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In *Our Own Minds*, Radu Bogdan takes a developmental perspective on consciousness_its functional design in particular_and proposes that children's functional capacity for consciousness is assembled during development out of a variety of ontogenetic adaptations that respond mostly to sociocultural challenges specific to distinct stages of childhood. Young human minds develop self-consciousness_in the broad sense of being conscious of the self's mental and behavioral relatedness to the world_because they face extraordinary and escalating sociocultural pressures that cannot be handled without setting in motion a complex executive machinery of self-regulation under the guidance of an increasingly sophisticated intuitive psychology.

Bogdan suggests that self-consciousness develops gradually during childhood. Children move from being oriented toward the outside world in early childhood to becoming (at about age four) oriented also toward their own minds. Bogdan argues that the sociocultural tasks and practices that children must assimilate and engage in competently demand the development of an intuitive psychology (also known as theory of mind or mind reading); the intuitive psychology assembles a suite of executive abilities (intending, controlling, monitoring, and so on) that install self-consciousness and drive its development. Understanding minds, first the minds of others and then our own, drives the development of self-consciousness, world-bound or extrovert at the beginning and later mind-bound or introvert. This asymmetric development of the intuitive psychology drives a commensurate asymmetric development of self-consciousness.