

## Why Me?

This book explores the evolution of the mental competence for self-reflection: why it evolved, under what selection pressures, in what environments, out of what precursors and with what mental resources. Integrating evolutionary, psychological and philosophical perspectives, Radu J. Bogdan argues that the competence for self-reflection, uniquely human and initially autobiographical, evolved under strong and persistent sociocultural and political (collaborative and competitive) pressures on the developing minds of older children and later adults. Self-reflection originated in a basic propensity of the human brain to rehearse anticipatively mental states, speech acts, actions and states of the world in order to service one's elaborate goal policies. These goal policies integrate offline representations of one's own mental states and actions and those of others in order to handle the challenges of a complex and dynamic sociopolitical and sociocultural life, calling for an adaptive intramental self-regulation: that intramental adaptation is self-reflection.

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## The Sociocultural Evolution of a Self-Reflective Mind

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*To the memory of my beloved Catalina*

We can never survey our own sentiments and motives . . . unless we remove ourselves . . . from our own natural station and endeavor to view them as at a certain distance from us. But we can do this in no other way than by endeavoring to view them with the eyes of other people.

(Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*)

Self-reflection [is] the ability to make an object of one's deepest feeling, to set it before oneself, to bow down to it, and, perhaps immediately after, to ridicule it.

(Dostoyevsky, *Diary of a Writer*)

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As with most of my books, the cover of the present one displays one of Catalina’s paintings. The book itself is dedicated to her memory.