## *Editorial*

# Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience: When opposites attract

It was not long ago that those in the biological and medical sciences would have little reason to break bread with those in the social sciences. Similarly, those of us in the social sciences spent little, if any, time imagining how our work could be enhanced by sitting down with those in the biological and medical sciences. Although we may still have offices separated by floors, buildings, or even whole campuses, our ideas have increasingly become interconnected in a new intellectual enterprise and our research endeavors have become interdisciplinary across lines that once seemed impenetrable. The biological and medical sciences are recognizing that a full accounting of human biology cannot proceed without incorporating the social and emotional factors that modulate the functioning and health of biological systems, and may have played a key role in the evolution of those systems. The social sciences are simultaneously embracing the idea that the social mind cannot be severed from the social brain and body. Ultimately, a full understanding of the social mind depends upon a full understanding of how the brain and body are receptive to socioemotional pressures and produce social behavior.

For those of us working at the intersection of the social sciences and neurosciences, these are exciting times indeed. Although the social sciences and neurosciences have been hugely successful enterprises in their own right, there is a sense that we can now build an intellectual superhighway between them that will allow us to catalyze the insights from both into a new kind of science that will yield important insights into the basic nature of the human mind as well as shape future thinking about applied issues such as mental health and the treatment of addiction.

Despite the general enthusiasm for this new kind of research and the fact that the number of investigators has been growing exponentially, there have been no dedicated outlets for the publication of this work. Social scientists have had to search through countless unfamiliar neuroscience journals to find the occasional article relevant to them and, once found, have been frustrated that the articles were not written for the social scientist or in light of decades of social scientific theory and research. On the other hand, social science journals have been slow to incorporate research on the neuroscientific bases of socioemotional processes into their pages. Additionally, social science journals tend to take much longer than neuroscience journals to review and publish new research. This publication lag has unfortunately discouraged the submission of work to social science journals.

*Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* (SCAN) aims to be a central home for work that brings together social scientists and neuroscientists to produce top-notch work that has the advantages of both contributing disciplines. In every issue, SCAN will publish cutting-edge research from social cognitive neuroscience, social neuroscience, affective neuroscience, neuroeconomics and political neuroscience, and will do so with the speed of typical neuroscience journals. Editorial decisions on new submissions will be made in about a month, and accepted articles will appear online as in press 'advance access' publications within two months of acceptance. At the same time, authors will be strongly encouraged to incorporate existing social science theories into their work and address the contribution their work makes to these theories. A brief look at the list of consulting editors should assure readers that submissions to SCAN will be vetted both for methodological rigor and theoretical contribution. Of course, not every article can be all things to all people, but our goal is to limit pure brain-mapping studies to those that can provide a road map for future work that would engage in testing the hypotheses of social and emotional theories.

For authors submitting their work to SCAN, we have worked hard to make this journal an appealing outlet. As mentioned, we have streamlined the review process and have an online submission system that should allow papers to be processed with great efficiency. The journal will begin with three issues this year and then become a quarterly publication from 2007 onwards; however, articles will appear online, in press, as soon as they are ready for publication. Additionally, there will be no charge for the inclusion of color figures.

Perhaps most exciting for authors, manuscripts may be submitted in their current format *even if it is in another journal's format*. If your manuscript has been formatted for submission to another journal, we will review the manuscript in its current form. If accepted, authors will be asked to revise the manuscript to the SCAN formatting guidelines.

For readers, the fact that articles will be online in 'advance access' form quickly means constant access to the most

current work being conducted on social cognitive and affective neuroscience. Additionally, anyone can sign up to have the titles and abstracts of each issue, with links to the online material, sent to them by email. In order to make the research published in SCAN more accessible, each issue will have a section titled 'In this Issue', which will include one or more brief commentaries addressing the broader significance of one of the articles published in that issue. For instance, in this issue, Ralph Adolphs has written an 'In this Issue' commentary about the research by Harrison and colleagues. Similarly, each issue will contain a section titled 'Tools of the Trade', which will be edited by Russ Poldrack and Tor Wager (see their editorial in this issue). In this section, a cognitive neuroscientist will present a brief review of a methodology or technique relevant to the SCAN audience and will do so with the SCAN audience in mind, that is, with an appreciation that many readers may be interested in these methods but may not be 'techies' by nature. Finally, the online home of the journal will provide a forum for readers to discuss each of the published articles in the journal. E-letters, blogs, forums, and immediate feedback are great advantages of information sharing on the internet, and we at SCAN intend to fully embrace the way that these interactive forums can advance the cause of science inquiry.

Although SCAN will mostly consist of regularly submitted empirical articles, there will also be occasional special issues centering on a particular topic, theme or technique. For instance, the December issue will be a special issue on 'Molecular and Comparative Aspects of Social Neuroscience' edited by Ralph Adolphs. Next year we will also have a special issue on 'Social Aspects of Neuroeconomics', coedited by Tania Singer and Ernst Fehr. We would be happy to entertain other ideas for special issues in the future.

Before concluding, I would like to offer a few recommendations regarding new submissions to SCAN. First, submitted research should report new empirical investigations using neuroscience techniques (including, but not limited to, fMRI, MRI, PET, EEG, TMS, single-cell recording, genetic imaging, psychopharmacological perturbations, and neuropsychological lesion techniques) to examine social and affective processes. Ideally, submitted research will test hypotheses that address theories from the social sciences, but this will not be the case for all articles, particularly in a research area that is still quite young. Submissions should be under 5000 words, but 2000–4000 words are ideal. If a submission is a bit longer, it can be submitted and shortened upon acceptance. Finally, research submitted to SCAN should focus on the social and affective processes of the human mind. This does not necessarily mean that all studies must have human subjects, but it does mean that all studies must be aimed at contributing to our understanding of humans.

In conclusion, many thanks are in order for making SCAN both necessary and possible. John Cacioppo, Todd Heatherton, Steve Breckler, Carolyn Morf, and Kevin Quinn have each made enormous contributions, often behind the scenes, to provide the administrative and financial support structures for social cognitive and affective neuroscience research. Their contributions have allowed this kind of work to develop rapidly and visibly. Jenni Beer, Jason Mitchell, and Kevin Ochsner have organized numerous social cognitive neuroscience conferences that have brought a large number of us together each year to discuss all things related to social cognitive and affective neuroscience, including whether or not it was time to have this very journal we are now launching. The editorial team at SCAN has been energized and forward-thinking, and I would particularly like to thank the associated editors for all their hard work: Ralph Adolphs, Ernst Fehr, Chris Frith, Kevin Ochsner, and Tania Singer. Finally, SCAN would not exist without the vision of Paul Kidd, our publisher at Oxford University Press, who realized that SCAN's time had come.

I hope you find the pages of this journal interesting and informative.

Matthew D. Lieberman
Editor-in-Chief