

THE THEME OF THE DOUBLE

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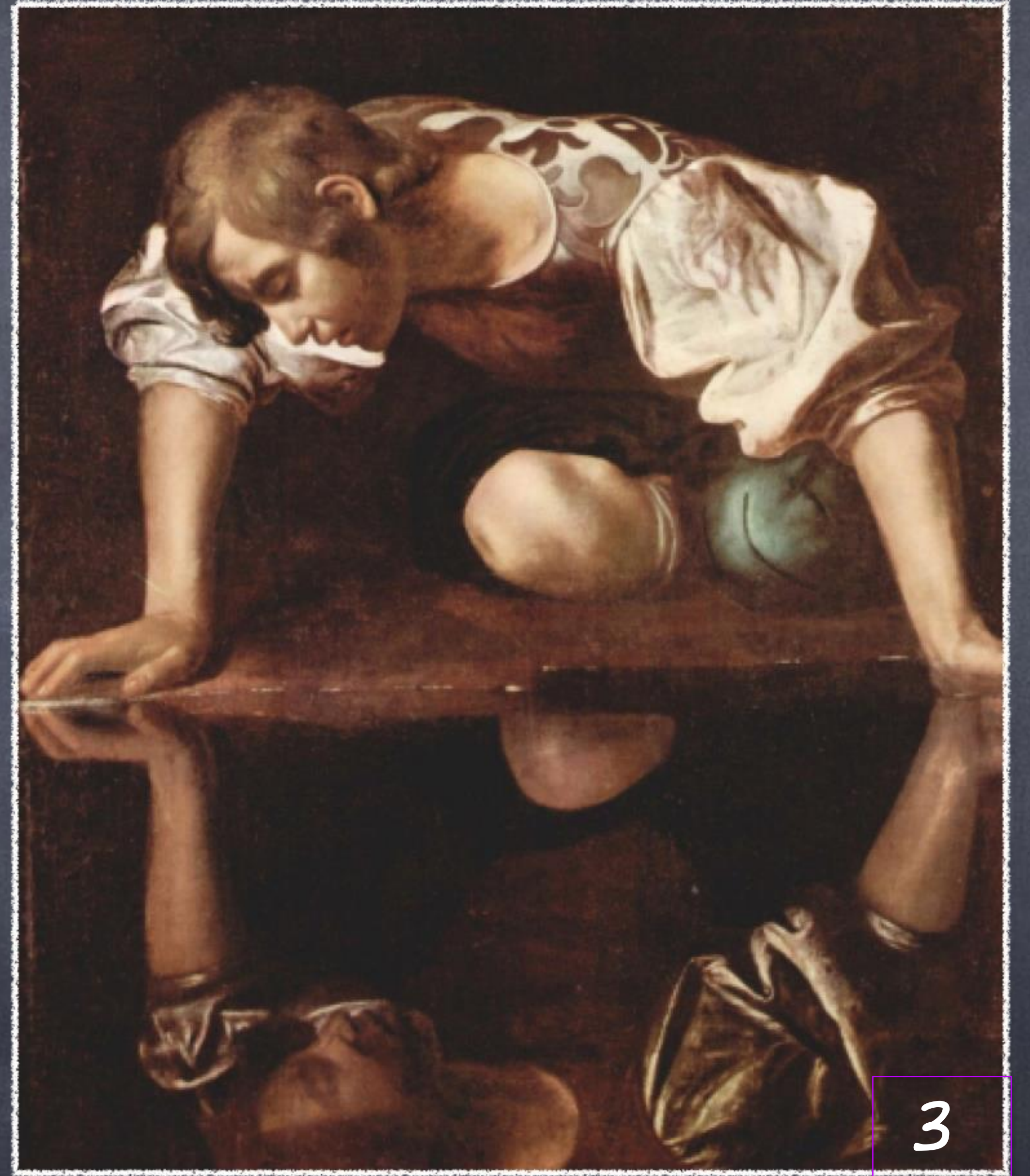
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The notion of the double seems to be related to the German term *doppelgänger*, which defines somebody's double. The term is literary translated as "second wanderer" or "double goer"

The first evidence of a doppelgänger, is to be found in classic Greek culture, more specifically in the myth of Narcissus, who falls in love with the image of a young handsome boy that he sees in the water, unaware that it is his own.



- . In the Roman classic tradition there are doubles too, for example the biographer Plutarch reports that Bruto, one of Caesar's murderers, had seen Caesar's evil spirit the night before the Fillippi's battle;
- . furthermore doubles were used as comic elements in the comedies by Plautus.





According to German and northern European folklore, to see your doppelgänger, was interpreted as a tragic omen, bad luck or a sign of impending death. Doppelgängers might be an evil twin or someone carrying a message.

As reported by tradition, a doppelgänger's image does not reflect in mirrors or water and doppelgängers do not cast a shadow, which is the distinguishing evidence that they are not human. Sometimes they can be seen in the corner of the eye and by some characters only. Other times doppelgängers are ghosts that do not vanish, so the person or the character that is involved with one of them becomes haunted by or obsessed with it.



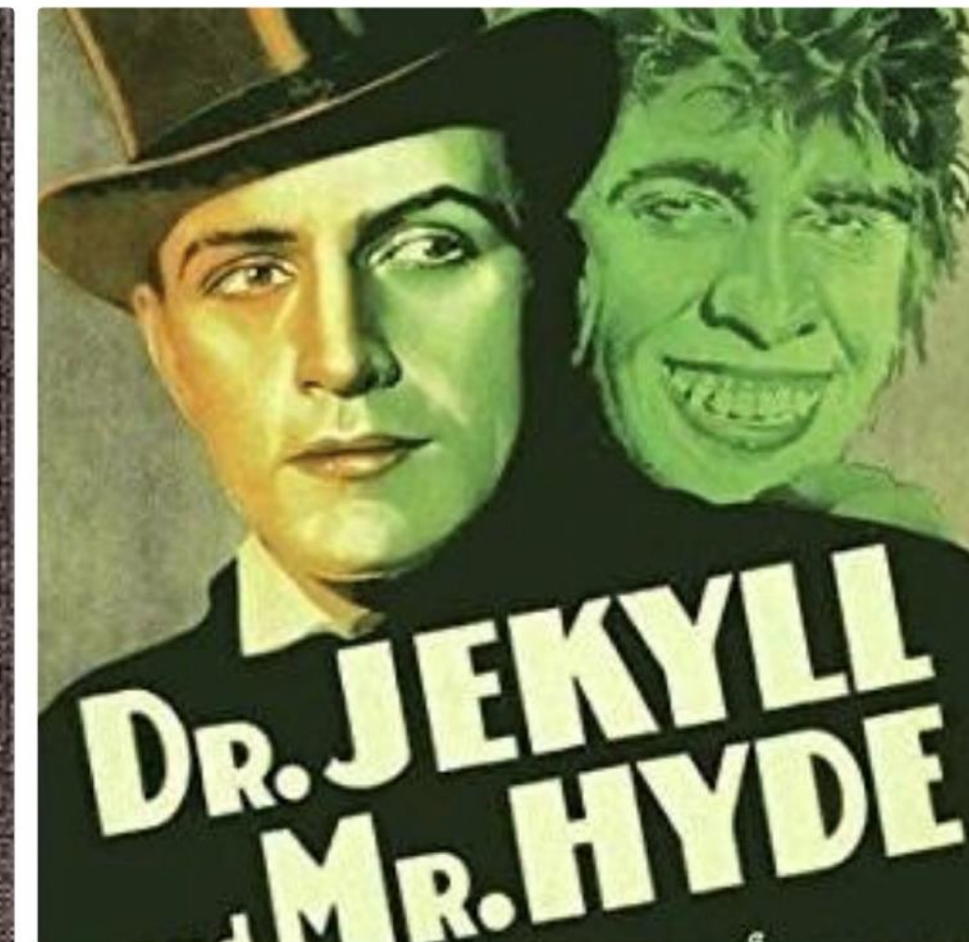
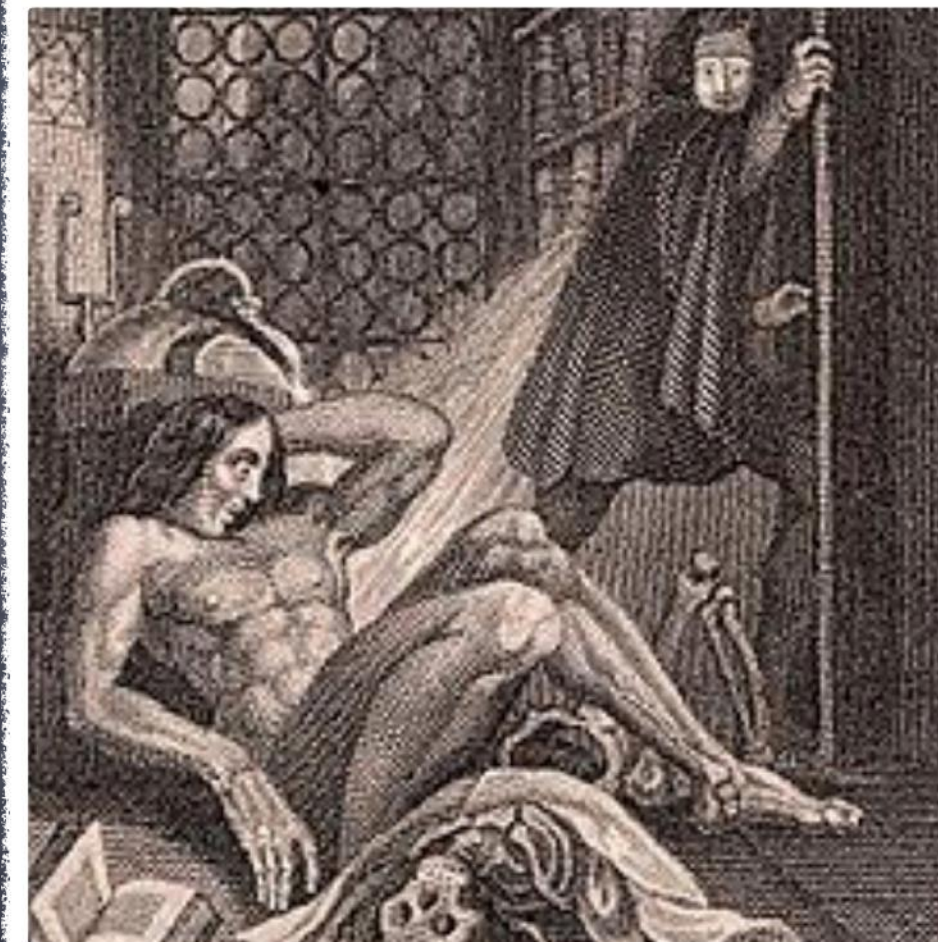
Doppelangers became quite popular in the 18th century, being exploited for example in gothic fiction, presumably as a response of the Romantic age to the anxiety of the time.

The notion of the double is pivotal to novels like:

- Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, where the creature is Dr Victor Frankenstein alter-ego.
- William Wilson by Edgar Allan Poe and some other his stories.
- The strange case of dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by R.L. Stevenson
- The picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde
- as well as in all vampire related literature, to name just a few examples...

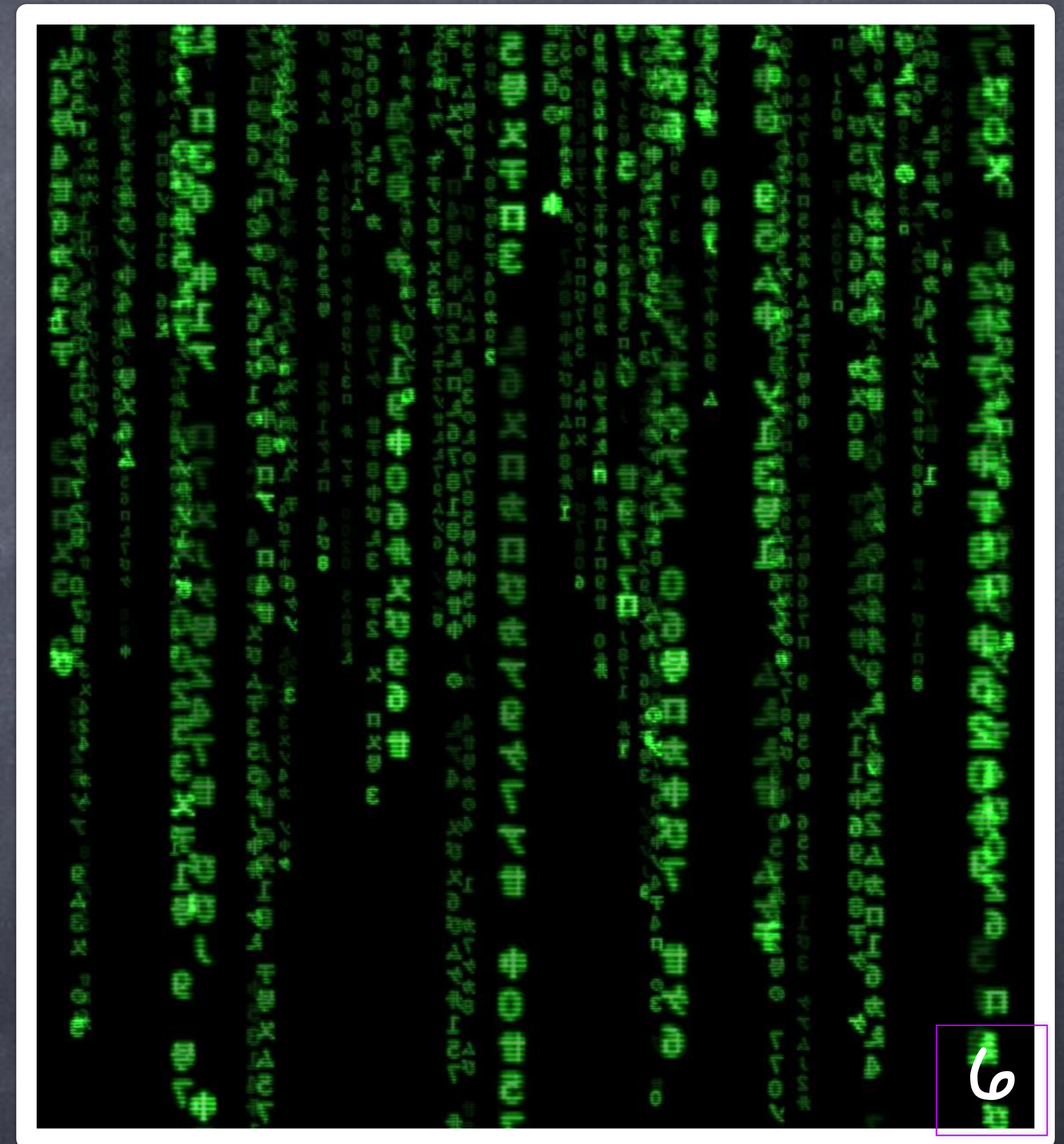


WILLIAM
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A more realistic example of the double phenomenon could be the split personality disorder, which is a subject matter for psychoanalysis. In any case doubles keep providing inspiration for the cinema industry and tv series;

what is more the advent of social media, which enables you to find photos and news regarding an extremely large number of people worldwide, contributes to keeping the belief that there is one or multiple doubles for any of us alive ; a modern version of doubles can be avatars, whereas doubles have even served the purpose of cybercriminals with the infamous 'identity theft'.



In conclusion the notion of the doppelgänger, though ancient, legendary and somewhat related to superstition, has not stopped exerting its attraction in current times as well.



The end

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