



THE DOPPELGÄNGER PROJECT

A mini-RPG by Côme Martin, for one GM and 3 to 5 players, conceived as a sequel to *The Doppelgänger Effect*. Written in June 2019.

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Morley Corporation, Inc. has discovered the secret to traveling between realities; you are the brave volunteers who will undertake the first mission to a parallel universe. Scientists have unfortunately determined that the breach between universes has awoken giant, reality-devouring slugs, but this side effect will not seriously hamper your installment of relay transmitters throughout the multiverse, will it?

Before going away

Each player has 4 points to create their character; they use those 4 points to build skills they determine themselves (for instance, Gabriel creates a negotiator and decides on the following skills: Inspires trust 2, Sweet talk 1, Never cracks under pressure 1). The PCs' profile is completed by discussing the reasons why they work (or are forced to work) for Morley Inc., how they feel about each other and who are the NPCs close to them. One of these NPCs must give them a reason to look for its parallel versions: lost love, disappeared sister, ill parent, friend who turned bad...

The GM then gives players details about the setting by reading out loud the following elements, completing and/or modifying their description as need be. The GM also decides where Morley Inc.'s offices are, how the PCs travel through the multiverse and what a relay transmitter looks like.

Neighborhoods:

- The residential ghetto (cramped, run down, overcrowded, ill-famed)
- The industrial zone (proliferating, deafening, polluted, labyrinthine)
- The administrative neighborhood (secured, clean, icy, opaque)
- The commercial district (deserted, demolished, infested, feared)

Important places:

- The ghetto's bazaar (full of beggars, under the mafia's thumb, cluttered with damaged goods)
- The ghetto's galleries (underground, trapped, crossed by strange gangs)

- The power station (automated, malfunctioning, haunted by other ghostly realities)
- The patent office (incorruptible, irritable, abstruse)
- The civil servant's bar (dull, hermetic, straining under debts)
- The former bank (cavernous, invaded by insects, rock solid)
- The implant market (nomadic, overflowing with products, devoid of morality)

NPCs of note:

- Mother Miracle (cyborg, silent, benevolent)
- The Rat King (repugnant, leading a network, incognito)
- Three-lightning (crook, claims he has psi powers, informant)
- Conscience-326 (automaton, paranoid, fragment of a hive-mind)
- William rank-3 blue (civil servant, secretly a mutant, go-getter)
- Rosa rank-12 purple (amateur poet, introverted, head of her department)
- The Swollen (human body full of insects, haunted by his banker past, suicidal)
- The small one (no ties, blue collar, alcoholic)
- The tall one (intimidating, pimp, from another reality)

These elements will change, for better or for worse during the PCs' travels through the multiverse.

The preparation phase ends with a prologue during which each player describes their PCs' last preparations before leaving for the mission, probably with no hope of going back: the MC adds details to the descriptions so as to introduce the setting's first landmarks. Then the PCs start the first transmitter and go head first into their first parallel universe.

Across the multiverse

In each new reality, the PC's official goal is to set up a dimensional transmitter and making sure it's safe before hopping on to the next reality, so Morley Inc.'s expansionist dream becomes more and more tangible. Informally, they can take advantage of each travel to gather information on their doubles, try escaping their employer and/or looks for the parallel version of the NPC the players described during the preparation phase.

Each reality is infested with gigantic slugs which devour reality itself; their progression varies from one reality to another but the space beyond the city's limit is always nothing but disintegrated void. Adding to this cosmic force chasing the PCs and their doubles, they could also face:



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- Gangs of pillagers, determined on surviving at any cost until the end
- Memetic spirits, able to propagate their personality and physical aspects from one body to the next

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- Android, more or less defective, trying to impose their domination
- Cleaners, sent by Morley Inc. to hunt down uncooperative employees and speed up the conquest of all realities
- Employees of Tamel Enterprises, a rival company
- Being who were humans once, now controlled by the eggs of cosmic slugs hiding inside them

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Changing things

When a PC acts and the result is uncertain, their player draws as many cards in a 52-card pack as they have points in the most appropriate skill. They then play as many cards they want from their hands (no minimum). To succeed, they must exceed 8 for complicated actions, 10 for difficult actions and 12 for the toughest ones (a Jack is worth 11, a Queen 12, a King 13 and an Ace is worth 1). A player can add several cards to reach the threshold; if they have no appropriate skill, they write down a new one which begins at 0. PCs can also help each other by adding up their skills.

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When they use a skill at 0 in a test, players still draw a card but discard their highest card beforehand. If they have no cards in hand, they discard the highest face up card charged on the transmitter (see opposite) before drawing. If the transmitter has no face up card, they draw one without drawbacks.

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Cards which have been drawn by the players but not played to get a success can be kept in hand (and be used in future tests) or be used to charged the dimensional transmitter (the choice is immediate, you cannot keep cards in your hands and use them to charge the transmitter later). Cards played to get a success are discarded; a player cannot have more cards in hand than their highest skill level.

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To other realities and beyond

When PCs arrive in a new reality (including after the preparation phase), the GM draws a card and places it face down on the table: it's the transmitter's current charge. Players can add as many cards (face up) as they want before leaving to a new reality. When they decide to power up the transmitter, the face down card is revealed and its value is added to the others; the players or the GM then get to change one or sever-

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al aspects of the elements which define the city (among the neighborhoods, the places or the NPCs) however they choose:

- less than 7: the GM changes one of the aspects, in a worse way if they want
- 7-11: players change one aspect
- 12-16: players change two aspects
- 17-20: players change three aspects
- 21 exactly: players change all the aspects of 2 elements
- 22 and more: the GM changes one of the aspects, in a worse way if they want

Outside of the aspects defining the elements, the GM can vary things as much as they want from one reality to the next, even if progressive changes are preferable. Don't hesitate to reuse NPCs already met by the characters and alter their behavior, or let actions made in one reality have an echo in the next ones.

When arriving in a new reality, cards from the discard pile and from the transmitter's charge are put back in the deck, which is then shuffled. Players keep the cards they have in hand.

An aspect changed by the players stays unmodified from one travel to the next, fixed in all realities. For a shorter campaign, elements are changed all at once instead of their aspects (getting a 21 thus has the same effect as getting a charge between 17 and 20).

A campaign of *The Doppelgänger Project* ends when players have changed all the aspects of all the elements and/or when PCs have succeeded in stopping the slugs' implacable progression (which shouldn't be an easy fix).

Learning and absorbing

During their journeys, characters can get more skills points in 3 ways:

- Starting from level 1, by playing in a test as many cards of the same value or suit as the level to reach. To improve a skill to level 3, for instance, you can play three Jacks or three spades.
- Every time they travel to another reality, each PC gets 1 point in the skill they used the most (including a 0-point skill) or in a 0-point skill of their choice.
- Finally, when a PC kills one of their doubles, they absorb their quantum energy and get 3 skill points to add wherever they like (including in a 0-point skill).

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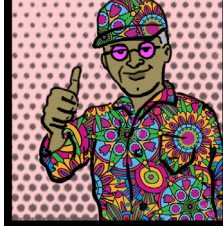
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