She finishes the chapter by considering three cases that might be considered as forms of caring for the self that might be ethically and politically admirable: bodily modification, British shipyard workers who practiced ballet, and yoga. She describes and evaluates each of these somewhat briefly, and she indicates that this topic is where her future work will be.

The theoretical position set out by Heyes is promising in its overall form, but her argument lacks enough detail to be convincing. In her short book, she covers philosophical methodology, sociology, cultural studies, feminist theory, medical ethics, and ethical theory. Her first main chapter uses Wittgenstein and Foucault to set out a way of thinking about the body in contemporary society, but really Heyes does no more than gesture at a theoretical position rather than develop a sustained argument.

While the earlier theoretical sections give some indication of how one might ground her approach, they don't help much in explaining her later suggestions. Heyes is stronger in her discussion of mutual relevance of theory and personal experience or popular culture. Her positive suggestions about how we might understand an ethical approach to the care of the self are tentative and vague. I wish she had been bolder in her claims and had spent more time developing the ideas hinted at in her final chapter, especially those concerning yoga. Just when this book starts to get interesting, it finishes, and the reader is left wondering whether Heyes' project for conceptualizing a progressive way to care for the self is indeed viable.

**Christian Perring**
Dowling College

**Russell T. Hurlburt** and **Eric Schwitzgebel**
*Describing Inner Experience?*
*Proponent Meets Skeptic.*
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2007.
Pp. 326.
US$34.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-08366-9).

In this book an experimental psychologist (Hurlburt) and a philosopher (Schwitzgebel) with somewhat opposed perspectives collaborate in an attempt to determine to what extent the contents of experience can be accurately described through introspective first-person reports. Although skeptical about introspection in general, Hurlburt optimistically presents and defends the use of his Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) method to obtain an accurate understanding of a subject's conscious experiences. Schwitzgebel, on

the other hand, persists with a largely skeptical perspective on introspection throughout the book, expressing considerable doubt that DES is a significant improvement in the study of consciousness. Although neither Hurlburt nor Schwitzgebel strays too far from the positions they have defended elsewhere, the juxtaposition of their views in this book successfully produces a unique and interesting exploration of introspection and its key role in the investigation of consciousness. The material is presented in a manner that will be accessible and informative to readers lacking a background in the issues at hand, but the book also operates at a level of depth and specificity of interest to those who are already steeped in the literature on introspection, consciousness, and the epistemology of first-person reports.

The format of the book is itself quite unique and deserves some attention here. Its core consists of a series of interviews that loosely follow Hurlburt's DES method, with a subject named Melanie, coupled with the participation of Schwitzgebel as a skeptical outsider. In the DES method, the subject carries around a beeper that randomly prompts her to write down a description of whatever experience she was having in the last undisrupted moment directly prior to the beep. Within twenty-four hours after a series of six to eight such samples has been taken, the subject is interviewed with the goal of reconstructing her reported experiences as carefully and accurately as possible. The book revolves around six such interviews with Melanie. However, unlike normal DES interview sessions, these interviews contain significant amounts of critical and theoretical discussion between Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel about the nature and trustworthiness of Melanie's reports, as well as some meta-analysis of the interview questions that prompted the reports. A number of interesting topics are covered along the way, both within the interview discussions themselves and in supplementary text boxes dispersed throughout containing informative commentary from both Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel. Topics covered include inner speech, thoughts, emotions, bodily experiences, visual and auditory imagery, the presence and/or lack of self-awareness accompanying experience, the richness of experience, similarities and differences in experience across human subjects, the influence of presuppositions and metaphorical conceptualizations, and, most centrally, the trustworthiness of introspective reports, ranging from reports of particular details to broad generalizations about experience. In addition to the interviews and commentaries, which comprise roughly half of the book, there are substantial opening and closing essays by Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, in which they explain and argumentatively defend their positions and further reflect upon the issues that emerged in the interviews. The result is a thorough dual-perspective analysis of introspective descriptions of experience, uniquely rooted in the concrete reports of a particular individual.

A key focal point throughout this book is a fundamental disagreement about the trustworthiness of introspective reports, particularly those generated by DES. Hurlburt's position is that Melanie generates increasingly accurate reports as she becomes accustomed to the process and his careful 'open-beginninged' questioning. He concludes confidently that the interviews

provided significant insight into Melanie's particular way of experiencing the world. This includes, among other things, the purported discovery of an unusual tendency towards active self-monitoring of her ongoing experience. In contrast, Schwitzgebel defends a perspective he labels 'Descartes Inverted', skeptically arguing that introspective reports face a potentially insurmountable propensity towards error not found in our understanding of the external world. Although he does grant tentative (but still untrusting) acceptance of some of Melanie's basic claims about her experience, Schwitzgebel concludes that DES does little to overcome his skepticism, largely due to a lack of external corroboration to validate its findings. For instance, in regard to the tendency towards self-monitoring described above, Schwitzgebel expresses doubt that Melanie is unusual in this regard and suggests that this conception could be an artifact of the interview process itself. Without any external measures to back up the claim, there is little reason to trust that it is a genuine feature of Melanie's experience. The implication of this skepticism is that the study of consciousness is left between a rock and a hard place: it has no choice but to rely upon introspective reports, but these reports offer little to no epistemic security as things currently stand.

This book leaves us with no final agreement on the epistemic status of introspection, but this is a quite appropriate conclusion considering the fundamental lack of consensus on the topic among both philosophers and psychologists. In fact, we might wonder whether we should be seeking a unified consensus in the first place. What is introspection, after all? Is it a single sort of cognitive process that can be given a one-dimensional epistemic characterization, or is it a heterogeneous collection of different processes with an irreducible plurality of epistemic traits? Unfortunately, neither Hurlburt nor Schwitzgebel directly confronts this issue. Of course, to be fair, the primary focus of the book is the epistemology, not the metaphysics, of introspection. But these two domains are arguably so intertwined that the former cannot be addressed without at least some attention to the latter. For instance, in the course of reading this book I found myself wondering what processes were at work in generating Melanie's reports. Was she drawing upon the same general cognitive resources throughout, or were different resources involved in different reports (or even within the same report)? Answers to such questions are not readily forthcoming, and are perhaps even inaccessible from a first-person level of description, but an adequate understanding of the epistemology of introspection arguably depends upon them. Despite their inattention to these concerns, however, Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel's book is a worthwhile addition to the literature on introspection and offers much of value to think about. It admirably addresses the topic of introspection at a rare level of concrete specificity, and it charts some initial steps through genuinely interdisciplinary debate towards a nuanced understanding of introspection and its crucial but currently tenuous role in the study of the mind.

**Jesse W. Butler**
University of Central Arkansas