How do we reflect upon ourselves and our concerns in relation to society, and vice versa? Human reflexivity works through ‘internal conversations’ using language, but also emotions, sensations and images. Most people acknowledge this ‘inner dialogue’ and can report upon it. However, little research has been conducted on ‘internal conversations’ and how they mediate between our ultimate concerns and the social contexts we confront. Margaret Archer argues that reflexivity is progressively replacing routine action in late modernity, shaping how ordinary people make their way through the world. Using interviewees’ life and work histories, she shows how ‘internal conversations’ guide the occupations that people seek, keep or quit; their stances towards structural constraints and enablements; and their resulting patterns of social mobility.

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Making our Way through the World
Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility

Margaret S. Archer
University of Warwick
To the memory of
Luminiţa Caibăr

Who made her way lovingly through the world
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Acknowledgements

This book was an adventure. After commuting to the University of Warwick for thirty years, I finally got to know the city of Coventry. To do so means unpacking ‘the decline of British manufacturing’ into the painful lived reality of many people: the young without work, the families with first-hand knowledge of redundancy, and the older ones who will try anything rather than say ‘I’ll never work again.’ My first and deep thanks go to those who generously gave hours of their time to being interviewed and shared the good, the bad and the mundane so openly. I sincerely hope that I have given their life stories the respect and understanding they deserve – and not only because these are the book.

Secondly, my thanks go to the ESRC for funding this project and its successor. Without the award there would have been no research team and, without the team . . . Its international mix is what excites me about globalisation – an excitement that remains despite and after reciting its catalogue of errors. In order of appearance, thank you Hazel Rice (UK), research secretary; Andrew Timming (USA), pilot statistician; Man Wing Yeung (Hong Kong), project statistician; Nana Zhang (China), pilot interviewer; Sergey Petrov (Russia), IT assistant; Inga Aleksandravici (Lithuania) and Adina Bozga (Romania), preliminary interviewers; and especial gratitude to Nicoleta Cincpoes (Romania) for checking every chapter, for teaching me some rules of English grammar we don’t learn over here, as well as for correcting the Conclusion at 35,000 feet.

Some good old friends helped, as usual, through discussions, suggestions and much-needed encouragement; thank you again Pierpaoio Donati, Doug Porpora, Andrew Sayer and Wes Shumar. Through various conferences, the book made some new friends. I’m especially grateful for helpful comments from Vincent Colapietro, Dave Elder-Vass and Norbert Wiley, which I hope have been put to good use.

Finally, my apologies are owed to an anonymous female attendant at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, whom I seriously affronted in November 2004 by using my camera to snap the unauthorised version of the cover painting.