

The Glass Half Empty: Verbal Rumination as Perspectival Entrenchment

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Although consciously thinking about the self can have an adaptive value, when such thoughts are repetitive, intrusive, frequent and negatively valenced they can have a severe impact on the thinker's self-understanding. I claim that verbal rumination can be understood as a particular way in which inner speech is involved in self-understanding. More specifically, verbal rumination, contrarily to dialogical instances of inner speech, being characterized by difficulties to switch between various perspectives in evidential considerations, leads to the unreliable ascription of attitudes. This process I dub 'perspectival entrenchment'.

By understanding verbal rumination as a kind of inner speech, this proposal aims to link research on inner speech and on rumination. Moreover, it constitutes an alternative view on the phenomenon of verbal rumination compared to views that focus on emotional appraisal or on self-regulatory mechanisms and it suggests alternative clinical approaches.