



# Complex Cognition: The Psychology of Human Thought

By Robert J. Sternberg, Talia Ben-Zeev

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**Complex Cognition: The Psychology of Human Thought** By Robert J. Sternberg, Talia Ben-Zeev

How did Boris Yeltsin decide to resign? What sort of thinking was involved in Richard Nixon's near impeachment and resignation? In this new book, acclaimed psychologist and author Robert Sternberg and coauthor Talia Ben-Zeev skillfully use such questions to offer their contemporary review of the key concepts and research findings within the field of cognitive psychology. Included in the book are discussions of:

- \* history of the field of complex cognition
- \* the nature of language
- \* concepts: structure and acquisition
- \* language and thought
- \* knowledge representation and acquisition
- \* human and artificial intelligence
- \* deductive reasoning
- \* creativity
- \* inductive reasoning
- \* expertise
- \* problem solving
- \* development of complex cognition
- \* decision making
- \* teaching thinking

In *Complex Cognition: The Psychology of Human Thought*, Sternberg and Ben-Zeev offer an original analysis of the field. The authors explain that in the past several decades there have been two dominant approaches in cognitive studies. One was of normative reference—represented by the "economic-person" and utility models—according to which people are rational thinkers who, in making decisions, thoroughly consider all alternatives and how to weigh them. The other, a contrasting and more contemporary approach, is the model of "bounded rationality," according to which people are surprisingly irrational, or at best a-rational, in their thinking, often deriving ill-conceived shortcuts that lead them to wrong conclusions. This text is a synthesis of these two approaches, combining the best elements of each to offer a radically inclusive new theory. It emphasizes multiple points of view, including the objective, but also the subjective views of the self and others. For example, from their own subjective points of view, people think sensibly, if not always wholly rationally; from an outside, objective point of view, their thinking often is not rational. However, according to the

authors, the objective stance is not more correct than the subjective stance: They are just different points of view that lead to different conclusions as to what is rational.

Appropriate for professionals, cognitive scientists, and educators, *Complex Cognition: The Psychology of Human Thought* is an essential text for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students who wish to learn about the field of complex cognition.

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About the Author

Robert Sternberg is at Yale University. Talia Ben-Zeev is at Williams College.

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