

Doppelgänger Architecture The Dialectical Pair as a Representational System

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The extrapolation of an artistic mechanism to the architectural project is an action that frequently takes place. Nonetheless, most of these occur in the field of visual arts and other cases of direct transference of resources from music or literature to architecture are less common. Considering paradigmatic examples as the collaboration between Iannis Xenakis and Le Corbusier for the mythical Philips Pavilion of the Expo 58, the dynamics of translation from an artistic mechanism to an architectonic structure can be observed on few occasions.

The Doppelgänger is presented as an operational model, extracted from the XVIII century romantic literature, reproduced and adapted to the cinema industry and photography throughout the XX century. Although its roots can be found in a folkloric sort of nature, through the years, it has become an aesthetic and formal resource, acquiring a growing autonomy as a projecting tool. So much so, that both in literature and cinematography, there are several researches concerning this mechanism, which can partake in different contexts and features without losing its power as a representational mechanism of the uncanny, the ambiguous and the exceptional. However, it is difficult to find studies about the use of doppelgänger in architecture, one that analyses the formal, aesthetic and psychological consequences in the specific field of this discipline.

This article suggests a systematic analysis of the architectural doppelgänger by means of three aspects which structure it: its character -through the study of Sigmund Freud's *The Uncanny*-, its structure -defined by the concept of 'pair' and the idea of repetition-, and its system of relations -based on the concept of 'dialectics'. The aim is to prove its consolidation as a representational mechanism, analogous to the one in literature and cinematography, but with its own implications in the field of architecture.

Doppelgänger is a German term that describes the double of a person alive, translated too as "a person deceptively similar"¹. The word is made up by two particles: 'doppel', which means double, and 'gänger', translated as 'andante'. The first records of this term go back to 1878 when it was included in Francis Grose's *Glossary of Provincial and Local Words*², where it is

defined as the appearance of a person alive'. This figure is swiftly adopted as a "topic" in the late XVIII and early XIX century literature. Romanticism becomes interested in the phenomenon of the double as the materialization of the human being's dark and mysterious side. During that time, works such as *The Devil's Elixirs* (1815) by E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818) by Mary Shelley, *William Wilson* (1839) by Edgar Allan Poe or *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) by Robert L. Stevenson are written.

The doppelgänger generates great attraction since the condition of the double can be explained in several ways, which leads to countless speculations. The interpretations cover from the phantasmagorical double to personality split, including the idea of the evil identical twin or the unknown clone. Several writers have used the mechanism of representing the double as an operational resource assigning different functions to it. Fiódor Dostoevski interprets it as the split of personality in *The Double* (1846). Italo Calvino as oneself's split in *The Cloven Viscount* (1952). Julio Cortázar as a character with a symmetrical life in *Rayuela* (1963). Jorge Luis Borges as an encounter with himself in *The Other* (1975) and José Saramago as a double identical and unknown in *The Double* (2002).

In the cinematographic production there is a great variety of works in which this mechanism is used, and as in literature, there are many divergences in its interpretation. Thus, this topic arises great interest. Director Paul Werenger presents the double as a utilitarian dissociation of the character in *The Student of Prague* (1913). Alfred Hitchcock captures the double as a symbiotic and dark relation between parts in *Strangers on a Train* (1951). Peter Greenaway as a questioning to reality in *A Zed & Two Noughts* (1985) and Darren Aronofsky as the opposite double and object of desire in *Black Swan* (2010).

In architecture, there are also many examples of the incorporation of this figure in project structures. However, a relationship between its implementation and the doppelgänger's referential framework is not frequently established. Cases worth mentioning are: the *Lippo Centre towers* (1988) by Paul Rudolph, the *4x4 House* (2005) by Tadao Ando or the *FRAC-Nord Pas de Calais* (2013) by Lacaton & Vassal. The present investigation suggests to deeply examine the role of the doppelgänger, which will allow us to determine the double 'character', and build a frame of specific relations to attempt to explain its operational dynamics in the field of architecture, through the tool named 'dialectical pair'.

The Pair from a Psychoanalytic Point of View

The interest on the image of the double and its use in art has produced all kinds of reflections about the nature of specific triggers to activate its effect and what impact it has on perception and, thus, what this mechanism's intrinsic character is. The investigation carried out by Sigmund Freud

in his analysis on *The Uncanny*³ (1919) stands out as a good example to trace the conditions which characterize the uncanny.

To start with, Freud postulates the word 'Unheimlich' (uncanny) as opposite and antonymous to 'Heimlich' (intimate, close, homely, domestic). Nonetheless, he quickly concludes that in some circumstances, there is a coincidence in the language between both terms. This would explain why the uncanny often arises attraction and repulsion, and at the same time, fear, familiarity, comfort and uneasiness. The ambivalence of this pair, owing to its double sense and its capacity to belong to two groups of representations, which, not being antagonistic, are very distant from each other, is by all means outstanding. On the one hand, it has to do with its character of being familiar and comfortable, and, on the other, with that of a hidden and concealed aspect. Among others, he quotes Friedrich Schelling as a way to illustrate this: "We call Unheimlich to anything that should have remained secret, hidden...however, it has appeared"⁴

The 'double' or 'the alter ego' appears as a key character in the uncanny representation. Freud exposes the different ways in which this model can be seen: ego splitting, ego partition, ego substitution, and lastly, through the constant return of the cognate in the repetition of gestures, names or attitudes. In this sense, he establishes three ways in which the double is represented:

In the first place, the image of a double protector whose aim is to elude death. This representation is derived from the child's primary narcissism as a splitting of oneself destined to capture danger of extinction or disappearance. In the second place, he postulates the presence of a double derived from ego evolution. In this version, it is developed as an opposition to the other part of the ego and its function is self-observation and self-criticism, complying with the role of psychic censure and equivalent to the voice of conscience. In the third place, it appears as the manifestation associated with the desire of being someone else: "(...) all the possibilities of our existence which have not been fulfilled and that imagination does not surrender to quit."⁵ It has to do with the personal aspirations, which have not been achieved, and the double, in some way, represents or personifies.

Freud concludes his study about the double image stating: "But once exposed in this way, the double's explicit motivation', we must come to the consensus that none of what has been explained so far is enough to account for the extraordinary uncanny character of this figure."⁶

The Construction of the Dialectical Pair

From a morphological point of view one can observe that, the architectural doppelgänger relies on the constant presence of a 'pair'. Independently from the double character -protector, conscience or desire-, it is represented as a duplicate, which opposes to its original. The effect only makes sense when visualizing the pair simultaneously. Thus, it is possible to think that the pair representation

possesses an expressive charge of its own, which is shown in both the formal and the psychological dimension.

The pair introduces two fundamental aspects in the conceptual and the formal realm: the ambiguity between the dupla and the unit and tension existing between both elements. Probably, this ambiguity is derived from the lack of acknowledgement about the pair formulation principle. That is to say, due to a double presence, the intellect is driven to explain its nature: one will try to figure out how it has been generated, if there is an original and a replica, what their differences are or in what way they relate to one another. The pair image is so powerful because it denies singularity. Therefore, visualizing pair creates reality strangeness.

Gilles Deleuze starts the introduction of his book *Difference and Repetition* with the statement: "Repetition is not generality"⁷. He establishes, in this way, the distinction between repetition and similarity. For him, both similarity and equivalence belong to the world of generality. By means of the contrary, reflections, echoes, doubles and souls appear. The repetition is understood as a reaction: "To repeat is to react to something unique or singular, which has nothing equal or equivalent."⁸ He postulates that an -apparent- external repetition is a consequence of an interior one, a deep and secret vibration. And even if it is possible to represent repetition as an extreme similarity, the difference in nature between them has to be taken into account.

Deleuze believes in generality as apparent equivalence and equality, while repetition represents the emphasis on something unique: "Therefore, generality as the generality of a particular character and repetition as the universality of a singular character are opposed."⁹ In this way, repetition is presented as an operational resource to stand out in the context of generality. In this trend of thought, it is intellect, which has the capacity to generalize while the senses perceive singularities¹⁰. The repetition, in 'Freud's double', is way incomprehensible from the point of view of logic and, that is why it works as a high impact representation/ perception.

Repetition implies duality and this condition can be understood from the perspective of symmetry. According to Deleuze, an arithmetic symmetry - which is derived from entire or fraction coefficients - and a geometric symmetry - based on irrational proportions or relations- exists. Thus, a sort of repetition of dual condition is postulated: an apparent perception accompanied by underlying relationships rules. Understanding repetition from a dual logic implies a deep reciprocity between both parts. In fact, repetitions are not independent. For Deleuze, one is the singular subject, the heart and interiority of the other. The other is only the external cover, the abstract effect. Duality is formal and conceptual.

From this point of view, repetition is the mechanism, which activates the pair in multiple dimensions it is. At the same time, the movement that originates it and the drive

that keeps it on. It is the dialogue between repetitions -a kind of bipolar tension-, which constructs the story and determines the way/shape. Therefore, we could say that the pair comes from repetition, and it establishes a dialectical relationship between the parts.

Dialectics is presented therefore, as the active mechanism of "pair relation". On the one hand, it complies with the function of consolidating the unitary perception of the whole, and on the other hand, it considers the relationship between the parts. Due to the variety of pair types, which can be found in architectural doppelgänger, we have chosen three dialectical pairs, which are operational for our aim: Friedrich Hegel's synthesis dialectics, Theodor Adorno's negative dialectics and Walter Benjamin's dialectical image.

Dialectics in Hegel is shown as a transfer of the debate philosophical method to a history building's mechanism. That is to say, reality is made up by opposite terms which being in conflict, become in new concepts. This trend of thought allows to explain change, keeping each element's identity. This dialectic is based on the foundation that an idea -thesis-, generally historic, social or philosophical, when being developed in detail reveals diverse aspects which oppose with each other -antithesis-, but finally there is a way of carrying out a re-conception of ideas reconciling aspects which were apparently contradictory. Applying this dialectical pair conception, we could understand its configuration as opposite parts which find balance through synthesis. It would be a dynamic set in its interior -by means of confrontation- and static in its exterior -through synthesis-.

Adorno's negative dialectics confronted to the pair model means an alternative result. According to this vision, Hegel's interpretation of dialectics is criticized. The latter, as it has been already mentioned, holds that a positive result comes from the contraposition of ideas. On the contrary, Adorno emphasizes the unfinished character of any conceptual confrontation: a thought out dialectical movement does not end up in a synthesis that surpasses the opposites within it, and shows the incoherence in it as an evidence of reality's contradictory nature. The negative dialectics is a model where there is no space for synthesis, where there is no reconciliation of opposites. Neutrality is abandoned and the focus is set on difference. This position means, after all, an attempt to break up with all systematical ways, expressing theory through models or fulfilling its own critical philosophy. "The pair" interpreted from this point of view, would suggest an unbalanced model, in constant redefinition: a pair of opposites in permanent tension and movement, working as a critical exercise of a double, one over the other.

Finally, we would like to carry out this exercise of analysis based on Benjamin's dialectical image. In previous conceptions, dialectics is used as the means to understand the historic progression, both in events and philosophical thought. In Benjamin's

however, the focus is more on the way to perceive change rather than its dynamics. The power of dialectical image consists on the new time conception, based on the notion of instantaneity. Time is made out of instants and these break with the idea of neutrality and causality. The dialectical image is that sense configuration which comes from the combination between the physical and past image and the one suggested by historians. From this perspective, the pair works with non-linear and undetermined dynamics, from an instantaneous experience and in discontinuity.

The Dialectical Pair: Analysis of Three Cases in Architecture and its Consequences

Considering the doppelgänger is an autonomous representation mechanism and assuming its presence in architecture, as well as in literature or cinema, it is essential to develop the necessary tools for its understanding in the field of architecture, in particular. As seen in the referential frame described above, this research postulates 'the dialectical pair' as the mechanism to explain how the doppelgänger representations works in architecture and its implications.

In the first part of this paper, one could see the dialectical pair's theoretical framework to enable one to figure out how it is activated, the way it is constructed and what consequences it has. Hereafter, these case analyses are presented in order to exemplify these statements. The cases are grouped into three categories, defined by their character, their spatial structure and the kind of relationships among their different parts: the 'Static Pair', the 'Temporal Pair' and the 'Ambiguous Pair'.

The Static Pair

The first group of the architectural doppelgänger has some formal, clear and forceful characteristics, which favours its perception as double. It could be said that its generating power is its axial symmetry. Its central axis is constituted by emptiness, which allows each element of the pair to be identified and delimited. These cases are characterized by the fact that they are a static and balanced set. On the one hand, there is weight correspondence between both parts, and on the other, a formal rotundity that transmits the idea of stability. When observing a static pair, you have the idea that it has always been there. Therefore, its balance goes beyond its composition to achieve a temporal dimension.

The nature of this pair is based on the 'double protector'. The repetition is the ego identical copy, born to ensure permanence. Its static and categorical structure represents the values of trust and safety, and its composition, releases an intimidating and monumental image. In fact, this pair works as a mirror and, for that reason, it implies the representation of an ideal. It acts as a scenography, overwhelming because of its singularity and perfection, with the capacity to transport us in time and space. In Michel Foucault's

words: "The mirror is a utopia, since it is a place without place. In the mirror I see myself where I am not (...), a kind of shadow which gives me my own visibility back, which allows me to look at me there where I am absent: mirror utopia."¹¹

This pair dialectics is deeply synthetic. Even when tensions are not apparent, both elements of the pair are different. There is a hidden struggle in seek of the original vindication. It is not by chance that in twin tower projects there are always implicit questions such as: Which one was finished first? Which one is taller? What difference is there between them? However, there is not a dominant or winning part. There is a synthesis between them, which tenses and brings them together. Extrapolating this to an image of nature, this pair would be that of the identical twins. They are perceived as a pair although each of them is an individual subject. It is admitted that there are character differences, but these remain in a second place due to their level of apparent similarity.

This pair has the lowest value of possible ambiguity, derived from its synthesis level. It is possible to delimit and understand each pair double and it is impossible not to identify them as a unit. Perhaps, due to this, they are often found in the city. The representation of twin buildings is a very common image in urban spaces. At the same time they have a formal power, they also have a great utilitarian capacity. In most of the cases, the implementation of this pair is linked to the accentuation of road axes or framing of urban landmarks. In the same way, in the case of high-rise developments, they contribute to shaping the particular skyline of the city they are set in.

The Temporal Pair

The second group of the architectural doppelgänger is not presented as an understandable and definitive image. Its perception implies a great degree of abstraction. It appears unexpectedly and it possesses an instantaneous temporality. We could say that time is its most essential condition and its constitutive engine. Its dynamic and provisional nature are derived from this aspect. It is, as a pair, in constant redefinition since it is directly related to environmental phenomenological factors. Its conformation is not fixed. It can only be perceived from a specific point of view and at a precise moment. Thus, it denies all apparent neutrality and deposits its presence on the observer himself. These conditions increase the degree of attraction they produce because the observer becomes aware of the phenomenon's singularity.

The characteristic of this pair operates as 'double conscience'. In this case, the doubling is the voice that reminds us of reality's temporal condition. This pair, in comparison with the static pair, is neither identical nor intends to be so. Both parts work by complementarity, even though they do not produce a unanimous or definitive result. There is a high level of dependence between them, although each of them

express themselves in a different way, and for that reason, they represent divergent but not opposite values. Its structure is ephemeral and it is activated in instantaneity configuring a double shape with an unexpected and surprising content.

The relationship of this pair is given by its degree of spontaneity, based on the dialectical image principles. It is a virtual, passing, ephemeral representation, which seems to establish an indirect and sensorial dialogue. Perhaps, stimulated by that, the observer tries to capture it through external means. It arises as lightning, where the unit duplicates to configure a pair of meaning, and its definition varies from one observer to another, it is unique/unrepeatable.

This pair represents a criticism to what is established and has the effect of questioning what is real, solid, stable. Its utilitarian nature is much less than the one of the pair described above. Nonetheless, there are examples of its use in circumstances where astonishment, surprise or exhilaration effects are for the reactions which are aimed to be achieved. The pair's most remarkable operative qualities is its capacity to evoke other realities, ruled by alternative laws, and its capacity to maximize the impact of a singular element on the environment. This pair usually arises in the urban context as a controlled act in large-scale institutional buildings or in religious spaces created by reflections on bodies of water, facades or reflective pavements. However, this pair's power lies on its temporal volatility and the variability of what seems to be, apparently.

The Ambiguous Pair

Finally, the third group of the architectural *doppelgänger* is defined by its counter position. The drive generated by this pair is the open struggle between the parts it is made out of: it is a pair of irreconcilable opposites. Even if they are recognized as a pair, its structure expresses the high degree of heterogeneity within its composition. This pair is unstable. Its static system works by counterbalance, but it is not always compensated. The relationship between its parts is carried out through a complex and difficult- to- understand articulation. It is not possible to talk about a balance between its parts since there is no way to disassociate them, without risking the pair. This pair can be shaped in two ways: from different structures, which have distinct internal logics and which are joined by means of identical articulations, or from identical structures combined in a complex way.

This pair's character is that of 'double desire'. The duplication represents unachieved aspirations and the projection of desire. It is a passionate pair, based on the struggle for survival. The double is the manifestation of the opposite, what is longed for. This implies a high level of contradiction in the relationship between them, which is usually reflected in the pair's formal expression. Although its constitution is not very clear, it is impossible not to recognize the uniting element between the parts since they are

linked in continuity. For that reason, it is not possible to identify the limit or autonomy of each part. In its structure, we can perceive each element's rotundity, which expresses its singularity. However, there is an awareness that survival depends on the permanence as a pair.

The relationship between its parts is by means of negative dialectics. Each double is an opposite compelled to interact with the other, even though this does not imply any degree of synthesis. Pair heterogeneity, opposition and diversity are expressed openly without any concern for showing coherence. Contradictions are explicit and show a complex reality where they are constituted. This pair can be assimilated at the biological level to Siamese twins. Frequently, they are associated with a fortuitous nature deviation and pose a challenge. There is not a clear position which determines whether their wellbeing is linked to remaining together or separate, although this speculation arises from the need of establishing their limits and differences. With regard to architecture, it means understanding the structural types that conform each unit and the kind of articulation, which connects them.

This pair shows a great degree of formal ambiguity, which inevitably represents its conceptual indetermination. When this pair appears in the urban context, it shows the complexity of structures, volumes or superposition of programs. Its hybrid shape makes us aware of a model that is quite unclear, difficult to classify and deeply heterogeneous.

1. On-line German Dictionary Woerterbuch.
2. Complete original name: A Glossary of Provincial and Local Words used in England (1787). John Russell Smith, London, 1839.
3. Essay "Das Unheimliche" published in 1919. Consulted version: FREUD, Sigmund: The Uncanny (1919) in Complete Works. Freud total electronic version, 2014, p. 1-14.
4. SCHELLING, Friedrich in FREUD, Sigmund: The Uncanny (1919). Freud Complete Works, Amorrortu Editores, Buenos Aires, 1978., p. 4.
5. FREUD, Sigmund: The Uncanny (1919). Freud Complete Works, Amorrortu Editores, Buenos Aires, 1978, p. 8.
6. *Ibidem* (5), p. 8.
7. DELEUZE, Gilles: Difference and repetition. Amarrortu Ed., Buenos Aires, 2009, p. 21.
8. *Ibidem* (7), p. 22.
9. *Ibidem* (7), p. 22.
10. In Deleuze's words: "The head is the organ of exchange, but the heart is the amorous organ of repetition. (If it is true that repetition also concerns the head, but precisely because it is its terror or paradox.)" *Ibidem* (7), p. 51-53.
11. FOUCAULT, Michel: From Other Opaces "Des espaces autres", Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité, N5, October, 1984.

Doppelgänger
Pair
Dialectic
Repetition
Symmetry