

Preface and Acknowledgements

This manuscript has been underway for the past 11 years. The original text was a doctoral dissertation defended in 2006. Most of it has been rewritten in the meanwhile; the analytical structure and the argument as such are different.

Much of the credit (and, of course, none of the blame) for writing and rewriting it up to this form goes to the people I was fortunate to encounter. Over a decade is a long time in one's life and thus provides ample opportunities to travel academically and meet people. That being said, I was particularly lucky in this respect, to have encountered that rare and ever scarcer breed: genuine scholars, for whom ideas are neither dead and dull nor something trifling to merely toy with.

I owe my former dissertation advisor, Professor András Sajó of the Central European University, a good deal of gratitude for grudgingly pointing me to the right books at the right time. It was also auspicious that András Sajó momentarily broke with his Socratic methodological predispositions at an early stage. He mentioned, namely, that, in an early draft chapter rightly deemed worth discarding, only three words, *self-subverting rationality*, had to do with my topic. The borrowed strength of that early insight awakened and later confirmed my own intuitions. During my doctoral studies, in 2000–2001, I spent a full academic year away from Budapest, doing research at the University of Toronto and the Yale Law School. I am grateful to Professors David Dyzenhaus of Toronto and Jerry L. Mashaw of Yale for their readiness to welcome my work and me. During the 2 years (2002–2004) spent researching and teaching in Montreal, as a Boulton Fellow at McGill University's Faculty of Law, I had interesting conversations with Professors Fabien Gélinas, Roderick Macdonald, Desmond Manderson, Armand de Mestral, and Stephen Scott. They all have my unalloyed appreciation.

When the initial dissertation was written I could not read German and was therefore at the mercy of translations. I will always be in the debt of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for awarding me a 4-month language fellowship to study German and a 2-year research fellowship to read and think about this book at leisure. Each new language learnt is another shell for one's intellectual personality but German has revealed a thinking world I had no idea existed. Without immediate access to it my thinking and writing would have been much impoverished. My host

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