PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study builds on doctoral research conducted at the Universities of Reading and Essex, yet its origins lie further back. As an undergraduate, I studied English Literature. The critics impressed me as much as the writers, and it would not be inaccurate to say that my work to date has been marked by early readings of Susan Sontag and Marshall McLuhan, the French post-structuralists and the Frankfurt School. My attention soon turned to the work of Jürgen Habermas. I was inspired by the affirmative account of modernity at its heart. This has been the object of critique for some time, and in recent years it has seemed difficult even to articulate. That it still remains plausible to me – despite everything, a declaration of hope – is the reason I have persisted with the present avenue of research.

I had originally intended to produce an account of the ‘democratic deficit’. This would have been structured by a selection of Habermas’s concepts, particularly those of his later, legal-democratic, theory. After the tragic events of 9/11, however, I was forced, like many others, to question my most basic assumptions. It gradually became apparent that Habermas’s work was not rendered obsolete by the dramatic occurrences of the time, which in a sense marked the passing of the postwar context in which he had developed his major ideas. I would have to broaden my investigation, I realised, not abandon it.

Habermas (2001c: 75) has written of the ‘densely populated, ethnically mixed suburbs in the vicinity of Heathrow Airport’. I grew up nearby, and it was to the suburbs that I returned to do the bulk of the writing. More than once a key sentence or idea has come to me on an evening stroll (in unconscious homage to Walter Benjamin, perhaps), and the importance to my research of the European *lifeworld*, the experiential rather than market-administrative aspect of the integration process, probably stems from this peripatetic orientation. I also worked in the vicinity of Heathrow Airport, as a visiting lecturer at Brunel University – my warmest gratitude goes to Professors Justin Fisher and Alex Warleigh-Lack for inviting me back each year.

Thanks are due to a number of people. To begin with, Professor Richard Bellamy – I could not have asked for a better supervisor. My gratitude also goes to Professor Emil Kirchner and Professor William Outhwaite, both in relation to my doctorate and this study. Along with everyone at Manchester University Press, I am indebted to Professor Thomas Christiansen for his

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Reclining in a wicker chair in Bangkok, I began reading William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984). I was somewhat encouraged to learn that the author had completed it at the grand old age of thirty-six, and that I therefore had twelve solid years to produce a comparable work of my own. It remains unwritten. The engagement with geopolitics and philosophy that seemed a prerequisite for the task was compelling in itself, and, twelve years on, this study exists in place of the envisaged novel, though the worldviews of Habermas and Gibson are, of course, quite different. Another work that inspired me was John Goff's *The Last Days of the Most Hidden Man* (1992). Just as it exceeded *Neuromancer* in prescience, John's philosophical prognoses have consistently been a decade ahead of everyone else's. I owe him thanks for introducing me to Habermas's work in the first place, and a great intellectual debt besides. He has kindly contributed an afterword.

Finally, I am grateful to my family and friends, who have been with me through so many challenging times. If I began to list them all, and the debts of gratitude I owe, this preface would run to a volume in itself. And there is Silvia, without whom I would conceivably be nothing at all. This book is dedicated to her.

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