Preface

For quite some time—at least as far back in history as the golden age of Theophrastus and the Greek philosophers, and as recently as the modern era of the Doctrine of Traits—personality has been defined by the individual's set of distinctive, enduring, and consistently exhibited behavioral dispositions, or traits. Scientists involved in the study of personality have expended considerable energy documenting the existence of these traits, and searching for a universally applicable multidimensional scheme for the classification of people. Such schemes comprise, for example, the classic factor-analytic personality theories of J.P. Guilford, Raymond B. Cattell, and Hans Eysenck.

Though few would deny the impressive analytic sophistication achieved in the service of establishing the place of the Doctrine of Traits, even ardent supporters of this tradition are somewhat tired of the search for *the* taxonomy of personality types, or the debate over the *true* state of affairs with regard to behavioral-trait consistency. Recent attempts to broaden the scope of personality research and to resurrect interest in the biological-evolutionary, cognitive-motivational, or social-cultural bases of personality differences have been welcomed in the field.

The present book explores one of these alternative directions for personality theory and research. We place social intelligence at the center of this personality theory and define it as the concepts, memories, and rules—in short, the knowledge—that individuals bring to bear in solving personal life

tasks. Of course, by placing intelligence at the center of such an analysis, we too run the risk of narrowing rather than broadening the focus of attention and reducing the cognitive basis of personality to some scheme of "social IQ." Clearly, this is not our intention. In fact, intelligence seems to us to be an appropriate centerpiece of personality precisely because it can be construed as multifaceted in nature, as in the work of Howard Gardner on multiple intelligences. Furthermore, the study of "intelligent" action in motivationally relevant social contexts forces consideration of the *effectiveness* of individuals' coping strategies—joining personality and clinical psychology in a common cause. This approach moves the study of personality back to the questions of adaptation and social adjustment raised by Murray and his contemporaries, and, for the moment, away from psychometric concerns with taxonomies and consistency coefficients.

In such a cognitive-motivational analysis, we hope to illustrate the broadening of the scope of personality research by considering process as well as structure, situations in addition to persons, and the life tasks that provide the motivation for personality change as well as those that promote stability and consistency. With these goals in mind we emphasize the complexity of people's solutions to the tasks of social life and note that often those solutions create new and more frustrating problems that further stretch the limits of individuals' social intelligence.

We present the following analysis of personality and social intelligence in the expansionist spirit of the new directions in personality theory and research. Accordingly, we would very much like to acknowledge the continual influence on our thinking of colleagues who are, themselves, pursuing directions that suggest multiple bases for personality and that integrate the concerns of personality and clinical psychologies. Our collaboration in this effort derives from shared interests in social cognition, social learning, and clinical assessment—interests that have been and continue to be very significantly shaped by inspirations, ideas, and discerning guidance provided by Walter Mischel. His contributions to our work are too numerous to enumerate; we can only hope that this book, written in the spirit of his scholarly tradition, serves as something of a gesture of our enormous appreciation.

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