

Nine Clarifications of Descriptive Experience Sampling

Russell T. Hurlburt

The commentaries in this symposium reveal nine misconceptions about Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) that the present paper attempts to clear up: about pristine experience, about the iterative nature of DES, about the term of DES retrospection, about the accuracy of DES, about the diachronic abilities of DES, about the inability of DES to target specific questions, about the worry that DES stifles careful observation, about the difficulty/expense of DES, and about the transformative power of DES to trump a lifetime of observations.

Pristine Experience

By *pristine experience* I mean experience as it naturally occurs in usual, everyday environments, *not* altered or colored or shaped by the specific intention to apprehend it (Hurlburt & Akhter, 2008). I use *pristine* in the same sense as we would say a forest is pristine—before the loggers clear-cut, before the Park Service installs the walkways and the signage, before the visitors leave their plastic bags and bottles. Pristine does not necessarily mean “clean” or “tranquil”; much of a pristine forest is mucky, bloody, brutal, and so on.

People alter their behavior when they discover they are being observed—watch people at the moment they realize that they’re on TV and you’ll see their behavior change dramatically. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that people’s *inner* experience when they know their *inner experience* is being observed (that is, when they premeditatedly engage in introspection) will differ from their pristine (not premeditatedly observed) experience.

It seems that pristine experience ought to be a central interest of a science of experience. We should, for example, be at least as interested in people’s visual experience as it usually is in its everydayness as in their visual experience in those unusual instances of premeditatedly specified concurrent introspection. And contra Wundt, and apparently **Charles Siewert**¹, the two might not be at all the same (see the GLOBALIZATION IS GOOD example in **Methodological Pluralism**). For example, as discussed in **Little or No, Siewert** may be misled into thinking that there is a constant, rich stream of visual experience *in his pristine experience* because there is a constant rich stream of visual experience *whenever he premeditatedly looks for it* – a version of what Eric and others have called the “refrigerator light illusion.” There may well be some

¹ “H&S” refers to Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel (2007), the target book of this symposium. Items in bold face refer to contributions appearing in this symposium: bold face names identify authored contributions; bold face titles refer to contributions written by Russ and or Eric.

similarity (or even identity) between some aspects of pristine experience and introspected experience, but such similarity/identity should not be assumed.

Iteration

I regret not having given the iterative nature of DES more explicit attention in H&S because the comments of **Siewert**, **Christopher S. Hill**, and **Eric Klinger**, and perhaps **Michael J. Kane**, Eric, and others seem not to grasp that iteration is an essential feature of DES (Hurlburt, 2009, in press; Hurlburt & Akhter, 2006; Hurlburt & Heavey, 2006).

The DES task sounds simple: Report whatever you were experiencing at the moment of the beep. However, as an empirical fact, it is not at all simple for the vast majority of subjects on the first sampling day. On the first day, the subject probably does not adequately discriminate between actual ongoing experience and her presuppositions about it; probably does not adequately discriminate between what is actually ongoing at the moment of the beep and what is before the beep or after it; and so on. As a result, first-day apprehensions are of low fidelity, so the primary aim of the first-day interview is *not* to apprehend experience; the first-day primary aim is to learn to cleave to the moment of the beep, to clarify communication, to expose and reduce presuppositions, and in general to build the skills of apprehending experience. As a result, the first-day interview likely makes the second-day's observations more skillful, which likely makes second day's interview more effective, which likely makes the third day's observations more skillful and its interview more effective, and so on (Hurlburt, 2009).

Thus iteration is *not* mere repetition; it is on-the-job training systematically intercalated between each day's apprehensions. Multiple observations without intercalated training is *not* iteration; whatever presuppositions and skills that existed at the first observation are likely to continue to exist at the last (Hurlburt, in preparation).

Thus an essential feature of DES is that the first few interviews are primarily intended as iterative training sessions, and gradually over sampling days the emphasis shifts to the earnest attempt to apprehend experience. That may be overlooked by most observers, however, because first-day DES interviews *look* approximately the same as the last-day interviews – the interviewer asks the same fundamental question (“What was in your experience at the moment of the beep?”) on all sampling days. It may not be apparent that the interviewer's intention in asking that question on early sampling days is to initiate a conversation during which on-the-job training can take place, whereas the intention of the same question on later days is to elicit a description of experience.

Over the course of iteration, targets emerge, and the expositional interviews allow interviewer and subject to focus, iteratively with more and more acuity, on those targets. For example, in Melanie's first H&S interview, her reports of bodily self-consciousness became central during the discussion of her second and third samples. DES accepts that the first-interview discussion of Melanie's self-consciousness was problematic (as are all DES first-day interviews) because we were asking her to recall the details of events that had happened hours earlier *and in the apprehension of which we had not yet provided adequate training*. When, in the first interview, we pressed her for details about bodily self-consciousness, we cultivated in ourselves and in Melanie an attitude that might be expressed, “Hmm! I wonder what the deal is on bodily self-consciousness? Was that

really her/my experience? Am I mistaken? I'll have to pay attention to that!" That contributed to our/her ability to apprehend her experience on her second day in higher fidelity.

Eric would say that such iteration might also amplify problematic self-theories. For example, he suggested (H&S Boxes 8.9 and 9.5) that iteration may have amplified Melanie's view of herself as unusually self-conscious: she mentioned it in passing on the first day and then, perhaps out of a desire to be consistent, might have developed habits of responding to questions, habits of attending to certain aspects of her experience rather than other ones after the beep, habits of classification and conceptualization that are both problematic and entrenched by the iterative process. I agree that those are risks. DES seeks to make that possibility explicit and to subvert it as much as possible (for example, by thoroughly discussing the potential for distortions, as Eric, Melanie, and I did for 25 minutes at the end of day 1; this transcript is not in H&S but the audio and a transcript are available on the MIT Press web site, http://mitpress.mit.edu/inner_experience/). That doesn't eliminate the risk, but it doesn't overlook it, either, and the other alternatives I can think of are worse. For example, we could do one-shot studies, thus eliminating the possibility of the iterative habit-making Eric worries about, but I consider first-day (and therefore one-shot) reports of experience to be untrustworthy (see H&S Boxes 4.1, 4.9, and 4.18), and no amount of training that we have been able to devise, other than on-the-job iterative training, can overcome this.

For a more complete discussion of iteration see Hurlburt (2009, in press).

Retrospection

Some commentators think of the DES retrospective "term" as measured in hours; for example, **Klinger** (***) says, "I am still left with grave doubts about the collection of data from interviews that occur up to 24 hours after the experience samples were recorded." Such a focus is a misleading characterization of DES for two reasons. First, it overlooks the iterative nature of DES; second, the several hour delay is not an essential feature of DES. I discuss each in turn.

First, as we have just seen, because of the iterative nature of DES, subjects may become, across the course of sampling, better and better prepared to apprehend the salient characteristics of their experience immediately at the beep. For example, on her first sampling day, Melanie's apprehension of her bodily self-consciousness was entirely 24-hour retrospective: she did not know that that self-consciousness would be of interest. But on subsequent sampling days, the iterative nature of DES allowed Melanie to be more and more ready to consider her bodily self-consciousness immediately as it occurred, and to jot down notes specifically about that within seconds after the beep. The interview might occur up to 24 hours later, but the iteratively-informed introspection itself was essentially *contemporaneous* with the experience. (See also **Methodological Pluralism**.)

Second, whereas it is indeed the case that DES interviews *customarily* take place several hours after the sampled experience, that is *not an essential feature* of DES. DES interviewers can and often do use dramatically shorter intervals between experience and interview. For example, in some of the interviews with children (e.g., in Akhter, 2008), we sat in the car in front of the subject's house; subjects came to us immediately after

each beep and we conducted the expositional interview on the spot. In some of our interviews with the elderly (e.g., in Seibert, 2009), we sat in the next bedroom or the hallway while the subject was in the living room or kitchen; subjects came to us immediately after each beep for the expositional interview about that beep. We have given subjects miniature tape recorders and asked them to audiotape extended descriptions of their experience immediately after the beep. We have asked subjects to telephone us on cell phones for interviews immediately following the beep. And so on.

I'm convinced, on the basis of informal but repeated consideration, that once the iterative training has had its effect, and so long as there is some permanent (written, tape recorded, videotaped, sketched, whatever) unchangeable record made immediately after the beep, it doesn't much matter whether the expositional interview is a few minutes later or a few hours later.

Thus the several-hour delay between the contemporaneous documentation and the interview is not an essential part of DES. If **Klinger** or others are concerned about the delay, they could eliminate those concerns either by conducting DES-type interviews with shorter delays, and/or conducting formal evaluations of the informal consideration of the previous paragraph.

Accuracy vs Fidelity

The interactively informal nature of Eric's and my debates that led to H&S had the unfortunate consequence of leading us to discuss, occasionally, whether DES descriptions were "accurate." I regret my usage of "accurate" because I think *all* introspection, including DES, is inaccurate: inner experience always includes details, fringes, pre-reflective bits (see **Petitmengin**), and so on that are impossible completely to grasp.

What was at stake in H&S and elsewhere is not really the *accuracy* of an introspection but its *faithfulness* (or *fidelity*, terms I used in H&S and elsewhere as synonyms). For example, section 2.3 (H&S pp. 27-39) is titled, "Does DES-Apprehended Inner Experience Faithfully Mirror Inner Experience?" When I am careful (as, regrettably, I was not always in H&S) I refer to the question of the *faithful* (or high fidelity) *apprehension* of Melanie's experience, *not* to the *accurate introspection* of her experience.

I think inner experience can be more or less faithfully apprehended. For example (as discussed in **Presuppositions**), I think the view of **Kane's** experience as nearly always including inner speech is of lower fidelity than is the view of his experience as nearly always including sensory awareness; I think McWhorter's view of everyone's always picturing the words they speak aloud is a low fidelity apprehension of experience; I think Baars's and Archer's view of everyone always innerly speaking is a low fidelity apprehension of experience.

DES descriptions always fall short of accuracy, so I agree with **Maja Spener** and Eric (see **Context**) that inaccuracy does not rule out introspection. But I think that DES apprehensions can be of higher fidelity than many other introspections (see **Methodological Pluralism**). Therefore I disagree with any implication from Eric (see **Context**) or **Spener** that all inaccurate introspections should be treated equally (see **Methodological Pluralism**). If there is reason to believe that one apprehension of experience is of higher fidelity than another, then the higher fidelity apprehension should

be accorded more weight. A corollary is that science should be on the constant lookout for better and better (that is, higher and higher fidelity) methods to apprehend experience.

Diachronic

John Sutton writes

[There is] one particular, striking problem with the subject-matter of DES. Russ takes it that his target – concrete, structured experience in the wild – is a momentary phenomenon. The method deliberately sets out to eradicate any dynamic features of experience by providing ‘a flash snapshot’, discarding anything other than ‘the last undisturbed moment before the beep’. (Sutton, this symposium, REF***)

Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons and **Claire Petitmengin** make similar criticisms, as did Eric briefly in H&S (p. 76). The worry appears to be that the DES relentless focus on the moment of the beep rules out the dynamic situation, rules out experience whose duration is longer than a moment, rules out the diachronic.

I’m not so worried. Perhaps this metaphor will be helpful. Suppose your task is to understand the surface of the earth; your method is to position lasers on geostationary satellites. The software that controls the lasers picks a latitude and longitude at random and shoots a laser at the earth, “painting” a thin line that is a centimeter wide and 10 meters long. Your task is to describe the slice of the earth surface that is painted by the laser line. That process is repeated; eventually you will collect a sample of descriptions of the planet at randomly selected line hits.

For example, the computer randomly produces a latitude 38°31’35.94”N and longitude 77°21’50.68”W and a line orientation of 80 degrees. What does the line paint? Here is one description:

Molecular Description A: At the west end of the line is a small pebble; heading along the line east from that pebble is a bit of concrete with a rubbery residue on it; continuing east is another bit of concrete, also with a rubbery residue; ... continuing east there is a once-centimeter step down and then a patch of asphalt; ... continuing east there is a blade of coarse grass; now another blade, ... etc.

Such a description provides many details of a very narrow slice of the earth. By contrast, here is another description of the same (38°31’35.94”N, 77°21’50.68”W, 80°) laser line:

Referential Description B: The laser hits Interstate 95, the highway that connects Florida and Maine and points in between. The west end of the laser line is on the right-most lane of the northbound side of the interstate at a point just west of Quantico, Virginia; Interstate 95 is a six-lane highway at this point. The line starts at the right-hand lane, which is concrete; then there is a one centimeter step down to an asphalt shoulder

lane; once off the shoulder that line hits the weeds that grow wild alongside the roadway.

Description A could be called “molecular” because it seeks to confine itself entirely to those bits of material that exist within the slice. Description B could be called a “referential” description because it seeks to describe what exists within the slice with the help of references to things outside the slice. The referential Description B therefore mentions that the I95 goes from Florida to Maine, not because Florida and Maine are *in* the slice, but because to understand what *is* in the slice, one needs references. From a referential point of view, what is in the slice is *not* merely bits of concrete but a snippet of a long superhighway.

It seems to me that all descriptions – even molecular Description A – are referential descriptions to some degree, so this is not an all-or-none view. When the molecular Description A says that here is a bit of concrete, that refers to some understanding of what concrete is that involves matters beyond the borders of the thin slice.

Once one allows that a description is referential, at least to some degree, then one opens oneself up to a variety of referential descriptions. Those referential descriptions are open to judgment about the quality of the references. For example:

Equally good referential Description C: The laser hits Interstate 95, the highway that connects Washington D.C. and Richmond VA and points in between and beyond....

There may well be no reason to prefer Description B over Description C or vice versa – one might view the same event from several or many different perspectives. However, not all perspectives are equal:

Bad referential Description D: The laser hits Interstate 95, the highway that connects Washington D.C. and Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Washington D.C. is the home of the United States Government, wherein Pennsylvania Avenue runs from the White House, home of the President, to the Capitol Building. The President and Congress have been arguing about the ridiculous socialist agenda of the Democrats which is sure to backfire in the next set of elections. I used to have a house on Hilton Head.

Referential Description D is problematic not because the description is referential but because the references to Washington and Hilton Head obviously reflect the writer’s interests or presuppositions rather than trying dispassionately to reflect the randomly selected bit of the earth’s surface.

A DES exposed description is much more like referential Description B (or C) than molecular Description A, but some commentators, perhaps including **Sutton**, **Horgan and Timmons**, and **Petitmengin** seem to think of DES results as being more like molecular Description A. That seems to be what lies behind, for example, **Horgan and Timmons**’s objection that “Because the DES method focuses on a *very* brief time

slice (what was going on experientially at the moment of the beep), the method may cut the subject off from the diachronic flow of experience over time (***) ref).

Let's apply this metaphor to a DES example, Melanie's sample 6.4 (H&S, pp. 206-217), a sample that **Horgan and Timmons** call "phenomenologically thin" (***) ref). Here is the summary from H&S p. 309:

Beep 6.4 (pp. 206-217): Melanie was picking flower petals out of the sink. Her experience was divided pretty evenly between the activity of picking up the petals and [innerly] hearing overlapping "echoes" of the phrase "nice long time" from a recently completed (but no longer ongoing) episode of inner speech [in which she had innerly said, "Those flowers lasted for a nice long time"]. (H&S, p. 207)

That is a referential description. For comparison, here is a more molecular description of this experience:

Molecular Description 6.4: Melanie was picking flower petals out of the sink. Her experience was divided pretty evenly between the activity of picking up the petals and innerly hearing three simultaneous instances of her own voice, one saying "time," another saying "long," and the third saying "nice."

From the molecular point of view, the original inner speaking occurred well before the beep and therefore does not count at all. Nor do the words "nice long" of the first innerly heard repetition of "nice long time" – only the word "time" is immediately heard in the thin slice. Similarly for "[nice] long [time]" and "nice [long time]." Such a thin-slice description tears the heart out of Melanie's experience at the moment of the beep, because *from an experiential point of view*, Melanie is *not* hearing her voice saying "time," she is hearing her voice *echoing* "nice long time," which itself is a fragment of an earlier spoken "they lasted a nice long time." Thus a description of Melanie's *experience must* refer to events outside the thin slice of the moment of the beep.

The descriptions we provided in H&S, like the Beep 6.4 description above, were written from a referential, not a molecular, point of view. We did capture some diachronic aspects of Melanie's experience. Sometimes the context reached fairly wide – referring to a debate about the World Series, referring to a remembered tool shed. It is true that we did not prompt Melanie to report the flow of her experience extending back more than a second or two before the beep because Eric and I both doubt people's ability to report such facts accurately.

I have harped incessantly on getting to the moment of the beep, and I will continue such harping because I believe that experience inheres only in moments, so to apprehend experience requires attending to moments (Hurlburt, in press). As it seems to me, most people do not ever establish the moment of their consideration and therefore are never constrained to discuss any particular experience. But *once you have adequately established what was the experience that was ongoing at the moment of the beep*, then I think it is okay to ask about and then to describe, *in a highly constrained and limited way*, the whences and whithers of that at-the-moment experience.

Targeting specific questions

Mark Engelbert and Peter Carruthers suggest that DES could profitably abandon the random-beep-driven ecological validity and the open-beginninged stance that DES typically employs. I agree, as long as the abandonment of ecological validity and open beginningedness does not also abandon the bracketing of presuppositions.

Besides ecological validity, and perhaps more importantly, the random-beep-occurring-in-natural-environments provides a head start toward bracketing presuppositions. Along with open-beginningedness, randomness selects what a DES investigation will discuss, and thus aims attention at what actually occurs regardless of whether that occurrence is thought a priori to be theoretically important. That is, randomness and open-beginningedness encourage both interviewer and subject to adopt a level playing field with respect to theoretical presuppositions, and that is hugely important, in my view (see **Presuppositions and Background Assumptions**).

Once that level playing field is securely adopted by both investigator and subject, then I think it may make sense to relax the randomness and open-beginningedness requirement. Here's an example. Golf is said to be a "mental" game; theories abound on what golfers do and should think about on the course, based almost entirely on 19th hole retrospection. Yani Dickens and I (Dickens, 2007) sought to explore the actual experience of golfers, so we set up a tournament where we would provide golfers with beepers. But we did *not* take these subjects immediately into the tournament and sample with them there. Had we done so, it is likely that their *presuppositions* about their golf experience would have overwhelmed their *actual* experience while golfing. Instead, we randomly sampled with each golfer individually in his natural everyday *non-golf* environments for three days each. The randomness of the beeps, the open-beginningedness of the interviews, and the variety of non-golf situations helped subjects recognize the variety of their own experiences, helped the subjects build a healthy respect for trying to bracket presuppositions, helped the subjects build the skills of bracketing their own presuppositions in environments where they might not have very strong presuppositions – that is, about the nature of experience during golf.

Once the variety-of-everyday-situation sampling had helped the subjects acquire a genuine interest in what their experience was *really* like rather than in what they presuppositionally thought it should be like, *and only then*, subjects wore the beeper in the golf tournament. We found, for example, that highly skilled golfers focus more on golf than do moderately skilled golfers. In my view, that finding is believable *only because we had trained subjects to bracket presuppositions*, created in subjects a substantial interest in the actual characteristics of their experience as opposed to their golf-theoretical interest.

Although we did not do so in this study, we could have targeted specific events: we could have arranged to have specific beeps occur while in the backswing of a putt, or during the setup before the shot on the 14th tee (a wicked shot over long water to an island green); and so on.

Thus I agree with **Engelbert and Carruthers** that the typical DES method can be usefully expanded *so long as* there is some effective method of building the commitment to bracketing presuppositions and building observational skills prior to the target observations.

Siewert's Deepest Worry

We must press sensitively worded questions to probe the content and implications of introspective judgment, to see which are worth retaining. But Hurlburt and I apparently differ regarding just what it is crucial to ask, how far to push such questioning, and the dangers of prematurely abandoning it—and it seems, the extent to which the questioners should also similarly examine themselves, while engaging in their own first-person reflection on experience. It seems—and this is my deepest worry about Hurlburt's method—that the very habits of self-reflection I would have us *cultivate*, he would evidently have us *suppress*, since he thinks they only breed error of the sort DES is called in to correct. But on my view we need just such habits of articulate alertness to our own on-going experience, and of self-examination, if we are to bring the “personal” into the “theoretical” as Hurlburt laudably wishes (pp. 257-60). It is just such habitual self-examination that we need to nourish the rational correction of introspectively-based conceptions of experience. (Siewert, *** REF)

I think **Siewert** and I are not as different here as he suggests, if one has adequate appreciation for the iterative nature of DES (see above). I am *enthusiastically in favor* of “press[ing] sensitively worded questions to probe the content and implications of introspective judgment,” *as long as one presses and pushes on an even playing field, not giving the advantage to privately created notions* (see **Presuppositions and Background Assumptions**). I strongly encourage DES investigators to be sensitive to their on-going experiences; one's own experience provides evidence of the workings of presuppositions, shows when the bracketing of presuppositions is most necessary (Hurlburt & Heavey, 2006; cf. the “nose for presuppositions” in **Presuppositions and Background Assumptions**), and may provide a bit of insight into phenomena.

For example, I have no objection whatsoever for Eric (or me) to develop an acute and articulate awareness of his own bodily self-consciousness or lack thereof, and then to press Melanie hard on whether her experienced self-consciousness is or is not the same as his own, as long as that pressing is on an even playing field. As long as Eric authentically has and genuinely conveys a disinterest in the direction of the result, I would encourage his saying to Melanie, “When I examine myself, I find no bodily self-consciousness of the kind you describe, so I would like us to figure out whether you're mistaken or I am, or whether your experience is different from mine, or whether our experiences are similar but we use the language differently.” Then he should press as hard as he likes, making as careful distinctions as he likes, iteratively improving both Melanie's and his own abilities to observe and discriminate, over as many sampling days as he likes.

The practical problem is that it is high personal art authentically to have a genuine disinterest in the direction of a result. Most people (according to my observations) are presuppositionally committed to a point of view, presuppositionally primed to “discover” what they want to discover, presuppositionally skilled at badgering the witness into corroborating the questioner's viewpoint. If those presuppositional pressures can be overcome, can be replaced with genuine, level-playing-field alertness, then I heartily

agree with **Siewert**: “we need... habits of articulate alertness to our own on-going experience.”

Difficulty/Expense

DES is often criticized as being too time-consuming, too expensive, with too much skill required, but I see that as a criticism of consciousness science, *not* of DES. Consciousness science thinks nothing of spending millions for an fMRI machine; such money could fund a lot of DES training. So the question is not about money, it is about perceived value. If the scientific community valued faithful apprehensions of pristine experience, it could have them. It would indeed require a reordering of priorities, a restructuring of the scientific community to develop and incorporate ways of recruiting, supporting, and training interviewers, as well as discriminating skilled interviewers from unskilled ones. But that could be done if the scientific community thought it important. Israeli Air Force recruitment provides an extreme model: All Israeli 18-year-olds enter the military. The Israeli military gives aptitude tests and behavioral observations and determines, out of all those men and women, who *the military* wants to train to become pilots in the Air Force (it is *not* a matter of volunteering, as if self-identified-interest somehow predicts skill). Then the Air Force operates a Flight school that washes out 39 out of every 40 pilot candidates. As a result of this literally best-of-the-best selection procedure, the Israeli Air Force gets *very* good pilots. If consciousness science were so motivated, a similar scheme could be put in place: select individuals who were likely to be skilled at observing inner experience, train a bunch of them, and wash out all but the best. There is nothing impossible about this procedure.

17 Snapshots trump an accumulated life?

Sutton calls DES “history free” and worries that I expect 17 flash snapshots to “trump an accumulated life” of historical self-understanding (***) ref). Actually, I think DES descriptions are steeped in history (see the Diachronic section above) and I don’t *expect* any trumping, even though, as an empirical fact, I frequently *observe* the subjects’ sampling snapshots *do* “trump an accumulated life.”

Historical self-understandings, like most historical accounts, are at best oversimplifications and usually substantial distortions of actual history, focusing on some events to the exclusion of others, focusing on one interpretation to the exclusion of others. Many (perhaps most) people have their favorite personal-historical accounts, usually called narratives, which they invoke often to explain or justify events and behavior. Such told historical accounts (narratives) are part truth, part good story, part self-protection, and part self-presentation.

DES differs from other methods by relentlessly discouraging relying on (partially true) narrative explanations in favor of relying on (as unadulterated as possible) sampled experiences. Many (perhaps most) subjects recognize that suspending the narrative to get to the facts is the reverse of their usual suspending of the facts to get to the narrative. Often they find the attempt to get to the facts refreshing or relieving. The DES subject knows that she has data whose provenance she herself fully understands, data that are little or not at all driven by any agenda I have other than to get as best we can at the truth

of her experience, data whose fidelity is vouched for by herself. As a result, subjects often transform their self-understandings in light of such high-quality data. I don't force this on them or expect it of them. If the subject does value her data, and does recognize that her data conflicts with her narrative (whose provenance is not well understood and whose veridicality is at some level known to be suspect), it is not surprising that she jettisons the narrative, even if – perhaps especially if – it is based on an accumulated life.

References

- Akhter, S. A. (2008). *Exploring adolescent inner experience*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
- Dickens, Y. (2007). *Inner experience during golf performance*. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
- Engelbert, M., & Carruthers, P. (this symposium). Descriptive Experience Sampling: What is it good for?. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Hill, C. (this symposium). How to study introspection. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Horgan, T., & Timmons, M. (this symposium). Introspection and the phenomenology of free will: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Hurlburt, R. T. (2009). Iteratively apprehending pristine experience. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 16(10-12), 156-188.
- Hurlburt, R. T. (in preparation). *Investigating pristine inner experience: Moments of truth*.
- Hurlburt, R. T., & Akhter, S. A. (2006). The Descriptive Experience Sampling method. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 5, 271-301.
- Hurlburt, R. T., & Akhter, S.A. (2008). Unsymbolized thinking. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 17, 1364-1374.
- Hurlburt, R. T., & Heavey, C. L. (2006). *Exploring Inner Experience: The Descriptive Experience Sampling Method*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Hurlburt, R. T., & Schwitzgebel, E. (2007). *Describing inner experience?* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hurlburt, R. T. & Schwitzgebel, E. (this symposium). Methodological pluralism, armchair introspection, and DES as the epistemic tribunal. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Hurlburt, R. T. & Schwitzgebel, E. (this symposium). Little or no experience outside of attention? *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Hurlburt, R. T. & Schwitzgebel, E. (this symposium). Presuppositions and background assumptions. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.

- Kane, M. (this symposium). Describing, debating, and discovering inner experience. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Klinger, E. (this symposium). Response organization of mental imagery, evaluation of Descriptive Experience Sampling, and alternatives. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Petitmengin, C. (this symposium). Describing the experience of describing? *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Schwitzgebel, E. (this symposium). The philosophical and psychological context of Descriptive Experience Sampling. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Seibert, T. M. (2009). *The inner experience of older individuals*. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
- Siewert, C. (this symposium). Socratic introspection and the abundance of experience. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Spener, M. (this symposium). Using first-person data about consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.
- Sutton, J. (this symposium). Time, experience, and Descriptive Experience Sampling. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.