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Monash University

FAIT, ACCOMPLI
THE DOPPELGÄNGER IN
GEORGE ALEXANDER'S MORTAL DIVIDE

Generations of men, throughout recorded time have always told and retold two stories – that of the lost ship which searches the Mediterranean sea for a dearly beloved island, and that of a god who is crucified on Golgotha.

Jorge Luis Borges

*On one side of the tapestry
There sits the bearded king
And round about him stand
His lords and ladies in a ring;
The hunting dogs are there
And armed at command*

*On that side of the tapestry
The formal court is gone
The kingdom is unknown;
Nothing but thread to see
Knotted and rooted thread
Spelling a word unsaid.*

Howard Nemerov

THE DOUBLE DOPPELGÄNGER

George, the hero of *Mortal Divide*, is in the throes of a middle-life crisis: “I was pushing forty and forty was pushing back.”¹ In desperate need of solace, he goes to Perth, the place where his immigrant father lived and died. Meanwhile in Sydney, his wife Alys and his daughter Toto are facing their own dilemmas: Alys because of a lesbian affair with Zoë, her husband’s ex-girlfriend, Toto because of her teenage *amore* with Snake. The family tension is recorded in George’s telephone calls to Alys and his letters to Toto. Eventually,

prompted by his analyst, Dr Nemerov's advice, George embarks on a journey to Egypt and Greece in search of his ancestral roots.² After a number of 'metaphysical' adventures, George returns to Sydney, where Alys announces that she is pregnant and Toto reads fairy-tales to welcome him. This is not quite a happy-ending but, at least George seems to have emerged intact from his nightmare.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Doppelgänger (the Double) is conceived of as something which is not the self, but which nevertheless functions as a mirror of the self and, hence, is an integral part of self-understanding. Although the Doppelgänger always appears otherworldly, eerie or uncanny, what is particularly significant is its closeness to philosophy: the Doppelgänger manifests a reciprocal relationship between theory and writing. The origin of the word Doppelgänger is testament to this relationship: Fichte's interplay of *das Ich* and *das Nicht-Ich*, the I and the not-I, had put subjectivity in a relentless motion, a constant turning. The solution offered by the *Wissenschaftslehre* was to extrapolate an absolute I, a self-in-itself, a kind of unmoved mover that resides in everyone and that guarantees reason.³ The word Doppelgänger was coined by Jean Paul in *Siebenkäs* who explained it in a footnote as "Leute, die sich selber sehen."⁴ Jean Paul's philosophical intentions in coining the word Doppelgänger were made explicit in his pamphlet *Clavis Fictiana* where he castigated the division of the self into an empirical and an absolute part, since this only led to solipsistic insanity.⁵ Thus, the motif of the Doppelgänger was involved in questions that figured prominently in Romanticism and determined the intellectual development of the nineteenth century – a fact that explains why this motif was instantly appropriated and transformed by other writers. For instance, Jean Paul's original definition of the Doppelgänger in terms of autoscopy (self-seeing) changed to that of the split personality in works like Hoffmann's "The Sandman" and Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*. In the twentieth century, Otto Rank's and Sigmund Freud's⁶ interpretations of the Doppelgänger were so powerful that Todorov claimed that its literary potential was lost after its appropriation by psychoanalysis.⁷

Such contentions are demonstrably refuted by books like George Alexander's *Mortal Divide*, which shows that the epistemological, ethical and metaphysical questions that the Doppelgänger raises are still pertinent and open to new transfigurations. The subtitle of the novel reads: "the autobiography of Yiorgos Alexandroglou – Γιώργος Αλεξανδρόγλου." The author, the hero of the novel and their grandfather all share the same name.⁸ And naming is intrinsically linked to subjectivity, or as George thinks, "that name is the distance I must travel to make friends with myself."⁹

Alexander's awareness of the theoretical baggage that the Doppelgänger carries is reaffirmed by his *Poetics of Autofiction*, a critical reflection on *Mortal Divide*; there, the

possibility of a project of self-criticism is justified on the assumption that “there is no fixed border between the languages of fiction and theory, and this may mean that I move from the specific textures of one, to the resonances of the other, attacking on two fronts with both sides of the brain.”¹⁰ One has the feeling that in Alexander’s idiom a textual double (the thesis) to his novel is not merely possible but also inevitable, even necessary.¹¹

The Doppelgänger in Alexander’s novel is not merely a literary motif – that is, it is not merely a fictional device whose characteristics and function can be determined by indexing its instances. Rather, the Doppelgänger as the representation of the narrative’s dualities objectifies the conceptual content of subjectivity. In *Mortal Divide* the Doppelgänger is the reification of the self as well as the self’s interpretation of its reification. Alexander has learned the Heideggerian lesson of the ontological priority of the ‘ready-at-hand’ (*Zuhandenheit*) over the ‘present-at-hand’ (*Vorhandenheit*): the objectual or material is subordinate to the contextually interrelated. Subjectivity is revealed not in the investigation of a static object’s substances but in the process of self-interpretation. The Doppelgänger in *Mortal Divide* is a mirror of subjectivity in the sense that it is the instigating force of the self-interpretative process.

There are two distinct approaches in the way George reflects on his selfhood. Initially, he conceives of a total self divided into parts, a fragmented subjectivity that has to come together. George struggles to distinguish the real from the unreal parts and this process constitutes the *symbolic* Doppelgänger – symbolic, from *symbolēin*, to put together. Later, George realises the futility of this struggle: he rejects the possibility and/or necessity of the construction of a total self by accepting its inherent incongruity or doubleness. For the *autofictitious* Doppelgänger the question of what is real and what is not real does not arise. Self-interpretation is construed here as a continuous writing of the self without a preconceived end. Thus, there are not two others that reflect the self in *Mortal Divide* but two strategies for self-interpretation in relation to the other.

THE SYMBOLIC DOPPELGÄNGER

George’s journey does not take place solely in space and time; it is also a representation of the hero’s efforts to recompose a shattered selfhood. “I was travelling inside”, George says, “I was my own foreign country.”¹² The topos of the ‘lost ship’, to use Borges’ phrase, presupposes a final, yet unreached, destination; a wilful end to the wanderings which coincides with the solution to the struggle of the self. The labyrinth metaphor is used to characterise this struggle for the construction of subjectivity: mind and memory are a labyrinth, they are the inside where one is lost, unable to find the way to the outside.¹³ There is “No escape

from this maze of selfhood.”¹⁴ What divides the self in these eerie corridors is the directional dilemmas which are impossible to settle: “One half seen, the other seeing. There is always a fork in the road on the way to ourselves.”¹⁵ The undeterminability of *seen* and *seeing*, or left and right never lead the hero to the exit, to the outside of the labyrinth. This ‘fork’ can assume many guises: e.g. the national identity fork – George has a “*taramosalata* of racial genes”;¹⁶ or, the psychoanalytic fork,¹⁷ which we will examine further.

George suffers from *videolepsy*, a quite common condition, Dr Nemerov reassures him. It is “‘Incremental reality slippage’. The technoculture’s own little syndrome, when the senses no longer hold the empirical court of appeal.”¹⁸ Because of his *videolepsy*, George starts dreaming every time he closes his eyes: “I am falling, but not to sleep. To some other body.”¹⁹ In Freud’s words, “sleep [implies] . . . a narcissistic withdrawal of the positions of the libido on to the subject’s own self.”²⁰ This inward direction of the libido also results in George’s abated sexuality. As Alys, his wife, puts it, “his Mr Happy has become Mr Gloom”²¹ – which embarrasses George because Yiorgos “the body I’m moving in, is not modest about his member.”²²

More important, *videolepsy* is not normal sleep, it is a condition which disables George from discriminating between a *videoleptic* vision and reality. George tells Dr Nemerov how he was found terrified in a locker at his workplace, thinking that he had seen Yiorgos, his grandfather.²³ This is the liminal space where the encounters with the Doppelgänger take place and which discloses the central psychoanalytic duality of *Mortal Divide*: the duality which consists in the subject’s awareness of perceptions of the material world as opposed to ideas that represent the unconscious.²⁴ The *videoleptic* visions are symbolic because they are ideational representations: they are the other side of the coin of George’s conscious, the other part of his self which seeks expression.

Now, George’s lack of self-assurance that the ghost of his grandfather is ‘in’ his mind, undermines not so much reality but his own subject: it gives rise to the pressing question of whether he has gone mad. According to psychoanalysis, the narcissism of the middle-age draws the instincts inwards, obscuring the distinction between perception of objects and ideational representations. If it is not a regression to infantile narcissism, it is a sign of mental illness.²⁵ The labyrinth of the mind and of memory is the prison in which the ego-instincts, or Thanatos, have trapped George who thus leads a “half life between representation and matter.”²⁶

Take the setting of George’s encounters with the Doppelgänger: the majority of them are linked to the sea.²⁷ This compulsion to return to the same setting is accompanied by a number of elements that are repeated in the encounters. For instance, in the very first page of the novel we find at the beach dunes “a body with a great gash on the back of his head, and a few feet away one ox-blood tasselled loafer.”²⁸ These shoes are a trademark of

the Doppelgänger and the head-wound is also a repeated characteristic. In a dream George harks back to his birth: “I walk across the room and climb through a mirror of a wardrobe to ... enter the baby I used to be.”²⁹ Then his attention turns to his mother, Violetta. The dream ends at the sea-side:

Footprints made their way to her [Violetta] onto the cold emulsion of the foreshore. It was Ox-blood Tasselled Loafers. He turned suddenly. And then something made a bleeding gash on the back of my head. It was so real I had to go and look at myself ... to see if I was bleeding.³⁰

But the subject of the wound is changeable. Later it is the Doppelgänger who is struck in the head. Again, the scene is set by the ocean. Yiorgos stealthily approaches George: “‘So you’re *George Alexander*.’ He spat the name with contempt. ‘Have you murdered Yiorgos yet?’”³¹ George strikes the ghost in the back of the head. But Doppelgängers don’t die and as George digs the shallow grave in the dunes, Yiorgos watches him: “‘You might have spared me the trouble’,”³² he tells George.

These psychoanalytic moments reveal an attraction to the sea which may be due to the decisive moment in George’s life: the sea-voyage from the Mediterranean to Australia, the reverse of his present journey. He was then only a foetus in Violetta’s womb. The photographs of the voyage turn up after his father’s funeral. Among them, there is one taken by the sea when he was a young boy.

I’m standing on my father’s shoulders, flexing my muscles for the camera. An icon of patriarchy and masculinity – ‘the Arnold Schwarzenegger feeling’ – a hard-on everywhere. A Mediterranean tradition, too, of never leaving adolescence because it is the time during which you become a man. Forgivable, this evidence of pre-teen narcissism. Embarrassed by the evidence of that cruel little god so despised by my women friends, I decided almost without thinking to tear them up. Then I decided to keep them. Tearing, splitting: one half seen, the other seeing. There is always a fork in the road on the way to ourselves.³³

The little god standing at the shoulders of the Father gives a certain force of determinism to George’s condition. It might not be, after all, his own fault that he is drawn inwards into his narcissistic labyrinth. But, even an aetiology which blames it on the ‘genes’ at the most proves that George’s labyrinth is not his own making. This is not good enough for our hero, still trapped inside, unable to distinguish the conscious from the unconscious, the perception of matter from the ideational representation. George’s

narcissism is the psychoanalytic labyrinth that he is lost in. In comparison to his transcendental fixation with the outside, with his male and masculine ancestry, he is found lacking. Or, he is not found at all: there is no Archimedean point to guide George's navigation clear of his self's madness and into a subjective Truth. The psychoanalytic moments show us a struggle with the Father/Doppelgänger in which George is the clear loser: The parts of the *symbolic* Doppelgänger do not come together to form a coherent self.³⁴

THE AUTOFICTITIOUS DOPPELGÄNGER

The *autofictitious* Doppelgänger helps George not to escape but to eradicate his labyrinth. We learn that "Mortal Divide is 'autofiction', a self-denying narrative that highlights the rival clarities of document and memoir."³⁵ Does that mean that the narrative denies itself, or that the narrative denies the self? It is actually a bit of both: Autofiction denies the text as an objective record of perception and the self as a coherent transcendental whole. It denies that the document and the memoir occupy the two irreconcilable poles of scientific objectivity and anecdotal subjectivity. The self of autofiction has a hermeneutic consciousness, in the sense that the self bravely accepts that understanding and meaning emanate from the 'I' as a fact which does not undermine objectivity or lead to madness. As Alexander puts it elsewhere, "Any discussion about the world is partly autobiographical (we never analyse another's dreams innocently)."³⁶

The sibyllic pronouncements of the Doppelgänger point to the same idea. What the Doppelgänger says usually leaves George utterly perplexed: in their earliest encounter George is flying to his dying father in Perth and the man next to him in a pink button-down shirt and ox-blood tasselled loafers talks to him:

The odd thing is once they go ... they – the dead, I mean – become just another floating thing to be responsible for in your memory, like where's the bankcard or the keys or the ashtray ... Oh the tropes of memory in the land of the living. ...³⁷

The Doppelgänger here shows a certain concern for George: he admonishes him that he ascribes too much importance to the labyrinth of memory and points out that the tropes of memory are not a puzzle of transcendent entities that needs to be solved. Rather, memory is like items that one is using, their meaning mediated through that use. George finds the stranger both too lucid and too much, "Like one of those people who fascinated because they were so cool and never paid you any attention. A shadow person, an echo-person, a catch-me-fast person."³⁸ There is something otherworldly about the Doppelgänger and, although George seems to sense that something important has been con-

veyed to him, he is unable to understand. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the pronouncements of the Doppelgänger are oracular: couched in deceptive, double-edged terms, they are always and necessarily true.³⁹

Linda Bayliss examines how the mythological motifs and attributes of Hermes evolved into the Doppelgänger. Hermes is the messenger of gods but, also, the arch-liar. One can find the truth hidden in his words only by deciphering the hidden meaning. Thus, what the Doppelgänger says is of utmost importance. According to myth, Hermes stole Apollo's cattle and hid his track by walking backwards, leaving only one set of footprints: this can be taken as a metaphor of the nature of Hermes' messages. And, the same image is used in *Mortal Divide*. After seeing the Doppelgänger, George looks back: "I saw [on the beach-sand] only one set of footprints, my own. I saw the shapes they made. The walk guided by random shells has all the signs – looking back – of determination. Chance had become destiny. Form was in the footsteps looking back."⁴⁰ The Doppelgänger in *Mortal Divide* takes the form of George's ancestors. Its message has to do with the past – it is an invitation for George to backtrack his steps. When George asks him who he is, the Doppelgänger replies: "I am everyone you ever wanted to be."⁴¹ Then George sees parading in front of his eyes his father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather: "I was looking at the scene across the mortal divide,"⁴² he says.

The *mortal divide* is the condition that the self finds itself in while experiencing the *autofictitious* Doppelgänger. Alexander explicates the notion in *The Poetics of Autofiction*:

What is revealed between you and the signifier 'you' is a mediatory in-betweenness that belongs neither to self nor language. The writer's narrative voice resides neither inside nor outside the text but hovers on the edge of inscription ... writer after writer tries and calls art's hand, to make finally what the twentieth century has repeatedly demanded, in vain, that it be: secular salvation. The mortal *divide* – which is writing – brings together the cycles of birth and death, the forces of creation and destruction. Thus the narrative is the concrete articulation of time lag between the awareness of death and the delayed recognition of its significance.⁴³

The *autofictitious* Doppelgänger eliminates the inside-outside distinction of the labyrinth metaphor: selfhood is not a fixed point, not a coherent entity. The self is not seeking an end or *telos* because there is no 'true' self. "I am not one, I'm many. George Alexander is annihilated in the act of writing,"⁴⁴ writes Alexander. And later, "Each man in his time plays many parts ... Why don't I be myself? I am being myself. They are aspects of my self. I have more of myself to go round than I can distribute at one dinner party."⁴⁵

This shift of meaning of the self's dualities is found in the tapestry metaphor, borrowed from Howard Nemerov's poem. The tapestry has a back and a front but not outside. Thus, while it has different faces, the problem of a 'true' side or an end-point is eliminated. The only aim is to weave life into a tapestry,⁴⁶ to create a "threadbare fiction" hopscotching between the "large holes and the thin patches."⁴⁷ Alexander makes the following comment on the poem of our second epigram:

I see this poem by Howard Nemerov as an emblem of the two sides in every text ("text" in the root sense of tissue or textile). On the one side is the sociopolitical weave of power; on the other side a knotty mess of impulses. On the surface things seem clear, underneath there is distortion due to a disruptive material embodiment. Art is about finding out something that you don't know (even don't want to know).⁴⁸

In the realm of autofiction the subject is like the text: it acknowledges that the self has double sides, but this is accepted as a positive feature. The search for more doublings not only does not undermine the self, it enhances it.⁴⁹ Autofiction may be a translation of the Romantic notion of *das Gewebe*, that is, on the one hand, the web that fate spins, and, on the other hand, the text that the author composes as a sign of his absolute freedom. The autofictitious self can never be reduced to either the fate or the text but rather persists in the tension between the two by doubling-up itself.

This idea is developed as the tension between two books that control George in *Mortal Divide*. Dr Nemerov has prescribed the writing-cure to George. Also, a manuscript in a sealed jiffybag is discovered in his dead father's possessions which is locked in a safe pending a lawyer's instructions. There is a curious interplay between the two books. The one that is being written by George fills him with despair. He diligently goes about researching his ancestors' lives to find material, but his efforts seem futile. Even his Doppelgänger disparages him: "Your writing deprives us of identity... You offer an identity made only of letters."⁵⁰ The writing-cure presupposes the recovery to a 'normal' state, a return to the 'true' self. But the different parts protest that they are not done justice. And justice is not done to George's own self-hood: "How long can you inhabit someone else's tragedy?"⁵¹ warns the Doppelgänger; "You have fallen into art. Return to life," warns Dr. Nemerov.⁵² Then there is the book that has been written by George's father. There is the expectation that it will bring forth some kind of answer, especially since the Doppelgänger is seen carrying it about.⁵³ Back at Sydney, when the envelope is eventually opened, there is a surprise and not a straight answer: "Blank pages. From the other side of the mortal divide. A life unwritten, a shadow book, an echo book, a catch-me-fast book."⁵⁴ There has

been no cure in the sense of finding one single self. The fact is that George had been on the wrong quest: the pages were blank – the life has to be written.

When the self is like a narrative, life is like art. The past that makes one the person he is is a construction, a creation, a text, an *Ιστορία* (history and story). As the self unfolds, so does the narrative. There might have been an old self who endlessly wandered, trying to find the end of the story before the end of the life, undergoing on the way a million tribulations and sufferings. George's only salvation is to realize that he has been inhabiting the wrong story. He forgets about the self as a *nostos* and see the self as an *anastasis* – the *god who is crucified on Golgotha*: the 'I' that brings forth understanding.

Art is not life: someone else's text cannot square with one's own story; someone else's art is but a blank book. But life is art: one weaves his own story, one creates his own selves. In the process, part of him has to die. That is part of the deal, necessary for the self to come to terms with its own mortality. The *autofictitious* Doppelgänger is ultimately the division between the self that has already been written, and the self that awaits to be written. The nexus of past and future constructs a determined fate, complete and ineradicable; simultaneously, self-writing is the fulcrum that functions as a present act which endows the self with the potential for rupture, for disentangling oneself from fate. Both elements imply the other, and neither can persist without the other. Thus, the issue is not how to privilege one or the other, but rather how *not* to privilege either. What binds the fated and the fictitious selves together is the emotions that they both feel. When George returns from Greece, he feels affection for his pregnant wife and his fourteen-year-old daughter and his emotions are reciprocated. He muses: "Maybe love is what you end up with after all the long divisions and mortal fractions – the denominator growing steadily emptier the further you carry it, until Fate decides to give you a break."⁵⁵

The mortal divide is the leaving behind, the writing down or 'killing' of the past selves, which, if they strive to unite into a single self, fail and bring the subject down with them. 'Fate's break', the physical death, is the immaterial divide, whose significance the subject has to acknowledge in order to avoid strife. Then, the subject can understand its *autofictitious* Doppelgänger, its past, inevitable end.

NOTES

- 1 George Alexander, Alexander, *Mortal Divide, The Autobiography of Yiorgos Alexandroglou* – (Sydney: Brandl & Schlesinger, 1997), p. 129.
- 2 Notice that the Dr Nemerov of the book is distinct from the author and poet Howard Nemerov. It is probably a tribute to the poet that the fictional psychoanalyst has the same surname – cf. the acknowledgement to Howard Nemerov in Alexander, *Mortal Divide*, p. 7.

- 3 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Science of Knowledge: With the First and Second Introduction*, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1982).
- 4 'People who see themselves' (Jean Paul, *Blumen-, Frucht- und Dornenstücke, oder Ehestand, Tod und Hochzeit des Armenadvokaten F. St. Siebenkäs* [1796], in *Werke*, I,2, ed. Norbert Miller (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959), p. 66). The motif of 'seeing oneself' is, of course, much earlier, e.g. the Narcissus myth in Ovid. What is new in the conception of the Doppelgänger in German Romantic literature is its close relationship to the philosophy of the subject. For the connection between Jean Paul's coining of the word Doppelgänger and the philosophy of Fichte, see, e.g., Elisabeth Frenzel, *Motive der Weltliteratur: Ein Lexikon dichtungsgeschichtlicher Längsschnitte* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1988), pp. 101–102; and Andrew J. Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double visions in German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1996), 28 ff.
- 5 Jean Paul, *Clavis Fictiana seu Leibgeberiana* [1800], in *Werke*, I,3, ed. Norbert Miller (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961).
- 6 Otto Rank, *The Double, A Psychoanalytic Study*, trans. Harry Tucker (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971); Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" [1919], in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychoanalytical Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 17 (London: Hogarth Press, 1973). The main difference between the two is that, while both explain the Doppelgänger with reference to narcissism, Rank does so by focusing on the author's narcissism, while Freud focuses on the narcissism of the characters in the story.
- 7 Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic, A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* [1970], trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell U. P., 1975), pp. 160–61.
- 8 But the book should not be taken to be 'autobiographical' in the sense that the author is presenting information about events that took place in his life. "My title ... draws on the ruse played by Gertrude Stein in her book, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Written by Stein pretending to be Toklas writing about her life" (George Alexander, 'The Poetics of Autofiction', unfinished PhD dissertation of Creative Arts at Wollongong University, n.d., ch. 3 [11]).

Because the thesis (Alexander, 'Autofiction') is unfinished, there is no fixed pagination. Therefore, I give the chapter and then in brackets the page-number of my copy of the thesis. I would like to thank George Alexander for making the thesis available to me and for permission to quote from it. Also, I need to note, first, that Alexander informed me that he has at present abandoned the writing of the thesis; and, second, that the analysis of the 'double Doppelgänger' of the present article has no explicit counterpart in 'Autofiction'.

- 9 George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide*, p. 15.
- 10 George Alexander, 'Autofiction', ch. 1 [2].
- 11 "Alexander's writing has been variously dubbed experimental, post-modern, off-the-wall and hip-hop depending on the discursive context. Often seen as a radical eclectic, a loose (anti) canon amongst disciplines, Alexander is a wandering minstrel who speaks five languages and crosses the borders of philosophy, art theory, criticism and fiction as a tactical imperative to shifting circumstances: "the two threads of the critical and the creative have been synchronic in my life rather than dialectical" (Kurt Brereton, "George Alexander: A Heterographic

- Profile”, *Southerly*, 56 [1996], 130). The fact that Alexander moves so freely between genres may mean that ‘decoding’ his texts precludes classifying them.
- 12 George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide*, p. 81.
 - 13 *ibid.*, pp. 11, 121, 144.
 - 14 *ibid.*, p. 46.
 - 15 *ibid.*, p. 78.
 - 16 *ibid.*, p. 34.
 - 17 I use the adjective ‘psychoanalytic’ in phrases like ‘psychoanalytic fork’, ‘psychoanalytic duality’ and ‘psychoanalytic moment’ in the sense of a fork, a duality or a moment that has been theorised by psychoanalysis.
 - 18 George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide*, p. 13.
 - 19 *ibid.*
 - 20 Sigmund Freud, “On Narcissism: An Introduction” [1914], in *Standard Edition*, vol. 14 (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), p. 76.
 - 21 George Alexander, op. cit., p. 31.
 - 22 *ibid.*, p. 139.
 - 23 *ibid.*, p. 13.
 - 24 As Freud puts it, “An instinct can never become an object of consciousness – only the idea that represents that instinct can. Even in the unconscious, moreover, an instinct cannot be represented otherwise than by an idea” (“The Unconscious” [1915], in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Anna Freud, trans. James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 151.
 - 25 See Freud, op. cit., “On Narcissism”, pp. 66–67.
 - 26 George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide*, p. 95. Talking about his father’s decision to Anglicise his name, Alexander comments: “*Mortal Divide* is a kind of horoscope of his unconscious. The unconscious is the night-sky of one’s workaday self. When it is day under one latitude, it is night under another. Speak English and an other, unspoken language does under, is in the dark. Words and images continue their antipodean existence, unheard, unseen. Sometimes they return, interfering with the host language, making communication difficult. The subject is caught between translation and schizophrenia” (George Alexander, ‘Autofiction’, ch. 4 [23]).
 - 27 See George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide*, pp. 9, 43, 55, 56–57, 63, 113, 137, 138–42, 150, 156, 170.
 - 28 *ibid.*, p. 9.
 - 29 *ibid.*, p. 56.
 - 30 *ibid.*, p. 57.
 - 31 *ibid.*, p. 113.
 - 32 *ibid.*, p. 114.
 - 33 *ibid.*, pp. 77–78.
 - 34 Irigaray describes the search for ‘divine truth’ in terms of a search which leads away from the female (the sensible represented by mother earth) to the male (the Father or God) in Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. G.C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell U. P., 1994), *passim*. Although Alexander employs a similar imagery to Irigaray’s ‘sexed’ labyrinth, his hero’s quest

- for the 'true self' is not so much gendered as ontological. Or, to pursue Irigaray's terminology, George fails in his quest because of his feminine side.
- 35 *Mortal Divide* inside cover.
- 36 George Alexander, op. cit., 'Autofiction'. ch. 3 [9]. Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Relevance of the Beautiful", in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, trans. N. Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1989), p. 11: "historical consciousness and the new self-reflection arising from it combine with a claim that we *cannot renounce*: namely, the fact that everything we see stands there before us and addresses us directly as if it *showed us ourselves*" (emphasis added).
- 37 *ibid.*, p. 50.
- 38 *ibid.*
- 39 See Linda Bayliss, 'Mirrors: Literary Reflection as Psychic Process', Ph.D. Dissertation [1984], Michigan State University (reproduced by Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1992), 24.
- 40 George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide*, p. 114.
- 41 *ibid.*, p. 131.
- 42 *ibid.*, p. 132. "The place was hectic with the traffic of the dead. Now all three of them seem to walk through each other, like a group-mechanism" (*ibid.*, 133).
- 43 George Alexander, 'Autofiction', ch. 5 [29].
- 44 *ibid.*, ch. 3 [15] – repeated verbatim in ch. 4 [20].
- 45 *ibid.*, ch. 3 [16].
- 46 George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide*, p. 157.
- 47 *ibid.*, p. 188.
- 48 George Alexander, op. cit., 'Autofiction', ch. 3 [14].
- 49 There is implicit here the Deleuzian notion of desire with its multiple and plural selfhood, as opposed to Freud's sharp dualism of Eros and Thanatos (e.g., see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley et. al. (London: Athlone Press, 2000), pp. 332–33 for a criticism of precisely this aspect of Freud).
- 50 George Alexander, op. cit., *Mortal Divide* p. 131.
- 51 *ibid.*, p. 54.
- 52 *ibid.*, p. 66.
- 53 See *ibid.*, p. 113.
- 54 *ibid.*, p. 189.
- 55 *ibid.*