

Dear Readers,

This second volume of the BSUJ is dedicated to the self and the influence of the social environment on cognition and behaviour. We human beings have been interested in our 'selves' for at least 40,000 years when we most likely began engaging in early self-reflection (Leary, 2004). Hindu philosophers conceptualized *Atman-Brahman*, or *Self-God*, around 800 BCE to understand personal experience (Daniels, 2002). Later philosophers as well as sociologists and psychologists have been strongly intrigued by the self for centuries (e.g., Descartes, 1637; Mead, 1934; James, 1890 respectively), a fascination that is still clearly visible in contemporary psychology and is growing exponentially (Morin, 2011) as seen in emergence of journals such as *Consciousness and Cognition* and books such as *Handbook of Self and Identity* (Leary & Tangney, 2012). To identify only a few examples of topics pertinent to the self, researchers investigate the possible structure and function of a self-system (e.g., McCombs, 1986), neuroanatomy of self-referential processes (e.g., Gillihan & Farah, 2005), self-awareness in non-human species (e.g., Gallup, 1998; Mitchell, 2002), self-cognition including self-talk (e.g., Morin, Uttl & Hamper, 2011; Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015), psychopathologies of the self (e.g., Feinberg, 2011), cultural differences in self-conception (e.g., Markus & Kitawama, 1991), and relationships between typical and atypical populations, the self, and social cognition (e.g., Morin, El Sayed & Racy, 2014).

Leary (2013) and colleagues (Leary, Raimi, Jongman-Sereno, & Diebels, 2015) argued that both interpersonal and intrapersonal processes should be considered in psychological theory and research, contrary to much research that has focused on only intrapsychic motives such as maintenance of cognitive or affective states. Therefore, authors in this issue have examined common psychological constructs within social contexts, and some have posited methodologies that may assist in this line of research in the future. In this special issue, readers will learn about self-processes and social cognition through both clinical and positive psychology lenses, meaning that authors investigated how these processes are related to both clinical dysfunction and everyday well-being respectively. Part 1 offers a look at *self-awareness* (SA), or the process of actively identifying, storing, and retrieving information about the self (Morin, 2004); part 2 is focused on *conceptual self-processes*, or the process of actively mentalizing about one's own traits and emotions (Morin & Michaud, 2007), and part 3 connects the topic of the self to that of *social cognition*, or the process of actively mentalizing about the self and others (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

Self-awareness is built from intra and interpersonal information based on active self-processes including inner-speech, rumination, and mindfulness. *Inner-speech* involves self-directed speech containing information about the self and others (Morin, Uttl & Hamper, 2011). *Rumination* is a process involving excessive negative thoughts, such as when one repeatedly makes comments to the self about the self or others in a manner associated with disturbing feelings often connected with depression (Moore, this issue). *Mindfulness* is a process involving focused nonjudgmental SA of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, which is a process useful for treatment of addiction in some people (Dragland, this issue). Music therapists have made use of the associations between healthy SA and other variables involved in well-being such as interpersonal interaction and healthy self-concept, self-regulation, self-control, self-evaluation and self-esteem (Navarro, this issue).

Conceptual self-processes involving self-evaluation, such as self-efficacy and self-esteem, are popular in therapeutic and clinical interventions because of their relationships with increased performance and wellbeing, yet there are at least three problems with this: (1) a lack of understanding about how these processes function or develop, (2) a lack of understanding about how interpersonal influences and individual differences affect these relationships, and (3) controversial relationships exist between these variables such that in some samples those with low self-esteem still perform tasks well, and those with high self-esteem may also be characterized by egotistic traits such as narcissism (Taiwo; Racy, this issue). Other cognitive theories involving the self have been defined as social cognitive in nature from the outset but remain in opposition due to lack of synthesis, such as gender schema formation (West, this issue). Biases are involved in self-processes and social cognition, functioning as shortcuts to information collection and analysis by the self, but are also partially at play in social injustices and violence, including stereotype formation (Gilmour, this issue) and use of biases to justify street-harassment (El Moghrabi, this issue).

We are pleased to present this special issue as preliminary investigations into these topics intending to stimulate undergraduates in their academic work and to inform a wider audience interested in the behavioural sciences. Comments and replies to these articles are welcomed and encouraged.

Famira Racy, Editor, BSUJ & Alain Morin, Guest Editor, *Frontiers in Psychology*

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