

# A Note on the Shadow Text (or Parerga)

June 1, 2009 | [Notes from the author](#)

This book tells a tale in two parts. The tale is one of abjection, of miasmas, of dehumanization. It contains the history and the story of how a “zone of danger” was instituted in Greece in the early years of the twentieth century and how it was forcibly populated with and inhabited by what was culturally designated as “the Left.” The first part is the story/history. The second part, the parerga, is a shadow text to the main one. The two parts do not take up the same space, although they both have stories to recount and account for and histories that refuse to be forgotten. They bleed into one another; the story/history and the parerga cannot stand independently of one another. That was the greatest challenge I faced in writing this book: How could I allow these chronicles, which have been bleeding for so long (into each other, onto themselves, spilling out of all bounds), to retain their infectiousness, to stay there, crowding each other, while remaining singularly meaningful?

Parerga are not commentaries. They do not interrogate a stable main text or invite further commentary. Rather, they are, in a sense, what Derrida has called a “lean on,” a space where I, the author, offer you, the readers, the chance to hold onto something: an idea, an explanation, a question, an interrogation, a dissent. Together they are a metatext that seeks to unseat any certainties that might exist in the main text, any convictions that might have developed in the narrative about the Left.

In the printed version of this book, the parerga short enough to be set in the margins were placed there, so that they could be read in spatial proximity to the text. Those too long for that treatment were placed in the back, with cross-reference in the text. This resulted in two sets of numbering: in-text superscripts for parerga in the margins and numbering by chapter (e.g., 1.1) for those in the back of the book. However, this does not fully realize the possibilities of the parerga in combination with the history. The intent of both sequences is the same—to open the possibility of a layered and somewhat aleatory reading experience, through which the reader can be repeatedly reminded of the many different voices and discourses brought together in the years of fieldwork and research done for this volume. Parerga are not simply notes. They should be thought of as the extremities of a body, without which the text is truncated. They are notations to the text that make the text show its complexities, as they set against the main narrative the realities of multiple positions, showing that there is no stability in this history, that any attempt to produce a cohesive narration will always attract voices from the margins that will demand that the nuances they offer be taken into account.

My editor at Fordham University Press, Helen Tartar, understood well the demands placed on me and on the text by those voices, those stories, and the limitations of traditional book design to present the reader with the desired experience. As it happened, Helen and Rebecca Kennison, the director of CDRS, had been exploring the possibility of their teams working together on a project—and this one struck both of them as perfect for just such a collaboration. They approached me with the idea of developing an online version of *Dangerous Citizens*, and from our first conversation, it was clear that this was the perfect solution to my dilemma. The nature

of parerga is such that the format of a printed text does not, quite literally, allow space for all the voices that contributed to the story/history I have outlined. Online is another story—quite literally—indeed.

### **A Note on the Evolution of Parerga**

Parerga are intimately connected with the development of the Western critical tradition, encompassing the historical and discursive development of social and philosophical thought that forms the backdrop for the entire discipline of anthropology, indeed, that has engendered anthropology as an inquiry and a discipline, from its methodology to its epistemology and content. The term initially appeared in Greek in *Philotheou Parerga*, a text conceived between 1716 and 1718 by the Voivode of Wallachia, Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, as a guide to conduct for his son. (Voivode was an Ottoman rank bestowed upon high-ranking individuals in the occupied lands.) It appeared next in Ayliff's *Parergon Juris Canonici Anglicani; or, A Commentary by Way of Supplement to the Canons and Constitutions of the Church of England* in 1726. Both texts make clear that parerga constitute a supplemental and instructional gesture that accompanies a main text or narrative but does so in a resolutely critical manner. In Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and later, in a very long note in his second edition of *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1794), the parergon is developed as adornment, embellishment, ornamentation (*Zierathen*) of the main ergon, the work.

Half a century later, in 1851, Arthur Schopenhauer published his *Parerga and Parelipomena*, a work that, Schopenhauer explained, was subsidiary to his other, more systematic works, could not find a place in those other works, and dealt primarily with philosophical issues that positioned the subject with regard to the legal system, death, and existence.

Derrida brought the idea of the parergon one step closer to anthropology by threading together anthropology and the logic of the supplement in Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques*. Lévi-Strauss, placing his work in a direct line of descent from Rousseau, makes *Tristes Tropiques* “at the same time *The Confessions* and a sort of supplement to the *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*,” Derrida notes (1976: 107). The supplement, Derrida continues, replaces and intervenes (*tient-lieu*), as its presence is as dangerous to the structure as is its absence (1976: 141–64, 216–69). It is precisely this critical texture of the parergon, its capability to contain text that is both explanatory and indispensable, that raises the stakes of the reading experience that I am exploring here.

—Neni Panourgia

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