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The human mind needs to acknowledge and celebrate anniversaries; however, some anniversaries are more salient than others. Why a fiftieth volume marks an important anniversary becomes clear, maybe, when we understand how the mind encodes numbers. Indeed, Dehaene et al. (1992) reported that the number 50 is psychologically more salient than, say, either 47 or 53. So, predictably, Volume 50 is a befitting occasion to celebrate an anniversary; it is a time to take stock of what has happened during these years, a time to remember how we were long ago and how we have evolved. It is also a time to express gratitude to people and institutions that have supported this venture for so many decades. My aim is not to evaluate the scientific impact of this journal, nor is it fitting for me to judge whether we have been sufficiently conservative in our selections and sufficiently brave to promote novel areas.

Cognition was conceived by T.G. Bever and me over many a conversation held in New York and Paris. We shared the view that the study of the new and diffuse area of cognition had to be facilitated by overcoming the inflexibility of form and content of the journals in which some of us were then publishing. Scientifically and culturally cognition is a multi-disciplinary domain. In contrast, psychology and traditional linguistics were too narrow and too attached to one school of thought or another. So too were most journals.

Bever and I had been in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where we had witnessed the birth of the cognitive revolution. N. Chomsky, G.A. Miller, J. Bruner, J. Fodor, E. Lenneberg, N. Geschwind, H.-L. Teuber, to name just a few, were all working on a project which was to become our field as we know it today. Our colleagues were trying to show that the study of mental life could thrive like any other domain of rational investigation. Was it possible to study intelligent behavior, in man and in machine, in the way that one studies chemistry, biology or even astronomy? During the sixties we became sure that this question should be answered affirmatively. Since then, the study of mind has become a part of the natural sciences. A large number of universities have created departments of cognitive science, and societies of cognitive science have come to exist in many countries.

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The sixties witnessed a change in, among others, the disciplines of psychology and linguistics, but journals still pursued a policy congruent with what had previously been the predominant constraints, in form and in content. Certainly, by and large, reviewers were fair and seldom hostile to the evolving domain that we have come to call cognition, yet positivism and behaviorism had confined publishing to patterns that were ill suited to our needs. Psychologists, linguists, neuropsychologists and others would often voice their dismay. Authors knew that to enhance their chances of publication they had to avoid motivating their studies theoretically. “Make your introduction as short and vacuous as possible” seemed to be the unspoken guideline of most journals. Editors were often even more hostile towards discussions that had “too much theory”, as they used to say in those days. That was not all.

Psychology journals would not welcome articles from linguistics while neuropsychologists had to hassle with neurologists to see their findings published. For a psychologist to publish in a linguistics journal was equally out of bounds. Readership also broke down along lines of narrow professional affinity. Yet scientists from all these disciplines would meet and discuss a range of exciting new issues in the seminars held at the Harvard Center of Cognitive Studies, and at similar centers that were being created at MIT and Penn, amongst others. Those were the days in which computer scientists and psychologists, neurologists and linguists would search jointly for explanations to the phenomena that their predecessors had explored from much narrower perspectives. If perception continued being important, learning was beginning to lose its grip on psychology. Neuropsychology and psycholinguistics were becoming very fashionable and, so was the simulation of complex behavior. Studying infants and young children had once more become a central aspect of our concerns. Likewise, students of animal behavior were discovering all kinds of surprising aptitudes to which psychologists had been blinded by behaviorism. It was, however, in the fields of linguistics and computer science that the novel theoretical perspectives were being laid out with greatest clarity. What was wanted was a journal that could help students to become equally familiar with biological findings, advances in computer science, and psychological and linguistic discoveries, while allowing them to become philosophically sophisticated. So, some of us set out to create a journal which would enclose such a variegated domain. I also wanted a publication for which it would be fun to write and which ought to be great to read.

These ideas were entertained at the end of the sixties, a difficult time. France was still searching for itself in the midst of unrest, still searching for its soul after hesitating for so long about the need to face up to its contradictions, those that had plunged it into defeat, occupation and then collaboration on one side, suffering, persecution and resistance on the other. The USA, contending with internal and external violence, was trying to establish a multi-racial society. At the same time it was fighting far from home for what, we were being told, was going to be a better
world, though the reasons looked much less altruistic to our eyes. All these conflicts formed our world and our concerns. They also inspired the scientists of my generation to think about their role and responsibility as social beings. The nuclear era was a reminder that science was not as useless and abstruse as many had pretended it to be. Was it so desirable for us to be scientists during weekdays and citizens on Sundays and holidays, we would ask ourselves. How could one justify indifference over educational matters, funding of universities, sexism, racism, and many other aspects of our daily existence? In thinking about a journal, questions such as these were always present in my mind.

_Cognition_ was born in France and I have edited the journal ever since from Paris. It is predictable, then, that many of my recollections as well as many of the problems and ideas that I talk about in this editorial have a Gallic or European flavor. When I moved from the USA to France, I worked in a laboratory located across from the Folies Bergères, a neighborhood with many attractions, as the numerous tourist buses attested, yet without the scientific journals that were essential to keep up with cognitive science. In 1969 the laboratory was finally moved to a modern building at 54, Bd Raspail, where it has been up to this day. The building had been erected on the site at which the infamous Prison du Cherche-Midi had been located until its demolition at the end of the Second World War. This prison stood opposite the Gestapo Headquarters and resistance fighters and other personalities were tortured and shot within its walls. A few decades earlier in the prison, another French citizen had been locked up, namely Capitain Dreyfus. It was difficult to be at such a site without reflecting on how the rational study of the mind might illuminate the ways in which humans go about their social business. Of course, being in a laboratory constructed on the old Prison du Cherche-Midi furthered my conviction that it was very important to understand how science and society had to co-exist.

The building shelters the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), an institution that played an important role in the development of the French School of History. F. Braudel presided over the Ecole for many years while being the editor of the prestigious *Annales*, a publication which had won acclaim in many countries after it was founded by M. Bloch and L. Febvre. It was obvious to all of us that the *Annales* played an important role at the Ecole, where M. Bloch himself was remembered as an important thinker. Bloch, an Alsatian Jew who was eventually murdered for his leading role in the French Resistance, was a convinced European who preached a rational approach to the social sciences. He was also convinced of the importance of expanding communication between investigators working in different countries and in different cultures.

M. Bloch and his itinerary must make us think about the importance of moral issues, and about the individual as an ultimate moral entity whose well-being does not rank below what politicians and others want to take as most sacred, be it the state, fatherland or religion. My hope is that rational enquiry and cognitive science
may help us escape the bonds of nationalism, chauvinism and exclusion. Cognitive scientists, like all other scientists and like all citizens, ought to be guided by moral reason, and moral issues must become one of our fields of concern.

The setting in which I found myself was just right to create a journal, and it was while this was on my mind that a Dutch publisher, Mouton, offered us the opportunity to launch our project. The Maison de Sciences de l'Homme (MSH) had a number of publishing relations with Mouton. It was during one of his visits to the MSH that I met a Mr. Bornkamp. In the late sixties, money seemed far less important than it does today. Publishers were interested in ideas, and with the elegance with which they were presented. Mr. Bornkamp became fascinated with Cognition and gave me what amounted to virtually a blank cheque to launch a journal that would be the advocate to the cognitive revolution. He agreed that we ought to minimize formal constraints and never opposed our wish to include a section to vent our political and social preoccupations. Moreover, the fact that the project was being launched by young, unknown scientists was not an obstacle for Mouton. The obstacles that I found during those early planning stages came from a source I had not at all foreseen as a cause of trouble.

During the early phases of planning I wanted to associate the journal with the Laboratoire de Psychologie of the EHESS. I had just arrived and believed that associating my new colleagues with this venture would be profitable to us all. However, to my great surprise, I discovered that publishing an English language journal in France was not an easy task. Some of my colleagues disapproved of what they perceived as a foreign-led venture. “Isn’t it true”, they would argue, “that J. Piaget, one of the central players in the Cognitive Revolution, writes in French?” “A French intellectual ought to try and promote the French culture through the language of Descartes, Racine and Flaubert”, I was reminded time and again. For a while I had mixed feelings. I need no reminders of how important differences and contrasts are to the richness of intellectual life. At the time at which I write this editorial, politicians are discussing the ways in which the world is going about opening markets and promoting business. The GATT discussions also bear on the diversity of cultural goods. I agree with those who would like to see some kind of protection against a world of silly mass-produced television, ghost-written books, and movies conceived to anesthetize the development of good taste and intelligence. Unfortunately, nobody really knows how to protect us against these lamentable trends. Removing all cultural differences and catering only for the least demanding members of society, however numerous, would promote the destruction of our intellectual creativity. So why did I favor making a journal in English, and why is it that even today I fight for a lingua franca of science? Science is a special case, I would tell myself then, as I do today. We all know that since the Second World War almost all of the top-quality science has been published in English. It would be unthinkable for top European scientists to have won the Nobel prize or reached world renown if they had published their foremost papers in their own rega...
own language. They didn’t. Likewise, it is unthinkable today for serious scientists, regardless of where they study and work, to be unable to read English.

Of course, novels, essays, and many disciplines in the humanities are more concerned with form than with truth. It is normal that those disciplines fight to preserve their tool of privilege, the language in which they need to express themselves. Thus I viewed the resistance to English during the planning stages of *Cognition* as an ideological plot to keep the study of mind separate and antagonistic to science and closer to the arts and humanities. My intention was just the opposite, namely to show that there was a discipline, cognition, which was as concerned with truth as chemistry, biology or physics. I was also aware that the fear of contacts and communication among fellow scientists is the favorite weapon used by narrow-minded chauvinists and, in general, by authoritarian personalities with whom, unfortunately, we still have to cope in some parts of the academic world in Europe.

Twenty years ago, some French colleagues viewed *Cognition* with suspicion and disapproval. Of course their arguments, as I mentioned above, were couched in terms of the language the journal would use, or in terms of the journal having too much of an Anglo-Saxon profile, or claimed that the journal was too negligent of the European contribution to cognition. While the journal was trying to use the same weights and measures for European (*inter alia*) and American science, some of my colleagues were pleading for a private turf, for special journals catering to their specific needs, and so forth. Try as I might to counter these challenges with rational argument, my success remained limited, and the journal was launched with the help from, among others, my French, English, American, Israeli, and Japanese friends. Mouton made it easy to launch the journal. The continued support from Elsevier allowed the journal to become successful.

Today, almost a quarter of a century after its inception, I have drawn together some views that I would like to share with my colleagues. In science as in most endeavors involving large numbers of people, it is advisable to have a geographically distributed decisional power structure. When one national group, or for that matter a small group of nations, has sole power to stipulate which are the projects that need to be funded, which papers ought to be published, which scientists should get prizes, and so forth, the result is mostly mediocre when not outright bad. Such power structures generate coteries, parochial interests and many other undesirable consequences. Unfair and unethical behavior thrives whenever power concentrates in such a way. The same is true for scientific journals. It may even be terribly dangerous when scientific journals in countries in which science is of good quality respond to small power elites. That is why, regardless of the language in which they are published, scientific journals must rely on reviewing procedures that are protected from narrow national and similar parochial interests.

*Cognition* chose to be a journal published in English, but with a widely distributed set of reviewers from a large number of different countries. Likewise, the papers that we receive tend to emanate from many different countries. If one
wants more and better publications from other areas of the world, it is necessary that those areas promote local science, helping scientists by providing better opportunities for their best people, and by liberating science from the bureaucratic clamp in which it has to exist in many places. It will do no good simply to have journals include work by the Nationals of Outerlandia so that the local bureaucrats and politicians can go home and think that they have done a great job. Journals that accommodate in that way destroy themselves.

For the advancement of science, what remains important is that the selection procedures of journals be such that they do not accept bad work, but that they do not reject papers that could have made it in a big way if they had originated from, say, Stanford rather than Outerlandia. This aim can be achieved by ensuring that reviewing remains fair and thorough. Moreover, the only way in which this can be achieved without loading the dice is by using the lingua franca of science, English.

The process by which manuscripts are reviewed is, of course, never perfect, and I would like to urge colleagues to provide *Cognition* with the necessary feedback to improve our ways. Often a paper originating from a peripheral place tends to be written in ways that make it more difficult to assess the intrinsic quality of the work. In such cases, even if the likelihood of acceptance is, probably, not too high, it is important that reviewers carry out their task bearing in mind that they are acting as teachers, not just as judges. That, unfortunately, does not always happen. In the past, the discussion section touched on a number of broad issues concerning the relation of science and society. I would like to kindle back to life this section that was active during the first issues of the journal, and which has become very restricted, limited to scientific discussion of papers already published in the journal, although it started out with a much broader perspective.

We have a rather long history. However, we are also aware that only dynamic structures stay alive and well. So, we need to maintain our ability to change and adapt. It would be nice to hear from colleagues to understand better how they want us to evolve. Feel that you are being invited to make suggestions and to propose new ideas that might change the next fifty volumes.

How could one end this editorial without acknowledging the effort and devotion of so many reviewers who over the years have been the journal's true backbone? But the largest thanks go to Susana Franck, who has provided the professional competence, continuity and style that *Cognition* needed over its first fifty volumes. To you, authors and readers, we owe what we are becoming. Accept our gratitude.

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