**Preface**

*Social robots* (called in this book ‘sociorobots’) represent a class of robots completely different from the industrial robots both in their functioning and their role in our life. They are designed to interact ‘socially’ and exhibit human-like or animal-like appearance, emotional expressions, and communicative capabilities. Therefore, it can be said that sociorobots represent a transition from ‘artifacts’ to ‘sociofacts’ in the sense that they participate in social interactions as true actors. Good sociorobots are accepted as partners from humans and are able to provide companionship via ‘distributed emotional agency,’ because they can be connected to humans in all three levels of constellation, viz., intentionality level, contingency level, and causality level.

Currently, a wide repertory of sociorobots is available which operate in both university and societal environments. For these robots, there exists an extensive research and/or market-oriented literature and Web-based information. The writing of this book was inspired by the author’s feeling that a consolidated source, where major sociorobots are included, is lacking.

In this book, the robots are examined at an introductory conceptual level with minimal technical and implementation details. The depth and width of the presentation is deemed to be sufficient for the reader to get a good and quick global picture of the world of sociorobots.

The material included in the book is suitable for use as a supplement in robotics courses, and as a general information source, with a rich literature, for both roboticists and other scientists. Those who wish to study more deeply or to do research in sociorobotics will find this book a convenient consolidated start.

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