THE DOPPELGÄNGER

Literature's Philosophy

DIMITRIS VARDOULAKIS

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LITERATURE'S PHILOSOPHY

Dimitris Vardoulakis

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For Andrew Benjamin

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PREFACE

A project that has been carried out, in various stages and in different places, for almost a decade will inevitably be indebted to a large number of friends. At the same time, this makes it difficult to acknowledge everyone. Thus, only those with the most immediate impact on the book can be mentioned here. Tina Weller's help has been invaluable. Walter Veit has offered wise counsel and support. Thanks to Gail Ward, Carlo Salzani, and Sabina Sestigiani for their friendship. Leslie Hill has been instrumental in forging the presence of Blanchot in these pages. Chris Danta's intellectual insights have always been highly valued. The input by Stathis Gourgouris, David Ferris, and Ewa Ziarek has been crucial in bringing this project to completion. An Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship, undertaken at the Peter Szondi-Institut für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, at the invitation of Winfried Menninghaus, made it possible to complete a full draft of the manuscript. The final draft was completed during a sabbatical that was organized by Peter Murphy and the School of English, Communication and Performance Studies at Monash University. Sarah Anderson was a supportive companion during the writing of this book.

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The spelling of the German word "der Doppelgänger" has been normalized to the English spelling "doppelgänger," except when German texts are cited.

In the absence of a reference to a published translation, translations are mine. On occasion, cited translations have been altered in order to amend mistakes or to retain terminological continuity or the stylistic tenor.

All references to Jean Paul's works are to the Norbert Miller edition,

unless otherwise stated: Jean Paul, *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Norbert Miller (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000).

All references to the works of Alexandros Papadiamantes are to the Triantafyllopoulos edition of the *Complete Works* (*Hapanta*), 2d ed. (Athens: Domos, 1997), volume number followed by page number.

All references to the German edition of Walter Benjamin's work are to *Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), abbreviated *GS*. All references to the English translations of Benjamin's work are to the *Selected Writings*, 4 vols., edited by Michael W. Jennings et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997–2003), abbreviated *SW*. All references to *The Arcades Project*, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1999), are given by the number of the Convolute entry, which is identical in the English and the German editions.

What is proper to a culture is not to be identical to itself. *Not to not have an identity, but not to be able to identify itself, to be able to say "me" or "we"; to be able to take the form of a subject only in the non-identity to itself or, if you prefer, only in the difference* with itself. *There is no culture or cultural identity without this difference* with itself.

<div align="right">JACQUES DERRIDA, *The Other Heading*</div>

According to Jean-Joseph Goux, the figure of Oedipus represents the first philosopher. Oedipus can claim to launch the entire philosophical tradition of the West because he presents a subversion of the traditional mythic pattern of a hero's trial in order to become king. Instead of the hero's using physical force to overcome the monstrous, Oedipus uses only his mind against the Sphinx. As a consequence of Oedipus' self-reflective act, the subject can aspire to self-identity. This represents the humanist insistence on self-knowledge.[1] There are two dangers inscribed in this act that have accompanied philosophy ever since. First, Oedipus' use of ratiocination can set him apart from all other humans. He can be called a *last man* in the sense that his reason creates a space separate from his fellow humans, a space where he remains forever trapped.[2] His bypassing of bodily combat with the Sphinx condemns Oedipus to a desolate space of reason from which there is no escape. Second, Oedipus' revolutionary act of overcoming the Sphinx is not directed merely against myth but also has profound repercussions for the sovereign power that it bestows on him. That power is also supported by the spilling of blood, initially the blood of his own father, and subsequently that of his mother, who was driven to suicide. Oedipus as a *first man* cannot disengage himself from a founding act of violence. Separation and its accompanying violence challenge the humanist assumption of a self-consistent subjective identity—and this is a challenge to the first philosopher no less than to the foundations of the philosophical tradition he inaugurates.

What would it be like to think of another opening to the philosophical tradition? How is it possible to think of the philosophical without being seduced by the desire for self-identity? Henri Lefebvre suggests in

the second lecture of his *Introduction to Modernity* that such an open-ing consists in recognizing the inherently political dimension of Oedi-pus' answer to the riddle. Lefebvre presents the blind Oedipus groping his way toward Colonus and wondering what he did wrong. Being fully aware of his importance as a first philosopher, Oedipus is unable to see his error. At this point the "voice of the Unseeable" intervenes to re-mind Oedipus of his crime, the blood that he has spilled. It is because of this crime, says the voice, that Oedipus is guilty. Lefebvre abruptly concludes with the following statement: "The voice is lost in the tu-mult. A cloud of dust rises from beneath the feet of soldiers marching by. They laugh at the blind old man. They come from the little town to-wards which Oedipus is groping his stumbling way: Athens."³ What the marching soldiers of Athens—the first colonial power in the country that gave birth to the first philosopher—remind Oedipus, along with the "voice of the Unseeable," is that Oedipus' crime was neither a mis-take in the way he rationalized his circumstance nor the spilling of the blood his action precipitated. Rather, his crime was that both his ra-tiocinations and his actions ignored the structures of power. Oedipus failed to take responsibility for the political, even though—or, perhaps, because—he assumed sovereignty. Man's self-knowledge cannot justify or legitimate the use of this knowledge in perpetrating acts of political violence.

Recognizing the emergence of the political in the discrepancy that persists between any configuration of knowledge and power character-izes, according to Lefebvre, modernity. The other opening to the philo-sophical is made possible in modernity. What is, however, the nature of this other opening? How is its political agenda to be understood? Dis-cussing *Oedipus at Colonus* in his lectures on hospitality, Jacques Der-rida suggests that this other opening requires an unconditional accep-tance of the other. The stranger must be welcomed as the most intimate friend, as the one whose unconditional acceptance is determinative of the host's identity.⁴ This is both an ethical and a political responsibil-ity. Through this responsibility, the individual can attain singularity, which is to say, that it renounces self-knowledge; it is no longer "able to say 'me' or 'we,'" as Derrida puts it in the epigraph above. As Derrida further explains, such a subject does not renounce identity altogether but can locate identity "only in the non-identity to itself or . . . only in the difference *with itself*."

At the same time, it is a responsibility that challenges the autonomy of philosophy in modernity. If philosophy is to account for the oth-

er, if it is to find another opening, then philosophy has to welcome its own other, namely literature. Even more emphatically, the welcoming of philosophy's other is not a matter of choice for modernity but the chance for philosophy to rise to its own potential. That potential can be called "literature's philosophy." But it should never be forgotten that "literature's philosophy" would have been unthinkable in modernity without Oedipus. The first philosopher—and this means, most emphatically, the first subject also—cannot be summarily rejected, thrown in the dustbin of the history of ideas. Modernity is called to respond to the construction of self-identity. This response will be traced in the following pages through the figure of the doppelgänger. The doppelgänger overcomes the sovereign, self-identical subject by disrupting the nexus of knowledge and power. As such, the doppelgänger emerges as the other that literature has to grapple with in order to give philosophy a chance.

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Introduction, or The Reflections of the Doppelgänger

Mirroring is the primary phenomenon of ideology.

THEODOR W. ADORNO, *Metaphysics*

The doppelgänger makes possible an ontology of the subject. This does not entail a lapse into metaphysics. The doppelgänger, rather, eschews attempts to reduce the subject to mere presence. A first thesis of this book is that *the resistance to presence indicates the doppelgänger's ontology, bringing literature and philosophy into productive and mutually illuminating contact*. The thesis about the doppelgänger's resistance to presence does not entail a simple opposition to, or negation of, presence. Such a move would have resulted in an essentialization of absence as constitutive of subjectivity. Instead, it will be shown that the subject persists through its resistance to both presence and absence, and, therefore, what matters is the manner in which it persists. The subject's persistence is evidenced not only by the continuing use of the concept in philosophy but also by the necessity of having characters in stories and novels as well as by the necessity that criticism address those characters. The poststructuralist insistence on the death of the subject, the author, and so on does not entail equating death with complete absence.[1]

The doppelgänger, it will be argued, is an *operative* or *effective presence* to the extent that it effects the undoing of the framing of the subject by the opposition between mere presence and absence. Such an operation indicates a function of relationality—the various relations that structure the subject's ontology. This relationality is what is called here the doppelgänger. The relationality is formal, and for this reason the doppelgänger will be referred to by the neuter pronoun, the "it," despite the fact that "der Doppelgänger" is a masculine noun in German. This is not to deny that the relations established in the subject are gendered.

On the contrary, it follows from the acknowledgment that the relations are always gendered because they are always particular. Hence, the neuter is preferable so that neither the masculine nor the feminine appear privileged.

What are the doppelgänger's relations of? What is being related? The problem of approaching the relationality proper to the doppelgänger by an inquiry into its "what" will always encounter the problem of essentializing relationality itself. In other words, by starting with "what," relationality is already presupposed. The doppelgänger is neither solely a product of relations nor simply produces them, so that it unfolds outside the bounds of this neither/nor. The question is about the manner in which the unfolding occurs. *How* is the doppelgänger operative? Or, *how* does the subject figure as the doppelgänger? The relations proper to the subject should neither be equated with the aggregate of empirical attributes of a specific subject nor lead to an abstraction of a subjectivity as such. Rather, the relations will unfold in particular sites, which will always be historically determined. Such determinations will be provided in this book by literary texts. This is not an arbitrary choice, given that the doppelgänger has been prevalent in literature. The focus on specific literary texts means that the particular endures. There is always a historical context. At the same time, the context is not occluded: the literary contains immanently in itself possibilities for its criticism, and both the literary and the critical are also organized by various protocols that entail a propriety leading to the ontological and the philosophical.[2] So long as relationality is an operative presence, it enables the staging of different discursive fields (here, the literary, the critical, and the philosophical) as well as that which is being staged by those fields. The doppelgänger is this double staging—or chiasmus—of relationality.

Tackling the doppelgänger through literature is due to its historical development, but still this approach should not be taken as exemplary. A number of alternative approaches can be envisioned. For instance, Debra Walker King summarizes the doppelgänger as "the collision between real bodies and an unfriendly informant: a fictional double whose aim is to mask individuality and mute the voice of personal agency. Although this double is created and maintained most often by forces beyond ourselves (television, magazines, cultural mandates and myths), we bear its markers on our bodies, particularly those of age, race and gender. In this way, the fictional double is always with us. . . . Unfortunately the informant they see, and to whom they are willing to listen, lies. Instead of telling a story of individuals living in social reality, this

cultural construction of racialized, gendered, or sexual body fictions disfigures or conceals women beneath a veil of invisibility, threatening economic, political, emotional, and spiritual suffocation."³ The first thesis, stated above, about the doppelgänger's resistance to presence is in accord with King's assertion that the "double is always with us." The doppelgänger's effective presence could be pursued from the point of view of technology, the media, or feminism, as is suggested by King. But this intimates a second thesis of the book, namely that *the doppelgänger is in a process of construction—its effective presence is transformative*. Consequently, it is possible to thematize the doppelgänger in different ways. There is no ipso facto privileged mode of access to the doppelgänger. However, this book diverges from King's proposal in one significant respect. It does not read the doppelgänger as a symptom of impotence or as an evil presence. Moreover, as it will be argued throughout, a nostalgic restitution of the individual is not amenable to the doppelgänger, whose operative presence undoes individuality. The doppelgänger is neither good nor bad, but rather it is the element of formal relationality that structures the subject's ontology.

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The distinction highlighted above between the "what" and the "how" of the doppelgänger can also be the starting point for distinguishing two kinds of reflection vis-à-vis the subject, which bring to the fore literature's import for philosophy. The first kind of reflection, which pertains to the "what," is instrumental for an understanding of the doppelgänger insofar as it designates the relation that is reconfigured by it. (Crucially, the movement from the "what" to the "how" is a reconfiguration, not a rejection or an overcoming. As it will be argued later, there is no sublation or synthesis to guarantee the reflection proper to the doppelgänger.) This first reflection can be called metaphysical and is linked to the genesis of the word "Doppelgänger." It is the reflection between a subject and the subjectivity underlying it. The subject is the phenomenal self, every single one of "us." The subjectivity is that "us" itself, a generalized notion of the subject—not a single man but humanity, not an individual but the individuality of the people(s), not a human but man in the image of God. The relation between the subject and subjectivity is a self-reflection. As it will be shown, self-reflection always requires a clear distinction between the two structural terms—the subject in its particularity and in its universality—but the doppelgänger always intervenes and destabilizes the distinction.

The metaphysical self-reflection does not merely indicate that subject and subjectivity mirror each other. What is also necessarily involved is a reference to the "world." Specifically, if this image is not to be simply tautological, it requires the mediation of a third term. But to the extent that what is enacted between the particularity of the individual and the universality of subjectivity is a relation between the finite and the infinite, then the third term would also be constructed by that relation. For this reason, the third term is the setting of self-reflection, the "world" or "reality" of the subject. If the reflections between a self and selfhood construct reality, then what tends to be forgotten is the ineliminable web of interests on the part of the subject, which are refracted through the reflection. No matter how many precepts are prescribed to regulate action, self-reflection will always be aligned with self-interest. To repeat Adorno's assertion from the epigraph, "mirroring is the primary phenomenon of ideology." Reflection's import is that there is always a politics of the subject.

Self-reflection, as a unilinear relation between the infinite and the finite, can take two forms, depending on which term is given primacy. First, the move from the infinity of reason to the particularity of action characterizes the philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Following in the footsteps of Kant, Fichte developed a philosophy by positing apperception or a transcendental subject as a first principle from which all the laws about the subject will be derived. As will be shown in Chapter 1, the German author Jean Paul coined the word "Doppelgänger" to criticize Fichte's "I-philosophy."[4] Jean Paul's Doppelgänger illustrates that the move from the infinite to an actual place or setting is always curtailed, with the result that the subject is lost in the infinity of reason—in an absolute loneliness. This is what Nietzsche calls "the last man," a placeless subject. Second, the opposite move can be adopted, namely from the particular to the infinite. As it will be shown in Chapter 2 through a reading of Alexandros Papadiamantes' novella *The Murderess*, this requires a continual negation of the particular in order to attain to a complete self-reflection. Negating reality is, according to Hegel, the solving of the riddle about the human by a "first man," who institutes the laws of subjectivity. Because the negations are endless, this self-institution is timeless. The legal framework of subjectivity will accord with the infinite. However, what dies in the progression toward subjectivity is the particular subject—there is a murder of the subject in that its future is foreclosed. This explains the often murderous intention of doppelgänger characters and also shows another lone-

liness operating here. It is the loneliness of the subject struggling for the atemporal, which takes the guise of an accessible future. This struggle is curtailed; the future cannot present a complete self-reflection; and hence, just like the last man, the first man also fails.

This dual failure of self-reflection—the failure of the institution of the subject through subjectivity and the failure of the subject to institute subjectivity—will make it possible to stage a different relation of the subject to the law. It will be a relation arising out of a small remainder in the law, a penumbra, which always destabilizes the law and which cannot be identified with it. This taint in the mirroring of self-reflection leads to a notion of justice—to the tain of the mirror, as Rodolphe Gasché puts it.⁵ A justice which is premised, on the one hand, on the dismantling of individuality and subjectivity and, on the other, on the blurring of the outlines of the autonomous and independent subject. In other words, justice cannot accommodate the distinct terms—the empirical and the transcendental subject—that structure the metaphysical self-reflection. The second notion of reflection will arise from the failures of metaphysical self-reflection.

This second reflection, the doppelgänger, will be a critique of infinite subjectivity no less than a critique of the law. In the doppelgänger's reflection, both the subject and the law can only be present as absent—that is, not framed by the opposition between presence and absence. As it will be shown in Chapter 3, Jean Paul as this absent presence is a collocutor of Maurice Blanchot. This allows for the operative presence of the doppelgänger, which unfolds on the fault lines of literature, criticism, and philosophy. The doppelgänger arises at the points where each inquiry reaches a limit, transforming itself into something else. The collocution of Jean Paul and Blanchot entails that the canon is not merely a list of authors compiled by the critic but arises out of the absent presence of the doppelgänger. Thus, the doppelgänger becomes a medium of reading the work, and hence constitutive of writing. This process of the mutual limiting and interacting between—the imbrication of—literature, criticism, and philosophy is, then, an initial feature of the reflection proper to the doppelgänger.

To allow for the doppelgänger's reflection to exceed the laws of subjectivity—the self-reflection of a particular and a transcendental subject—is a political project. However, the political should not be assumed to be given within the empirical. The finite and particular human activities that comprise the sphere of politics should not be confused with the political that enacts the excess proper to the doppelgänger, and hence

escapes the merely present. Nor should the political be equated with an ideal. As already intimated, the doppelgänger counteracts the attempt to base the subject on a principle of infinity. The political comes to the fore precisely as the mutual delimitation enacted between the finite and the infinite. Or, to put it in another way, the political is the *interruption* of the relation between the infinite and the finite.[6] In Chapter 4, such an interruption will be shown to be associated, first, with the enactment of judgment, as understood by Walter Benjamin's materialist historiography, and, second, with a notion of the cosmopolitical, independent of the humanist ideal of an autonomous individual but rather, as is argued with recourse to Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things*, with intermingled autonomy and automaticity. The political is an interruption of metaphysical self-reflection and hence a rupture of the politics of self-interest.

The doppelgänger is political in the sense that it allows for an extrapolation of the conditions of the possibility of action. The doppelgänger allows for a staging of the fissure between the two totalities of the phenomenal and the universal—a staging that reflects the political in the sense of not allowing the infinite and the finite to reconcile. What matters is the staging of this fissure, not its bridging. Consequently, as it will be argued in Chapter 5, theatricality—as that staging—is crucial for an understanding of the doppelgänger. Walter Benjamin's work on Franz Kafka is structured by the opposition between life and work. However, this opposition offers three different stagings, or three kinds of theater. Privileging the author's work turns the subject into an actor on a cosmic stage where conciliation has been achieved. Opposed to that is the privileging of life, which turns the subject into an actor mired in the ambiguities of mythic contingency. The third staging is an oscillation between the previous two, in which the subject is never allowed to find a resting place. Oscillation is important because, no matter how seemingly opposed life and work are in the first two extrapolations, they are ultimately allied. Their alliance is premised on an insistence on sameness, the retention of an essential quality as that which defines the subject's self-identity. This shows that, at the end, the self-reflections of the first and the last man have a common metaphysical foundation—the assumption that an equation between the empirical and the transcendental selves is possible.[7] Conversely, an interruption of the relation between life and work in the manner of a mutual transformability or oscillation between them is an insistence on difference. This difference is due to the operative presence of the doppelgänger. The doppelgänger figures the political in the sense that it enacts a

configuration and disfiguration of that which seeks to deny difference. The political figures as, or is reflected by, the doppelgänger.

For such a figuration to take place, reflection cannot be expunged.[8] A total rejection of metaphysical self-reflection will only result in the sublation of the concept of subjectivity into something even more totalizing and into a sublimation of the subject into a higher entity. Rather, owing to the interruption, reflection is to be retained. Interruption resists the final synthesis of a sublation or a sublimation. The subject persists in the figure of the doppelgänger. But it is a persistence in a process of formation, and hence a being as transformation. There is no *forma finalis*; rather, form is constantly deformed and reformed. The doppelgänger is always in a process of construction, very much as the discourses it reflects—literature and philosophy.

This endless transformation entails that the doppelgänger is never always already political. Rather, the doppelgänger is the interruption of the "always already" in its relation to the political. In other words, interruption has to be achieved; it does not simply exist—interruption is a praxis. Thus, the doppelgänger retains reflection but is not itself simply a reflection: the interruption is not only creative but also created. The doppelgänger is the medium of reflection, that is, that which allows for the interruption to take place. The doppelgänger is this staging in the interstices of the literary, the critical, and the philosophical. By being the condition of the possibility of this staging, the doppelgänger follows the political like a shadow but without ever being allowed to fully coincide with it. Thus, as is argued throughout this book, the doppelgänger is always in a process of formation and hence transformation; it remains to be elaborated; it *is*, but its being, its ontology, its presence, is not only linked to a past but also laden with a future.

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Some of the most important works directly dealing with the doppelgänger, such as Freud's "The 'Uncanny'" and Andrew J. Webber's *The Doppelgänger*, will be discussed in their appropriate context later in the book. It should be noted here, however, that these important works are the exceptions to the two main approaches to the doppelgänger. The main approaches represent the two common and easy ways to miss the significance of the figure of the doppelgänger to present literature's philosophy.[9] The first approach bypasses the doppelgänger's transform-ability altogether, whereas the second obviates the effort required by the enactment of the interruption and transformation. In other words,

these two approaches directly contradict the two theses about the doppelgänger indicated earlier—namely, that the doppelgänger persists in a process of construction and that its presence is effective. The result is that both these approaches lead to thoroughly unbalanced relations between literature and philosophy.

The first approach posits the doppelgänger as an immanently psychological category by insisting on a syncretism between author and character as well as between critic and analyst.[10] What is lost in the gap between the two syncretisms is literature itself—or, rather, literature is discussed only in terms of self-reflections. Ralph Tymms, who wrote one of the first and most influential studies of the doppelgänger in English, offers a succinct and instructive example of this psychological approach. The first sentence of Tymms's book asserts that "superficially, doubles are among the most facile, and less reputable devices of fiction."[11] This superficiality is dispelled, Tymms argues, so long as the doppelgänger is seen as a representation of the author's psychic process.[12] Thus, Tymms concludes, dark fantasies about subjective doublings should "be treated with the objectivity of a psychiater's casebook."[13] If that were so, then the literature of the doppelgänger would be merely a manifestation of the author's symptoms, and Tzvetan Todorov would have been correct to say that, as a category of psychoanalysis, the doppelgänger has lost its import for literature.[14] This approach posits the doppelgänger as exhausted, as having reached its end for literature. The syncretism of this approach is premised on a notion of something secret in the psyche of the human, which can be either fully confessed or never revealed. Conversely, as it will be argued in various points in this book, the doppelgänger resists an equation of subjective identity with either something entirely hidden or with that which is to be disclosed. Thus, the psychology allowed by the doppelgänger focuses on the staging of such resistances, no less that it is being staged by them.

Whereas the first way to miss the doppelgänger's significance for the relation between literature and philosophy consists in a contraction of the literary, the second way argues for its enormous expansion. Such an expansion has two variations: The first renders the doppelgänger either meaningless or theological. For instance, Hillel Schwartz defines the doppelgänger as that which exhibits a duplicity. This allows Schwartz to amass examples, having ignored all the while to specify what is meant by "duplicity." Everyone becomes a double of everyone else; everything is a copy of something. There is *no end* to doubling and copying.[15] On the contrary, taking the issue of the end seriously entails inquiring into

what is meant by "everything." The "everything" opens up a realm of pure differentiation, a totality which seeks to deny that there is anything outside, and hence it is a theological impulse. As it will be shown, such a totality seeks to deny difference, but the operative presence of the doppelgänger always reinscribes difference as it counteracts the mystique of reconciliation. The second way of broadening the scope of the doppelgänger tends to overlook the resistances offered by the figure of the doppelgänger as well as the effort required for interruption and the political to occur. What characterizes this approach is that there is *no beginning* to the doppelgänger. Typically, the canon of the doppelgänger is pushed back to antiquity, evoking a series of more or less standard examples, such as the discussion of the "other half" by Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*, or the motif of *Amphitryon*, the myth of Narcissus, comedies of anagnorisis, not to mention all the examples of doubling and the shadow that anthropology has highlighted.[16] This results in studies of the doppelgänger which are usually learned and often contain astute readings of literary texts, but which completely miss the doppelgänger's philosophical significance.[17]

Once the doppelgänger is effortlessly pinpointed in any canonical text of its genre, then there is no scope for thinking about the resistances that characterize the subject and which necessitate the interruptions of the political. The present study avoids both a contraction and an expansion of the doppelgänger. The beginning of the doppelgänger is pragmatically determined by Jean Paul's coinage of the word "Doppelgänger" in 1796. Yet given the ontological structure of the doppelgänger, its effective presence is not reducible to any pragmatic context nor to any single historical narrative. Therefore, so long as the doppelgänger's relationality—its being creative *and* created—is shown to be operative in a text or discourse, the date 1796, is of secondary importance. This allows for the doppelgänger to be discovered—that is, actively sought—in any text where the interruption of self-reflection can be discerned. In other words, the doppelgänger appears the moment a text is shown to be political.

The doppelgänger is not framed by an absolute beginning or an absolute end. The approaches that miss the doppelgänger—either by contracting or by expanding it—have all in common an essentializing of the limit. Conversely, the doppelgänger does not end with psychoanalysis; nor is it endless simply because there is an indefinite number of examples of it. Furthermore, because it eschews a metaphysics of origin, the doppelgänger does not have *a* beginning or *many* beginnings. Far

from essentializing the limit, the doppelgänger is an interrogation of the limit and on the limit—its interruptive power consists in the necessity of the limit as well as its equally necessary delimitation or transgression. Therefore, unlike the approaches that essentialize the limit, the doppelgänger puts the notions of beginning and end into question. If there is an endlessness proper to the doppelgänger, it is the infinite possibility of interruption between an absolute beginning and an absolute end. The doppelgänger enacts the interruption between a first and a last man, no less than the relation between the emergence and the exhaustion of novelty. But this is enacted on sites historically determined—the work of particular writers soliciting a response. Thus, this book does not pretend to have identified exemplary instances of the doppelgänger because there are no texts that are canonical doppelgänger examples. The corpus of the doppelgänger is growing and diminishing depending on the responses offered to particular texts. The canon of the doppelgänger does not have an end or a beginning because the doppelgänger does not have a measure—in the sense that the doppelgänger is that which interrupts the opposition between the measurable and the immeasurable. The operation of the subject can no longer be equated either with individual perceptions or with a generalized subjectivity. Rather, as both delimit themselves, they set in motion a chiastic relationality between being creative and been created, that is, the ontology of the doppelgänger, the liminal subject.