

The Hidden Truth Of *DOPPELGÄNGERS*

A Guide To Players

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The Complete Guide To Doppelgangers is the compilation of many years of research into the subject by a number of notable researchers. Unfortunately, it is neither complete nor completely accurate. Parts of it contain deliberate misinformation provided by Doppelgangers themselves, parts are romanticized fiction on the part of self-delusional contributors, and parts of it are simply the result of flawed logic.

Nevertheless, it remains the authoritative work on the subject, almost correct in every particular, except in those particulars described below.

A Note on the terms "known as," etc.: Except where the reference is to something named or labeled by a speaking species, these describe the nearest equivalent meaning to the telepathic concept of the doppelgangers. Think of them as slightly loose translations of the terms used by doppelgangers.

1. Doppelganger Lifecycle

This section is full of misdirection and misinformation. The truth is considerably more complex.

Mimics:

Mimics are actually the youngest form of Doppelgangers. They are 'pieces' of an adult doppelganger which are broken off and which are occupied by a proto-personality housed within the Dopplestatd. Telepathically aware, they serve as immobile 'scouts' for the Doppelganger that spawned them, and as relays to keep that Doppelganger in contact with the Dopplestatd. Finally, they serve as last-resort repositories for the mind of a slain Doppelganger, in which the proto-personality is subsumed by the personality of the Doppelganger. Mimics are not valued by Doppelgangers in the same way that Humans value their young; they are tools, nothing more, the equivalent of a fingernail, to be trimmed and discarded as necessary.

Stage I: Partials

Mimics experience four stages of growth, a life-cycle within a life-cycle. In stage I, they are small ooze-like creatures known as Partial that are unable to fully impersonate anything, only a piece of something - a severed limb, a sword-hilt or blade, or whatever. They are unable to maintain this form for more minutes than their constitution score. Initially weighing only a few hundred grams, they quickly grow to a couple of kilos in mass by consuming moss, slime, etc.

As they consume whatever food they encounter (which may include other stage-I mimics), they grow more adept. From the 1kg mark, every doubling of the Type-I mimic's weight doubles the length of time it can hold its shape. Upon reaching 16kg in mass, they begin making constitution saves against a DC of 64 minus their mass in kilograms with each kilogram of mass gained. They cannot take 'extra time' or 'extra care' for these checks, they are straight rolls.

Stage II: Contacts

When they eventually succeed, they enter stage II of the Mimic lifecycle, establishing telepathic contact with the doppelganger that spawned them or with the nearest stage II Mimic spawned by that doppelganger. The Parent must immediately dictate a shape for the mimic to impersonate, or it will instinctively take the shape of an appropriate fitting, fixture, or piece of furniture that blends in with the surroundings, based on the shapes that it 'felt' during the first stage of its existence. Immobile, they consume the unwary that pass by, telepathically

probing the minds of passersby and passing the information back to the parent. Stage II Mimics are what characters would recognize as Mimics, and have characteristics as described in the Monster Manual.

Their telepathic abilities are quite limited during this stage; they can only scan those within about 5' of themselves, only scan 1 sentence at a time, and only sense superficial thoughts and intentions. They can change shape to match the expectations of the sentence for CON minutes before reverting to the default form dictated by their previous experience. They exist only to serve the purposes of the parent, and to consume organic matter.

Stage II Mimics never gain weight; excess food is excreted as new Stage-I Mimics. One of their dominant personality traits is the need to avoid discovery, the closest they come to a sense of self-preservation. They are generally referred to by Doppelgangers as "Contacts," not so much as a descriptive label as to obscure their function by equating them with what a human would define as a "Contact," i.e. a source of inside information.

Stage III: Hungers

After existing as a Stage II Mimic for a number of years equal to $1d6 \times \frac{1}{2} \times \text{Mass (kilos)}$, the Mimic enters Stage III of its lifecycle. They develop an urgent 'lust' to consume sentient brain matter, an instinct at constant war with its need to avoid discovery. Other biological material is merely sustenance, nourishing without being satisfying. Doppelgangers use the term "Hungers" to describe Mimics in this stage of their life-cycle.

With each $\frac{1}{2}$ kilogram of brain matter that is consumed in Stage III, the Mimic becomes better at retaining the memories of its telepathic scans. When they have consumed a mass in sentient brain matter that equals 20% of their mass when entering Stage II, the Mimic begins making WILL saves at a DC of 25 +1 for each failed attempt. A fresh attempt can be made each time the amount of brain matter consumed doubles. Note that the brain matter must be living at the time!

If the Mimic succeeds, it establishes contact with the Doppelstadt to which its parent doppelganger is linked. A prepared personality pattern opens before it, and it gains full sentient control over its shape-changing abilities, becoming a doppelganger in its own right; this liberates it from the parent doppelganger that spawned it.

However, this is a difficult transition. The check to progress to Doppelganger is a difficult one for a Mimic, and unless success comes early, it quickly becomes out of reach. When the DC of the will save equals or exceeds half the Mimic's Stage-II mass in kilos, the Mimic enters stage IV of its lifecycle.

Stage IV: Sleepers

The Mimic in this stage of its life cycle is no longer able to advance to doppelganger status. Increasingly, it does not have the energy to alter its shape or feed, and begins spending its time in a semi-comatose sleep-state to conserve its energy. It is no longer capable of more than the most distant and remote contact with its parent doppelganger; more an undefined certainty that each other still exists. Mimics can remain in stage IV for 20 years per kilo of mass attained when entering stage II, giving it a lifespan still measured in hundreds if not thousands of years. Increasingly, its exterior will appear to rot and decay; sometimes this adds to the illusion

that they are the object that they have been impersonating, sometimes it is quite inappropriate and the Mimic may be subject to discovery. When that is the case, the parent doppelganger or agents in its employment may well have removed it to avoid compromising the interests of the parent.

During this phase of its existence, a Mimic is referred to as a "Sleeper", for much the same reasons as Stage II Mimics are described as "Contacts".

Doppelgangers:

Doppelgangers come into existence when a Stage III Mimic succeeds in articulating within itself sufficient virtual neural structure, modeled upon that of the sentient brain mass absorbed by instinct that it can hold and host a personality core contained within the Central Doppelstadt. Doppelgangers are analogous to the fingers of a sentient being capable of regenerating more if they are lost; they are not lightly dispensed with, but can be sacrificed if necessary without lasting harm to the greater whole. 'Individual' doppelgangers are normally shared with a number of different personality cores, though there is usually a single dominant mind who controls it, and more importantly, controls access to it by other personality cores. Doppelgangers also experience a four-stage life cycle, each stage having as one of its dominant behavioral characteristics the need to prepare for, and achieve, the next stage of development. Unlike most mortal species, these are not merely a matter of time, but are the result of deliberate (if instinctive) acts carried out to fulfill a natural drive of the species.

Throughout their existence, Doppelgangers are described by that term regardless of what stage of their life cycle they are at, with the stage as a qualifier, ie "Infant Doppelganger", "Active Doppelganger", "Imperfectus Doppelganger", "Submerged Doppelganger".

Stage I: Infant

In the Infancy stage, the doppelganger establishes a refuge or nest in a secure location near to its former location of residence as a mimic while it orders and comes to terms with the personality being expressed through it and augments its biomass to a size consistent with a humanoid. This mass increase is between +25% and +100% of its starting mass, and dictates what size of humanoid the doppelganger can naturally assume. The smaller the mimic at the point at which it entered stage III of that life-cycle, the smaller the humanoid that the doppelganger can appear to be without difficulty. Larger life forms can still be impersonated by the construction of a hollow centre. It is even possible for a sufficiently small doppelganger to impersonate a suit of armor. It is rare for the mass of the impersonated object to match the mass of the doppelganger during such extreme impersonations. This process can take as much as a year or two, or as little as a month, depending on whether or not the "Infant" doppelganger is in the care of Active Doppelgangers who can provide sustenance.

For every 100kg of food consumed, the doppelganger will gain 3kg of mass and excrete a single 1kg stage-1 mimic. Stage-1 doppelgangers are ravenous and consume a lot of energy mastering the art of impersonation.

During this period, the Doppelganger can impersonate a creature of appropriate size for 1-2 hours, can perform a partial impersonation (simply wearing the face of someone it encounters, or that the person it encounters is thinking of, or that the Doppelstadt has previously encountered, for example) for 4-6 hours, or can impersonate a creature of inappropriate size for a number of minutes equal to its Constitution score, halved for each size difference. These impersonations are imperfect and unstable. The doppelganger's natural instinct is to remain hidden from all but its own kind during this stage, and it only recognizes its own kind as being those belonging to the same Doppelstadt. If confronted, its instinct will be to disguise itself as something inoffensive (especially the young of a familiar species) and flee. These instincts are guided by the experience of the Doppelstadt and can be overridden temporarily by the Doppelstadt for short times.

While restricted to these limited impersonations, the doppelganger can only counterfeit surface features. It has not yet mastered the art of falsifying internal organs, and hence is unable to speak, even when carrying out an impersonation.

Telepathic contacts with its own kind remain superficial, communicating no more than could be done by the spoken word in a face-to-face encounter.

In order to make an attempt to progress to stage II, two conditions must be met: the Doppelganger must have augmented its mass by 5%, and it must have performed one more new partial impersonation than the total number that had been carried out at the previous stage. This permits a Wisdom check against a DC of 45, reducing by 2 with each failed check. Early in this stage, the mass augmentation (i.e. physical growth) is the more restrictive factor, but it is eventually overtaken by the experience requirement.

Stage II: Active

During the Active stage, the doppelganger is what others would recognize as a member of its species, with full capabilities and range of activities, as described in the CG2D and below. Within this stage, the doppelganger carries within its mind a complete personality imprint of the being that it is imitating, and any relevant experiences and past impersonations that it has carried out.

Any physical or mental abilities possessed by one or more of these past impersonations are within the doppelganger's repertoire and can be accessed by resuming the impersonation; only abilities conferred by abnormal biology (e.g. Sorcerers) or external agency (Clerics, Paladins) are not accessible. Thus, if a doppelganger impersonates a rogue of appropriate character level, the doppelganger has the ability to Sneak Attack; if a doppelganger impersonates a wizard of 6th level, he can memorise and cast spells as a wizard of 6 levels. If such an impersonation is resumed after a period of time, the spells that were in memory when last the impersonation was utilized are once again ready to cast, but spells that were cast still need to be replaced.

Transitioning from one form to another requires one standard action, one free action, and one move action, in that order. The standard action restores the doppelganger to its native form, the free action selects the form to be impersonated next, and the move action transitions the doppelganger from its native form into the new impersonation.

One of the earliest activities usually carried out by a doppelganger upon achieving Stage II is a "grand tour" of the most important beings currently being impersonated by the Doppelstadt. It requires 10 minutes of impersonation to acquire a full year of such experiences; thus, if a being was replaced by a doppelganger 20 years earlier, it requires 200 minutes (3 hours & 20 minutes) of imitating that being to know all that there is to know about that impersonation and its history.

Only one doppelganger can impersonate a given being at a time, though others can mimic the external appearance. Thus, these impersonations normally take place while the replaced being appears to be asleep, and following the resting activity described in stage III, below.

The suggestion that doppelgangers need less "sleep" than those it has replaced is a half-truth, and that communities of doppelgangers can be detected by this means is a complete falsehood. They may not be sleeping, but they *appear* to be doing so.

Such "downloads" of information can be interrupted, but require some minutes to terminate. If something occurs which requires the doppelganger who is merely wearing the appearance of sleep to appear to wake, the knowledge and experience and personality of the being it appear to be will be absent. The doppelganger will usually feign confusion and seem to be only half-awake (bluff check) but it is at this point that a replaced being is most likely to be detected. As soon as the "download" is terminated (Will check against a DC of 1/3 of the time required to complete the transfer, recheck once every 30 seconds until successful), the personality core that normally occupies the body being impersonated can again take charge of it, and will seem normal. It will not possess any information given to the doppelganger body while it was not operating the impersonation, and this poses the second greatest threat of exposure; more bluffing will often be required.

As a result, impersonated beings often get a reputation for being hard to awaken, or slow to wake in the mornings; but this is too broad a characteristic to be reliable as a general means of detection.

Doppelgangers naturally remain in stage II for a period of 21-40 years. Rare exceptions may fail to achieve Stage III for 80 or more years, but this generally requires a deliberate choice to slow the rate of development; this choice is normally only used where the doppelganger has replaced someone of vital importance and high rank to the Doppelstadt and no "line of succession of authority" can be engineered to permit a new doppelganger in a new impersonation to take up the reigns from the doppelganger in-place.

In order to achieve stage III, the doppelganger must make a Will save once each year:

Range Of DCs	Years in Stage II:	Will Save DC
58 to 40	21-30	100- 2 x Years in stage II
39 to 30	31-40	70- Years in stage II
29 to 19	41-60	49- ½ x Years in stage II, round down
19 to 16	61-72	34- ¼ x Years in stage II, round down
15 to 14	73-74	51- ½ x Years in stage II, round up
13 to 12	75-76	88- Years in stage II
11 to 3	77-81	165- 2 x Years in stage II
1	82+	1

By reducing CON by 1 for the next year, the roll to advance can be foregone until the next annual check.

For every 5 rolls that are foregone (even if rolls take place in intervening years), the doppelganger permanently loses 1d2 points of STR and 1d2 points of CON. For every 10 rolls, he also permanently loses d3+1 points of INT. This makes him less valuable to the Doppelstadt, and so is not undertaken lightly; the advantages gained by the delay must be sufficient to offset the price to be paid.

The primary reason for deferring entry into Stage II is that progress attempts in the advancement from stage III to stage IV **cannot** be deferred or delayed by act of will or conscious choice. Nor can any known form of 'youth' potion or spell affect a doppelganger.

Stage III: Imperfectus

The third stage of Doppelganger development would be known to scholars as **Gestalt Imperfectus** if they recognized its existence.

There is no clear demarcation point between Stages II and III of the doppelganger life-cycle. During Stage II, the doppelganger is essentially an independent being who can occasionally achieve a state of telepathic union with the Doppelstadt; over time, this capability improves until, at Stage III, it can enter it at will. It is only while in this state that the doppelganger can "upload" its experiences and encounters to the Doppelstadt. Attempts to achieve this state, and time spent in this state, are carried out during the "resting" phase of daily activities. This is a daily instinct as powerful and natural as the instinct to sleep is in most humanoid species, and if the doppelganger is unable to perform it, its mood will be analogous to that of a human who has been kept awake all night. Doppelgangers are just as vulnerable to "sleep deprivation" as any other species, even though it could be said technically that they do not sleep at all.

Imperfectus-stage doppelgangers possess the ability to "upload" archive copies of the personality and appearance that they are imitating, provided that the Doppelstadt to which they are linked is at the Collective or Unity stages. A doppelganger typically remains in stages II and III for a total of between 55 and 75 years. Rare exceptions may remain in stage III until beyond a century of years.

Stage III is all about preparing for stage IV. The doppelganger must put its affairs in order - bringing in younger doppelgangers to take its place (in a long-lived substitution), ensuring that its contributions to the Doppelstadt are protected while it is in the vulnerable Stage IV, and so on.

Stage IV: Submergant

The final stage of the doppelganger life cycle would best be described as **Gestalt Submergance**. The doppelganger loses the ability to separate itself from the Doppelstadt collective or is driven to form a new Doppelstadt if the current collective is full. It also begins to rapidly lose its ability to impersonate others, requiring a will save every hour to maintain an impersonation. Each year that it spends in Stage IV adds +5 to the base difficulty of this save (DC 5).

Each time that a save is failed, a second will save is required (at DC 45- the DC of the failed save) in order to resist immediately initiating the formation of a Doppelstadt. Up to half the extra mass acquired during Stage I of its lifecycle are released as new mimics, and any mimics that progress to doppelganger state will look to the stage IV doppelganger. Its days of mobility are numbered. Each year brings a reduction in STR & DEX of d3 points, and a reduction in movement rate of 5" (to minimums of 1, 1, and 5", respectively). The majority of its stockpile of impersonations are inappropriate to such conditions; only impersonations of the extremely elderly or physically frail are plausible to an outside observer.

Where the doppelganger can be accommodated within the existing Doppelstadt, it must find ways to simulate the deaths of any impersonations no longer required but whose identity as doppelgangers must be concealed, to make its way under a satisfactory level of protection to the location of the Doppelstadt, and for it to 'blend in' with the Doppelstadt's surroundings when the time comes. Most of this will have been preplanned in Stage III, but such planning must always be amended to deal with such situations as arise. Only doppelgangers that link to it (as described above) can be trusted, and these are always in short supply - if there are any at all.

Doppelstadt:

In some respects, this is the area of greatest misinformation within the CG2D; much of what has been provided there is outright fabrication, designed to divert enemy attention away from the Doppelgangers themselves and towards Doppelstadts as "the" critical component of the lifestyle. In reality, if a Doppelstadt is eliminated, its doppelgangers will simply found another (or, more likely, a number of others). It is an inconvenience and a temporary handicap, nothing more.

That is because the purpose they serve is not exactly what is described, though it is close enough that the disinformation cannot be readily noticed. Doppelstadts are a central information repository where personalities and experiences are stored when not in use by a doppelganger. They also serve as an information exchange similar to that of a telephone network, transferring personas from one physical doppelganger to another. Finally, they develop new doppelganger personae at the direction of the gestalt. However, until they achieve a sufficient size, they can perform none of these functions; like both their forebear subspecies, Doppelstadts have four stages of development.

Stage I: Collective

It requires a minimum of three Stage IV doppelgangers to form a functioning Doppelstadt. Until this is achieved, the Doppelstadt that will come into being is referred to a Collective. A Collective's primary objective is to protect the Active Doppelgangers that look to it, its second is to protect itself, and its third is to expand its numbers to the point where it is able to benefit the gestalt.

The first is achieved by maintaining the "official cover stories" and mythology that have been developed from the time of the First Collective, which may require the destruction of the Collective if that will help maintain the fiction that the Collectives are the heart of the Doppelganger social structure.

The second is achieved by locating the Collective in a location that provides frequent opportunities for new doppelgangers to assimilate into the "neighborhood", and by surrounding the district with Mimics.

The third is achieved by fast-tracking the development of additional doppelgangers as much as possible, which generally means that as the Collective prepares to advance to Stage II it has relatively few active agents and its member doppelgangers maintain a relatively low profile. It is at this moment that the entire collective as its most vulnerable.

It requires nine Stage-IV Doppelgangers to advance a Collective to Doppelstadt Stage II, including the initial three. These are known as Elements.

Stage II: Enlargement

When the Doppelstadt enters Stage II, it becomes a true Doppelstadt, but one of limited capabilities. In order to advance to stage III, it must incorporate a total of 27 Elements, including the initial 9.

An Enlargement is now able to retain 1 personality record "on file" for each Element within the whole, restricting the number of Stage-III Doppelgangers that can utilize the Doppelstadt. At this stage of development, the Enlargement is unable to fabricate new personalities, leaving Doppelgangers to develop their own, independently, based upon the collective mental patterns of those it Assimilates. Doppelgangers that are part of the Enlargement are also not yet able to switch from one host body to another. These two functions of the mature Doppelstadt remain in its future.

When the Doppelstadt reaches the Enlargement stage, the Gestalt that operates it is able to begin active operations to develop intelligence sources, place agents in places of authority, and gain control of key resources for future operations. From this time forward, the Gestalt is effectively a sentience in continuous existence until all its member doppelgangers and the Doppelstadt are destroyed. That sentience will have memories from previous Doppelstadts stretching all the way back to the First Collective, though these will usually be fragmentary and incoherent. They are also generally with explanatory context - doppelgangers doing things without explanation, frequently in opposition to superficial logic. The further into the past beyond the current Doppelstadt these memories originate, the more closely they will resemble a half-remembered dream.

Stage III: Compendium

Eventually, a Doppelstadt that survives will incorporate its 28th Element and ascend the life cycle to the third stage of its developmental life cycle, known as a Compendium. During this stage, Memory Wells which have been created throughout the Enlargement Stage become ready for use by the Gestalt. Each memory well requires nine Elements to maintain it, so there are initially only three, rising as the Compendium ages and gathers more Elements within it.

The function of Memory Wells is somewhat different to that described in the CG2D: more subtle, and more powerful. Memory wells permit the rapid exchange of a personality and appearance from one doppelganger to another, as described in the section on Active Doppelgangers. This permits an individual doppelganger to achieve the next best thing to being in two places at once.

This is an appropriate point to discuss a key aspect of Doppelganger society. In human societies, where individuals remain the same person throughout, the status and abilities of that person must evolve over time. The human pursues many tasks throughout his lifetime, and as a result, tends to focus principally on the short-term. Only rarely does one consider situations that extend beyond their own lifetime, and even more rarely, beyond the lifetimes of their children.

Doppelganger society is more akin to that of the elves, wherein a single doppelganger will pursue a given quest or pursuit for as long as necessary to complete it, taking on those roles necessary to see it to completion. These quests tend to be large-scale operations, and may be centuries in the planning, preparation, and execution. Examples might be to change the political structure of a particular nation, or to have a particular subject discredited and subsequently banned from the Great Library, or to have one race launch a war of genocide against members of an allied species. Even the large-scale plots described in the CG2D are mere stepping stones upon the path to completing such a quest.

The reasons for selecting such a quest are simply that the outcome, if successful, will confer an advantage to the gestalt of the time. It is not common but not unheard of for a particular gestalt to be pursuing two overtly opposed quests simultaneously, in which case a key stage of the quest would be to resolve the anomaly in such a way that the goals are no longer in opposition.

Doppelganger gestalts are great believers in creating opportunities to limit their losses. It may seem enormously likely that as a byproduct or stepping stone to a particular goal, a given ruler may have to be eliminated and replaced, or a particular commodity will become common and devalued; the gestalt will always have a plan and set of agents in place to take advantage of the situation should the substitution fail, or the commodity remain rare. "If the gestalt plans to take advantage of both possible outcomes of an action, the gestalt wins no matter what the outcome is" might be considered a fundamental statement of doppelganger society. Since doppelgangers are without personal ego, an individual is satisfied by either outcome, no matter how much their quest depends on achieving one, and no matter how much effort they put into bringing that outcome into being.

It is only access to Memory Wells that permits a single doppelganger to draw such a large tapestry of activity. By permitting the one personality (rather than the one physical body) to carry out one action in location X and then another in location Y, both by apparently different individuals, they effectively function as a widespread conspiracy in furtherance of a particular goal whose members come and go as necessary.

There is a limit to the number of such quests that can be supported at any one time; the maximum is one per memory well, but gestalts will often desire to leave one or more memory wells in reserve, permitting the gestalt to react quickly to changing needs and circumstances. As a general rule of thumb, somewhere between 1 quest for every two or three memory pools is typical.

It requires considerable time and growth for a Doppelstadt to advance from Compendium (Stage III) to Unity (Stage IV); the total number of elements within must exceed 243 before this occurs.

Stage IV: Unity

During the final stage of growth, the Doppelstadt contains at least 244 Elements. This confers access to the most powerful and subtle tools within the gestalt's repertoire, that of manufacturing personality cores in order to achieve a specific objective. Only these are capable of perfectly replacing a being with a rare talent or expertise, such as a high-level Wizard. It is rumored that one or more lesser deities have also been replaced by carefully-crafted doppelgangers created within a Unity.

Great effort is invested in the planning and construction of these manufactured personality cores; every aspect of what the personality is intended to achieve is studied and considered and the personality and capabilities of the personality are tailored to match.

These personality cores are also known by the term **Avatars**; the description of Avatars in the CG2D is in fact a description of a normal doppelganger in symbiosis with a Compendium. They are neither as rare nor as valuable as that document suggests. This blinds the learned to the true scope of activity and capability of an Avatar. It takes 27 Elements to support a single Avatar, and it can take 50 years or more before the Avatar is ready to be implanted in the next Hunger to achieve the step-up to Infant Doppelganger.

Some Avatars are assembled by the complete mental assimilation of a target; this is much quicker than the construction of an entirely new purpose-driven personality, but limits the potential of the avatar to whatever the model could achieve. Such assimilation requires three hours of telepathic probing per INT point of the target, during which the target must be in close proximity to an undisguised doppelganger (3' or less). Magic and/or drugs are frequently used to achieve this, but the risk of discovery remains extremely high, and the more authority the target has, the greater this risk.

It is normal for between 50 and 75% of the Avatars of a unity to be of the "quick" variety. It is also normal for between 1/6th and 1/3rd of a unity's capacity to be left free in order to facilitate quick responses to opportunities and emergencies.

Ordinary doppelgangers are rarely informed as to the location and activities of an Avatar, while Avatars are usually aware (at least in general terms) of the activities of all doppelgangers who look to the Doppelstadt. Nor can a doppelganger recognize an avatar on sight, though the Avatar can always recognize a doppelganger or another Avatar. They are akin to the spymasters of the gestalt. It is not unheard of for one gestalt to attempt to replace a key public figure only to discover that the target is an Avatar from a different Gestalt (rendering them immune to the telepathic probing).

The number of memory wells within the Doppelstadt continues to rise as the number of elements increase, enabling ever-more sophisticated operations by the gestalt. While the need or desire to do so is unlikely, the only thing that would prevent a gestalt backed by a Unity from completely replacing the hierarchy of a key guild is the near-certainty that the existing hierarchy contains operatives from other gestalts. Unities operate in worlds of shadows and espionage, where everyone encountered is suspected of being a 'double agent' from another Gestalt, or a puppet of the same, until proven otherwise.

There is a limited capacity within a Unity for the incorporation of additional Elements. The maximum capacity of a Unity is 729 Elements. As explained in the section above on Submergants, if the Doppelstadt cannot contain another Element, a newly-advanced Submergant will found another.

Losses

It is only when you consider the impact of the loss of various development stages that the true scope of what the doppelgangers are hiding becomes apparent.

- Losing a mimic is trivial; doppelgangers use them as burglar alarms! They are a byproduct of normal doppelganger activity, and completely expendable.
- Losing a doppelganger can be inconvenient; unless there is a Doppelstadt of at least Compendium development, the personality and appearance of that doppelganger's current impersonation are also lost, and even if the Doppelstadt is capable of maintaining an archived personality impression, unless the doppelganger is in the Imperfectus or Submergant stages they are incapable of uploading the archive copy.

Once there is an archive copy available, another doppelganger can replace the one who has been lost, assuming that one is available; the new impersonator will have no knowledge of events following the last archiving, but is otherwise just as perfect an imitation.

- Losing a Doppelstadt costs the gestalt the archived personalities, leaving the doppelgangers more vulnerable, and it costs the gestalt any Avatars in development, and the loss of memory wells poses an inconvenience - until the next doppelganger belonging to that gestalt advances beyond the Submergant stage. Frequently, the doppelganger engaged in the pursuit considered the least valuable by the gestalt will be instructed to accelerate his advancement as much as possible. Finally, it loses any personality cores not currently "in use" by doppelgangers. So it is inconvenient, but its hardly a fatal blow. Of course, an immediate priority is for the gestalt to determine exactly how the location of the Doppelstadt was discovered, and who amongst them has been compromised in his current impersonation. Most ongoing operations will be suspended until these questions have been resolved, and those operations which are continued will be undertaken with far greater caution.

The deceptions that are contained within the Complete Guide to Doppelgangers are designed to protect the most valuable members of Doppelganger society, if necessary with the sacrifice of more expendable members of that society.