Jill. So I don't know that we should want to go too far beyond the acknowledgement that Melanie may not be exactly the same as a lot of other people in this regard.

Eric: Right. Alright, well, I'm ready to go on to number 3. [13:00]

Russ: Me too. Number 3.

Beep 6.3

[The audio is available at http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience]

Melanie: Okay, still playing this game [laughs]. At the moment of the beep I was just... I was standing in front of this arcade machine with my arms crossed, concentrating on what was on the screen. And I was very... I was aware of the fact that I was concentrating, and in particular was attuned... was noticing that my brow was furrowed, that I was worrying my lower lip, and that I had my arms crossed.

Russ: Aware of concentrating, aware of brows furrowed, furled?

Melanie: Furrowed.

Russ: Furrowed, and worrying lower lip. So you're looking at the screen...

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: ...and it's a fact of the universe that your arms are crossed...

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: ..that any external observer could have seen that.

[1:00]

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: Are you aware of the crossed-ness of your arms?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: So it's not just that they're crossed, but that you know that they're crossed?

Melanie: That I know that they're crossed. I mean, I'm also aware of the way my feet are placed, and the way I'm standing. It was a very... it was much ... it was a physical moment and it wasn't. It was physical in that I could tell you the exact way I was standing and what my face looked like, but it was also mental in that I knew exactly how I was standing and what was going on.

Russ: Okay. And you're saying, as I understand it, that this awareness was present at the moment of the beep before the beep disturbed you.

Melanie: Yes. Um hm.

Russ: So that if we could have this tape recording of Melanie's experience, and the beep was going to come somewhere one microsecond before that, she would have been aware...

Melanie: Yes. It would be like this kind of inner camera watching what I'm doing and taking stock of what I'm doing.

Russ: Okay. And the "taking stock"-ness means that you're noting that your arms are crossed...

[2:00]

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ:...and your feet are this way and that...

Melanie: That my brows are furrowed...

Russ: ...that your brow is furrowed and that you're...

Melanie: ...worrying my lower lip.

Russ: ...chewing on your lip. And are you aware of that stuff all sort of in the same way?

Melanie: Um hm. The same...

Russ: That is, these are the bodily features of Melanie at the moment, and I'm paying attention to them.

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: Okay, and at the same time you're concentrating on the screen?

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: And what's happening on the screen?

Melanie: I couldn't tell you.

Russ: And so then when you say that you're concentrating on the screen, is that sort of like a general way of saying? But the fact of the matter is that you weren't so much concentrating on the screen as paying attention to Melanie's body?

Melanie: It was kind of split. I was concentrating on what I was looking at, but I was also very much concentrating on what was going on inside me.

Russ: And by "also" do you mean equal? Or more? Or less?

[3:00]

Melanie: I would say probably more.

Russ: More in the body?

Melanie: And I think that now when it comes to talking about it, I'm remembering a lot more about what was going on in my body than what was on the screen. But at the moment of the beep I was looking at the screen and I was paying attention to what was on it.

Russ: And so you were processing what was going on on the screen.

Melanie: Right. But if you ask me now, I couldn't tell you what was on the screen.

Russ: Okay. And as best you can reconstruct now, was this contents of the screen in your awareness at the moment of the beep? Because it's quite possible to be focused, to have your eyes aimed at the screen, and to be...

Melanie: And not really see it.

Russ: ...to be processing it in the same way that we can drive and talk and whatever...

Melanie: Right.

Russ: ...and not really be concentrating on the driving.

Melanie: It was, but let's say it was only some 20% of my awareness. So it wasn't the bulk of it by any means.

Russ: So the... most of your awareness is on this bodily...

Melanie: Yeah, feeling of concentration.

Russ: Okay.

Eric: So you're saying that it's different from the case where you're driving and somehow responding to the road, but not paying any attention in some sense.

[4:00]

Melanie: Yeah, it's different than that.

Russ: So is this... is it fair to say that these bodily aspects, your arms crossed, your feet planted, and your brow furrowed, this is all "concentration"?

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: And so you're aware of Melanie's concentrating?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And are you... So there is this concept of the concentration. And is the concept of concentration in your awareness at the moment of the beep? Like, "I'm watching Melanie concentrate!" Or is it that I'm watching Melanie's brow and I'm watching her lip and I'm watching her foot and I'm watching her arms, and now in communicating about it I can say, "Well Melanie was concentrating."

[5:00]

Melanie: No, I knew at the time that it was concentration.

Russ: So you were observing the manifestations of concentration...

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: ...which occurred in her, which is obviously your, arms and whatever.

Melanie: Right.

Russ: And is the word "concentration" present? Or is this just the knowledge of concentration?

Melanie: Just the knowledge of the feeling of it.

Russ: Okay. And this sounds – and this is a question – something like the self-analytical stuff that we've been talking about in previous beeps.

Melanie: The self-monitoring.

Russ: Where it's... But it's perhaps more central here than it was in the previous beeps.

Melanie: Yeah, um hm.

Russ: So the self-monitoring can be sometimes more and sometimes less, and this is a case where it's more.

Melanie: Yeah.

[6:00]

Russ: And is there anything else going on at this moment?

Melanie: That's it.

Russ: [to Eric] Your turn.

Eric: When you said there was a feeling of concentration, is that something over and above the bodily knowledge that your brow is furrowed and you're worrying your lower lip and your arms are crossed?

Melanie: Yes.

Eric: Can you say anything more about that feeling?

Melanie: No, the bodily manifestations of it are so intertwined with it almost to the point of being inseparable. If you ask me...

Eric: But you still have a sense that the feeling is something more than just those manifestations?

Melanie: Yeah, because I could be standing in the same position with my arms crossed, my brow furrowed, and worrying my lower lip, but not be concentrating.

Eric: Uh huh.

Melanie: But I was concentrating and I knew it.

[7:00]

Eric: So how would you compare this with the feeling of happiness in the previous beep? Where you felt that... Although it wasn't anything as postural as what you're describing now, you were happy to say that, the... in some sense, the physical feeling of yourself exhausted the happiness.

Melanie: Oh no, that's not what I meant for the last one. I think I misunderstood you.

Eric: Well maybe, I may have expressed myself poorly.

Russ: Let me... Let me see whether this is... whether I can say what it is that I understood you to say. Is it the case that the brow, and the arms, and the foot and the lip is to concentration in the same way as the lightness in the body is to happiness?

Melanie: Yes.

[8:00]

Russ: That is to say, happiness is comprised of the lightness and maybe some other things, but the lightness is the most important part. And conviction is comprised of the brow and the lip and perhaps some other things...

Melanie: Right, but I could have that same posturing, and have that same feeling of lightness, and not be concentrating, or not be happy, or not be.

Russ: Right. So in both cases there's more to it than that.

Melanie: Yes. Definitely.

Eric: Okay. So I was misunderstanding the happiness case. See, I had thought that you had said something like that the bodily description exhausts the feeling of happiness...actually that's not...

Melanie: What I think I thought you were asking was, was there anything more to the feeling than what I was feeling, and all I could say, there, was that that's what I was feeling. That's what I meant to convey when I answered that question.

[9:00]

Eric: I see, huh...Okay.

Russ: And I was going to ask the same question that Eric just asked. He asked it about the happiness. I was going to ask it about the feeling of conviction that you are right...

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: Is the feeling... Is the being right in that response somehow the same as the being whatever we're talking about here...

Melanie: Concentrating.

Russ: ...concentrating here? I'm watching myself concentrate; I'm watching myself be right?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: Okay.

Eric: So these in some ways are very similar samples, where you've got in each case some kind of feeling that you have a kind of analytical awareness at the time immediately before the beep. And that feeling is partly experienced bodily but the bodily experience doesn't exhaust what the feeling is. Is that fair to say of all three of them?

[10:00]

Melanie: Yes. Definitely.

Russ: More on this one? Or should we go on to another non-game one?

Eric: Alright, maybe why don't we do one more?

Beep 6.4

[The audio is available at http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience]

Russ: Okay, number 4.

Melanie: Alright. I was at home and had... We had some flowers on our kitchen table, and I had taken them to the sink in the kitchen to throw them out because they had gone by **dry**. And at the... Right before the beep I had taken the bulk of the flowers out of the vase and tossed them in the trash. Then right before the beep, I was leaning over the sink and picking up the remaining petals and collecting them in my hand to throw them in the trash. I was thinking that those flowers **had** lasted for a nice long time. It was just kind of an idle thought that was inner speech.

Russ: As in those quote, "Those flowers lasted for a nice long time," unquote?

Melanie: Quote, "They lasted for a nice long time."

Russ: Okay.

Melanie: And at the moment of the beep my awareness was split between being focused on picking up the petals and on hearing the echoes of "nice long time" in my head. [See Box 9.6 on Melanie's care here.]

[1:00]

Russ: So you had said in inner speech, “they lasted for a nice long time,” just prior to the beep?

Melanie: Um hm, not at the beep but just prior to it.

Russ: But in some way the “nice long time” portion is still there. Is that right?

Melanie: Yeah, it was. The best I can liken it to is like an echo.

Russ: And is this a hearing experience? You called that a hearing experience; do you mean that to be taken literally? Or...

Melanie: It was. The “nice long time” bit was. The “it lasted for a nice long time,” quote unquote, was inner speech, but this was much more like inner hearing.

Russ: Okay. And when you said it in inner speech, was that in your own voice?
[2:00]

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And when you’re hearing “nice long time,” is that still hearing your own voice?

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: And does... do all of these things sound the same? Because there’s your real voice, and then there’s the innerly spoken voice, and then there’s the heard voice, are they...?

Melanie: No, they sound the same. [Compare Beep 1.1, Box 4.2.]

Russ: Okay. And “echo.” I want to understand what you mean by “echo.” An echo gets softer and softer; did you mean to imply that? An echo sometimes is repeated and sometimes once but...

Melanie: No, it didn’t get softer and softer, it’s almost like [quizzically] it got blurrier and blurrier. Not in terms of visual blurry, but a sound blurry [again quizzically], where it just started overlapping itself until it just came to this jumble in which you can’t make any noise out. It sounds really weird but...
[3:00]

Russ: So is what your saying is that you said in inner speech something that was quite clear...

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: ... “It lasted for a nice long time.” And then there’s “nice long time,” “nice long time” overlapped with “nice long time”...

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: ...then “nice long time” overlapped with “nice long time” overlapped with “nice long time”...

Melanie: And it keeps going...

Russ: ...until there’s sort of several of these things going?

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: Okay. And is it possible to say how many of these things?

Melanie: No...

Russ: And is it possible...

Melanie: I think at the moment of the beep it had only been a couple.

Russ: So the part about overlapping a long time would be sort of speculating about what would have happened if this had gone on undisturbed?

Melanie: Um hm.

Russ: That there would have been more of these things included?

Melanie: Yeah, because it started to overlap, and then overlap a little more. Not a couple, so there were about three or four that echoed in there.

Russ: Okay. And at the same time as these overlapping inner hearings are taking place, you’re seeing petals...

[4:00]

Melanie: Yeah, and picking them up, and so focused in the way **motions** of, there’s a flower petal, reach my hand down, pick it up, and put it in my other hand.

Russ: Okay. Do you mean that in a cognitive sense? Or in a somehow thinking **that** I should pick up this petal?

Melanie: No.

Russ: So it’s a...

Melanie: It’s just what I’m doing.

Russ: ...it's your arms are going and petals are coming up...that kind of thing...

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: And that kind of thing could happen in awareness, and it could happen outside of awareness.

Melanie: It's in awareness.

Russ: So you're directedly, consciously, so to speak, in awareness...

Melanie: Yeah, oh there's another one. Yeah.

Russ: ...but you're not saying, "Oh there's another one"?

Melanie: No.

Russ: You're examining the sink...

Melanie: Right, and then just going and picking up all of the ones there, collect them all out of the sink and throw them away. [See Box 9.7 for more we might have asked about here.]

Russ: Okay, and you said **your awareness was "split."** Did you mean to imply evenly split, partially split, 80-20, 99 90-10...
[5:00]

Melanie: It felt pretty evenly.

Russ: Your turn Eric.

Eric: So, the echoes that you're hearing of your inner speech. Now at first I was inclined to take the idea of an echo pretty metaphorically...

Melanie: Um hm.

Eric: ... like there may be some pretty vague sense in which a thought can still be with you even after you've kind of finished saying it in inner speech.

Melanie: Right.

Eric: But you don't mean that. You mean something much more like an echo, where there's actually a repetition...

Melanie: Yes.

Eric: ...of an auditory thing that's going over and over again.

Melanie: Yes.

Russ: In sort of the same way as if we all decided in a minute here, let's to say, what is it that we're saying here, "nice long time" let's all say it at the same time. You would start at one time, and I would start at a little bit of a time later, and Eric would start at a little bit of a time later than that, and we'd all say "nice long time." That's what it sounded like?

[6:00]

Melanie: Yeah.

Russ: Except that it would be all your voice.

Melanie: Right.

Eric: Right. So it probably takes about a second to say "nice long time." Was... So if you're talking about having the echoing repeating, you're talking about something that's happening over the course of several seconds? Or is it somehow... I remember your saying at some point earlier on with the that in your inner speech that things were are speeded up. [Beep 1.1; see Boxes 4.4 and 4.5]

Melanie: Yeah. It felt instantaneous. Or not instantaneous but incredibly, you know, microseconds apart. I mean in a very, very short span of time, so it all felt like it was happening all at once.

Russ: And does that mean that it felt like that the speech was speeded up? Or did it just feel like that the whole experience happened at the same time?

[7:00]

Melanie: It felt like... No, it didn't seem like it was faster than normal speaking. It just felt like it was all happening at once.

Russ: And so is what your saying, basically, a physical impossibility here, because Eric is right, these things take a second or so, that some overlapping has got to take a couple of seconds, if it was going to happen in reality. But it's not happening in reality...

Melanie: No.

Russ: ...it's happening in your imagination so this seems like it happens...

Melanie: Very fast.

Russ: ...more or less instantaneously, even though in reality...

Melanie: It couldn't...

Russ: ...if we were going to do it, it would take a couple seconds.

Melanie: Right.

Russ: Okay. I don't know how she could do that either [all laugh] but that doesn't mean that she can't.

Eric: Right. It seems to me like it can't literally seem both that the voices are... it's repeating multiple times and that all... that it's an instantaneous. It seems like the seeming of repetition must involve at least some little time gap between the starts of the various...

[8:00]

Melanie: It did. I didn't mean instantaneous, it... but it felt like mere microseconds apart...

Eric: Uh huh.

Melanie: ...very fast.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And I disagree with the implication of your statement.

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: And I don't think that that's an impossibility...

Eric: Uh huh.

Russ: Mozart, for example, said – and I've never sampled with him unfortunately, which would have been a pretty cool thing to do [all laugh] – but what he said was that he heard a whole symphony at the same time. [See Box 9.8 for an elaboration of the Mozart reference.]

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: And you would be saying, well that's impossible because these things are temporal and there's there are entrances and exits and whatever...

[9:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...how could you hear those things at the same time? Somehow he could do it. And I, you know... It would be interesting to know whether that was really true – I don't know whether it was or not. I'm not trying to argue that it was true. But it seems like we have to suspend the laws of physics if we're going to understand what experience is like.

Eric: Right. Yeah, but this would be... this is not... But it doesn't seem to me like this is just the laws of physics. It seems to me like... I mean, you know, maybe it is conceivable. Maybe I'm being narrow-minded – the Mozart thing **story** has a kind of a nice ring to it. But it does seem to me like if you're imagining a symphony, you have to imagine one note ending and another one beginning after it's ended.

Russ: And I can certainly follow the logic, but I don't think it's necessarily true.

Eric: I don't think it's a matter of physics. If it's true, it's a matter of what a symphony is.

[10:00]

Russ: Not to Mozart.

Eric: If all the notes come at the same time, it's not a symphony, even in imagination.

Russ: Right, but not to Mozart, apparently.

Eric: Could be! [laughs]

Russ: And you'd think he would know!

Eric: Maybe I'm being too narrow about this, but the thought I was having was that it's a violation of the laws of physics to go floating off the floor, but there's nothing that... you can certainly imagine that coherently.

Russ: Right.

Eric: But I'm not sure you can coherently imagine an instantaneous symphony in the same way.

Russ: Well, I've got the advantage probably of having sampled with a bunch of other people. But it's... Time is a screwy thing in the sense that what seems like it violates the laws of temporal sequence, like we've got going here, that's a pretty good example of that, that it's not at all uncommon for people to report that **things that seem to violate the laws of temporal sequence. The example we've got going here is a pretty good example.**

Eric: Um hm.

Russ: And I've, you know, I've asked as many skeptical questions as you've asked over many years of doing this kind of stuff, to try to say, "Well, you know, it can't possibly

be!” And people like Melanie stick pretty much to their guns and say, “Well, you know, maybe it can’t be. But that’s the way it seemed. It seemed like there was a long thing happening but it didn’t seem like it took a long time to do it.”

[11:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: And so the laws of experience are somehow different from the laws of physics. And I think, **But**, you know, if we think of a skilled moviemaker can capture an event that takes a long time to actually occur, can capture that in some kind of implied kind of a way or whatever. If a moviemaker can do that in the really restricted medium of a movie, Melanie ought to be able to do it better in her own experience.

Eric: Yeah, well maybe so.

Russ: Well, I’m... Here again, I’m not saying what it is that she did and what it is that she didn’t. But it’s part of the what I would take as loosely called the epoche’ or whatever I call “bracketing,” that it’s not fair to criticize... it’s not fair to discount her experience on the basis of what must happen in reality, because her experience is not reality.

[12:00]

Eric: Yeah. Well, I guess I’m still... I mean... Well, you know, for some reason I can find more sympathy with the idea that something could go quickly and not seem speeded **ped up** – you know, go much more quickly than it would in reality. So when Melanie says that it took [inaudible] over a certain space of time, that... or when she said before that her inner speech was you know... happened quickly, more quickly than normal speech, but it didn’t seem that she was talking fast or something like that, you know [Beep 1.1], that doesn’t bother me as much as what seems to me as saying that it was **the echoes were instantaneous** does, which Melanie actually denied **denies** in this case.

[13:00]

Russ: Yeah. It seems to me that if we took a regular piece of audio tape and played it back at double speed, it would of course be twice as high **in pitch** and take half as long. And if we did this kind of thing often enough, we could probably become quite skilled at hearing the original speaker as if the original speaker were actually speaking **in his normal voice**, even though the overtones are twice as high, right?

Eric: Right.

Russ: So if you had my voice at it’s normal timbre and you speeded it up, you could, I think, if you practiced at it long enough, hear my voice more or less the way it was. And it would seem to you as if I were speaking at my normal speed and my normal pitch, even though **in actuality it’s going faster and higher higher and faster**.

Eric: Yeah, yeah...that could well be true.

Russ: And so I think, I think Melanie can develop a shorthand that goes **does** even better than that about her own voice.

[14:00]

Eric: Right. So maybe I'm being too literal about this.

Russ: Yeah, I think maybe. What Melanie is saying I think is, is it seems like an echo, it seems like these things overlap, it seems like it's my voice going at its own speed, I recognize that in reality it would take longer, but it also seems like it happened sort of at the same time.

Eric: Right. Now.... now I remember... see, I think I'm much more inclined than you are...

Russ: Much more which? Oh.

Eric: ...to see people as similar...[laughs]

Russ: Yeah.

Eric: ...in their basic experiences [see Box 7.4]. So for me it seems to be that the default is what my own opinions about my own experiences are. [See Box 9.9 on the appropriateness of such a default supposition.] **about which** I am, of course, as I acknowledge and would even argue, kind of ill informed and erroneous **mistaken** probably in many respects **about my experiences**. But **this the following** seems to me like a possibility. I had a sense from some of my samples of having a thought that was expressed somehow in inner speech **somehow** continue **continuing** to linger with me for some short period of time after that inner speech was completed, and it's hard to characterize exactly what that **experience** is.

[15:00]

Russ: Right.

Eric: So it would seem to me possible that someone attempting to characterize that would think of the metaphor of an echo, which is kind of a nice metaphor. But then **maybe she might** buy into it **the metaphor** too much and start to attribute to her experiences **you know** the literal features of an echo, imputing them backwards and erroneously into the experience. Like I think people in the **50s 1950s** attributed... erroneously attributed to their dreams black-and-whiteness because it seemed natural to compare dreams to movies. [See Schwitzgebel 2002b for an extended discussion of this issue; also Box 5.2.]

[16:00]

Russ: Right.

Eric: Right, so I guess I have a suspicion that that would be what was going on in this case.

Russ: Yeah, and I think your... it's okay to have that suspicion and that you ought to inquire about it as carefully as you can, but not just assume it.

Eric: Right.

Russ: And as part of our conversations here I have come to the notion that there's a fundamentally important deal about the difference between thinking that everybody's the same and thinking that everybody might not be the same. I don't know that I can articulate that any more clearly than that at the moment, but I think it's a big deal to think that people are the same by comparison to people are different.

Eric: Yeah, yeah, I think that is a big deal, alright. People give very different reports of experience, and I guess I have just a general bias toward the default proposition **presupposition** being **that** people are the same. You would have something to overcome, some burden of proof before you could say, "Wow! You know, they **people** really are as different as they say they say they are **seem from these reports!**"
[17:00]

Russ: Yeah.

Eric: But you know that's perhaps just a bias on my part.

Russ: People are very different! [laughs]

Eric: [laughs] Yeah. I know you don't share that bias.

Russ: No. I mean what I should say is that people's reports are very different.

Eric: Right.

Russ: People and samples...**But** let's put it this way. People, when I sample with people, people say things that would never in a million years occur to me to say.

Eric: [laughs] Right. See, I guess my overall inclination is to think that experience is elusive and gone in a second, right. So it's hard to remember. And in addition, it's hard to articulate. We don't have **good** words for talking about it. We don't usually think about it or talk about it. It's kind of hard to articulate **describe**, hard to conceive, hard to categorize the things that are going on in experience. So we reach for different ways of talking **speaking** about it, different kinds of metaphors, and that makes it seem... because people reach in different ways and reconstruct in different ways and kind of fit into **employ** different categories **to deal with their experience**, it makes it seem as though the **can give the impression that people's** experiences are very different, where they may be actually **be** pretty similar.

[18:00]

Russ: Yeah, yeah... I can appreciate that. But I've tried to be as absolutely, scrupulously careful as I can to distinguish between what's metaphorical and what's not...

[19:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...and to give people the out of saying, "Well I don't really know."

Eric: Right, yeah...and that's good.

Russ: And yet, and when I do that, people come out to be a lot different. [See Box 9.10 for a response to this point. See Box 9.11 for a discussion of "first-person" science.]

Eric: I'm not sure people know as well as they think they do when they're being metaphorical. Right, like... So, with the case of... I know this isn't reporting immediately past experience, but I'm you know struck by the case of thinking dreams are black and white.

Russ: Yeah.

Eric: People didn't think they were metaphorically comparing dreams to movies. It was just natural for them to compare these things, this kind of an experience that's very difficult to remember and to describe, to a movie and so came into their conception of it in a way that they didn't recognize.

Russ: Right, but from my point of view, that's applying... to apply that skepticism to Melanie's reports is to hone a skepticism on a badly crafted method, then aim it at a well crafted method, and then say, "Well, the well-crafted method can't be any better than that." And I don't think that's fair. I think we can... Let's criticize this method if we want, but let's not criticize it based on a bad experience of it.

[20:00]

Eric: Right. No I'm not saying in principle that because people made these kinds inferences about their dreams that this method couldn't work. I'm just trying to articulate something that I'm skeptical about and say how I think it's possible, right. So this is not a reason for thinking that what Melanie said is wrong. What it is, so much, is a way of describing how it's possible that she could be wrong and what the mechanism could be, right, given that I have a kind of preexisting inclination to think that she could be wrong.

[21:00]

Russ: Right. And I think... I think you and I have a very strongly overlapping skepticism. I think we would agree on what we're skeptical of 95% of the time. I think. Where we might disagree is when it comes to this method. I've become convinced that people can

be pretty non-metaphorical if you give them the opportunity to do it. You're not yet totally convinced.

Eric: Right.

Russ: We would both be absolutely identically skeptical I think about most retrospective accounts.

Eric: Right.

Russ: But I would carve out a pretty clear exception for reports about moments where the moments and the conversations about the moments are done according to what I think are the rules of set asiding... setting aside preconceptions.

[22:00]

Eric: Right. I guess I'm inclined to think that they're hard to set aside.

Russ: I agree they're hard.

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: So what samples have we had today...let's see. The first sample, Melanie is feeling that that's wrong... thinking that she's right, actually. So I believed her when she said that at the moment of the beep she was feeling that that's right. It's hard for me... You know we were pretty careful in distinguishing between the skeptical alternatives of, "Well I wasn't really feeling that but that's...I would have to say something in order to have a conversation about the beep."

[23:00]

Eric: Right.

Russ: We've trained her up pretty well over the six times that we've met with her and...

Eric: Yeah...I'm... I'd say I have no more skepticism about that than I do about any of the samples, which is to say that there is still some residual concern about any kind of report of this sort. But that I think it's more likely than not that, in the broadest sketch, the kind of most basic things about that report are correct. So, yeah, I didn't have a problem with that especially I guess.

[24:00]

Russ: Well, are we ready to be done talking about beep number 4?

Eric: I think so.

Discussion between Russ, Eric, and Melanie after the last beep

[The audio is available at http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience]

Russ: Because it seems to me that we've probably sampled with Melanie enough.

Eric: Yeah.

Russ: I think the conversations about Melanie are interesting, and they would continue to be interesting if we continued to sample with her. But I'm also thinking that what we have is something that's worthwhile to somehow externalize to the rest of the world, and we've got to draw the line somewhere and get on with the... get on with that other portion. Otherwise we'd still be here in another year and...

Eric: Right.

Russ: ...so I'm thinking that we ought to say thanks to Melanie...

Eric: Yes, that's my feeling also.

Russ: ...and then we ought to talk about what we're going to do with all of this stuff.

Eric: Right. Okay, well yes. Why don't we say thanks to Melanie and then once she's gone we can talk more generally about the project.

[1:00]

Russ: Okay.

Eric: Thanks Melanie! It was actually wonderful. You've been a very good sport about, especially my skepticism about your reports [laughs, as does Melanie] and very good at trying to tangle with some of the probably too sharp distinctions that I'm inclined to draw between things. So, I appreciate that. You've been a very good subject in that way.

Melanie: Thank you. It's been really interesting to hear both sides of the debate and see where it's going.

Russ: And I'm expressing my appreciation too and I'll probably call you and tell you what it is that we decide to do about this. But...and it may also be that we would want to call you and get you back into this conversation somewhere down the road. We haven't yet figured out what it is that we're going to do.

Melanie: Okay.

Russ: But...so I also appreciate your candor and your willingness to...what's the word here...indulge our questions. So let Eric and me continue this conversation and I'll give you a call and...

[2:00]

Melanie: Fine.

Russ: ...we'll see what's happening from there.

Melanie: Sounds good.

Eric: Alright, bye.

Melanie: Bye.

Russ: Let me turn off my electrons here.... [To Melanie] I'll get back to you at some point.

Melanie: Yeah, whenever and then whenever you want to get together or...