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GRASPING SHADOWS: THE DARK SIDE IN PAINTING

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Welcome to the world of shadows. Today I'd like to talk about how artists use shadows in painting, and to suggest a certain way of looking at them that may shed a new light on what those shadows mean.[i]

In the real world, people don't think about shadows very much, because they have no material existence. Shadows are just dark patches where the light has been blocked; they are absences as much as presences. And they keep changing in size and shape and direction. Sometimes they're here, and sometimes they're not. There are so many of them that if we were to pay attention to every shadow we came across we would hardly be able to move; the sensory overload would be so great. So we treat shadows as transitory effects and let them slip by without a conscious thought; automatically we quickly evaluate and discard thousands of shadows every day.

And yet shadows are tremendously important to the way we interact with the world. They help us see where objects are located in space, thus helping us to navigate the world. They tell us where the light is coming from and what time of day it is. They protect us from the sun or from being seen. They warn us of approaching danger. And if we do slow down and ponder the visual information that shadows give us, we can use them for all sorts of calculations. Aristotle, for example, used the shadow of the Earth on the moon during an eclipse to figure out that the Earth is round. Galileo discovered that the moon has mountains just like the Earth, since he could see their shadows moving through his telescope. And the Danish astronomer Ole Rømer deduced from shadow-delays in the eclipses of Jupiter's moons that the speed of light is finite.

If we turn from science to culture, shadows provide a vocabulary to explain our sense of the world. We notice foreshadowings in novels and films, we fear the shadow of death, we have shadow cabinets and shadow ministers, we remember the shadow of a smile, and we are haunted by the shadow of a doubt. The collective wisdom of centuries urges people not to mistake the shadow for the substance. Shakespeare proclaims in *Macbeth* that life itself is a walking shadow.

As the classic song "Me and My Shadow" suggests, a shadow provides some company even in the loneliest times. We know that shadows are immaterial nothings, and yet they invite us to entertain thoughts about souls, shades, doubles, and strange beings with supra-normal powers. The first and most influential of all super-heroes is Walter Gibson's "The Shadow," who since the 1930s has been featured in comics, radio shows,

pulp fiction, and movies. Thanks to its famous opening lines, the original radio show established the convention in popular culture that even if a person lies, his shadow will tell the truth. "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!"

When we see a movie poster where the shadow of the young Anakin Skywalker looks just like Darth Vader, we have a shadow that foreshadows. The shadow forecasts the ominous future of the child that casts it. Similarly, a regular feature of *Mad Magazine* throughout the 1960s and 1970s was "The Shadow Knows," drawn by Sergio Aragones, in which shadows betrayed the truth about the people or things that cast them.

Once we perceive an object as threatening, its mere shadow will sometimes be enough to cause anxiety. Last year the *New York Times* published a photo of Donald Trump's shadow to accompany an article comparing him to the cruel Roman emperor Caligula. [ii]

Sometimes a shadow can be more subtly metaphorical. When the artist Nelson Shanks did an official portrait of President Bill Clinton, he could not resist slipping the shadow of a blue dress, a reference to the Monica Lewinsky scandal, into his presidential portrait. "I kind of chuckled and put the blue dress on [a mannequin in the studio] and it created a perfect shadow" alongside the president, he said. "Let's face it, that's a metaphor. There's a major shadow across [Clinton's] presidency."[iii]

This anecdote highlights the fact that while shadows in real life are accidents of the light, shadows in artworks have been consciously put there by the artist in order to create meaning. That meaning could be as simple as, "this shadow makes my pot of flowers look more convincing." But often the shadow will take us into deeper metaphorical territory. As the story of Peter Pan losing his shadow reminds us, in artworks shadows come and go at the whim of their creator. Peter has his shadow cut off when a window slams shut on it, so he must return to retrieve it, which is how he meets Wendy, who sews it back on for him. Peter's lost shadow indicates that he is not fully human, but by acting as a mother-figure Wendy helps bring him into the human sphere for a while. Shadows are as arbitrary as everything else in an artwork; they depend on someone putting them in a certain place for a certain effect.

Let's look at some of the issues involved when artists choose to paint shadows. From the earliest times and in many cultures, artists have had little trouble with shading the darker parts of objects that do not face the light. These modeling shadows make objects look more rounded, and examples have been found in the cave paintings at Chauvet, which are about 30,000 years old.

But cast shadows, the shadows that protrude from an object, are another matter. The great artistic traditions of Egypt, China, India, and Central America do not use them. Cast shadows appear only in Western art about 400 BCE, thanks to Athenian painters such as Apollodorus and Zeuxis. Only the ancient Greeks concerned themselves with "the geometry of light" that made the direction of the light source and the resulting shadows into something that an artist should aspire to capture. Plato disparaged these illusionistic effects, but his fellow Athenians, and later the Romans, were much taken with shadow-based realism. No Greek paintings survive, but the effect can be seen in Roman mosaics and in wall decorations at Pompeii.

Cast shadows disappear from Western art during the medieval period. Light seems to emanate from within the bodies of the holy figures portrayed, even if modeling shadows based on consistent illumination round them out.

Renaissance art is said to start with Giotto, so it is not surprising that the first cast shadows since ancient times should appear, faintly limned, in his work around 1303.[iv] In his *Birth of Jesus*, in the Capella dei Scrovegni, Padua, we see very subtle lines of shadow coming from the donkey's legs, and a stronger shadow falling on St. Joseph's chest beneath his head and beard. But cast shadows were slow to be adopted. More than 100 years later, in his *Flight into Egypt* (1436), Giovanni di Paolo uses shadows in a highly arbitrary way, not for the foreground figures of the holy family, but just for the trees in the background.

Two big breakthroughs in capturing shadow happened almost simultaneously in the later 1420s. In northern Europe, Jan Van Eyck made it seem as if the light from the chapel window was causing the wooden frame of his Ghent altarpiece to cast shadows into his Annunciation scene. Meanwhile in Florence, Masaccio cleverly took advantage of the way light enters the window of the Brancacci Chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine to make it seem as if the holy figures' shadows were being cast from the daylight outside. Masaccio's 1426 painting of *St. Peter Healing the Sick with His Shadow* nicely symbolises how shadows work in art. They perform the miracle of making flat images seem real and grounded, but they also act unrealistically, obeying the command of the artist to avoid falling on the figures in a way that might obscure them. Masaccio set a trend followed by most later artists, to use a shadow only if necessary, and if so, making sure that its size and shape, its density and colour and placement, do not muddy the image, no matter what it might do in real life.

Masaccio was right to be careful. There are strong technical reasons to limit shadows. Because we are processing and discarding shadows constantly, and because shadows are changing all the time, we don't have a very good idea about what shape a shadow should actually take in any given situation. As the art critic John Ruskin said, "The strange shapes it gets into … cannot be imagined until one is actually engaged in shadow-hunting."[v] In Fra Filippo Lippi's *Nativity* (1467-1469), for example, the shadows of the wooden beams on the stable are impossible given the right angles of the surfaces they protrude from, but because they all point in the same direction, their consistency in that automatically-processed respect makes them convincing.[vi]

Moreover, if they are not skilfully located, shadows have a tendency to confuse an image's pictorial language. If their density and texture are not just right, shadows that were intended to add verisimilitude can read as flat surface patterns instead. Perhaps worse, shadows have often been accused of soiling or smudging a picture's design and colour. Already in classical times, the Roman author Quintilian pointed out that "painters who put a number of things in a single painting make clear spaces between them, so that shadows do not fall from one figure onto another."[vii] To keep pictures legible, it was a practically unbreakable rule not to let the shadow cast by one body fall perceptibly across another body above the waist.

The primary hurdle for painters who want to make their shadows convincing is what cognitive philosopher Roberto Casati calls the "shadow paradox." The paradox is that we have to recognise shadows *as shadows* in order to get benefit from them as locating devices. They help us see where and what objects are, but

only if we grasp them *first* as shadows of those objects. Our visual system habitually filters out shadows because they are temporary effects, so a painted shadow has to look fleeting to appear "shadowy." And since we read shadows as shadows much more easily when they move, it's a further challenge to render them effectively in a static artwork where the dark paint can easily be mistaken for a dark object. Because of the limited range of values on canvas compared to the actual range of light intensity, it is hard to establish a correct shadow-to-object brightness relationship. For in art, shadow establishes that brightness. In effect, the shadow creates for the viewer the very light that seems to cast it.

One common way to deal with these problems is simply to create "copycat" shadows that reproduce the outline of the caster, since these are easily recognizable and generally acceptable to the casual viewer, even if incorrect.[viii] In Konrad Witz's *Adoration of the Magi* (1443-1444) the shadows of Madonna and child bend around the unevenly lit corner of the stable without wavering. But because they replicate their casters, the fault is noticeable only if we are looking for such "mistakes."

It took a while, but by 1502 the use of grounding shadows was so ingrained that one artist couldn't do without them even when he was illustrating a story about their absence. Luca Signorelli depicts the moment in Dante's *Purgatorio* when the dead souls realise that Dante is casting a shadow and hence must be alive, unlike them. But Signorelli could not resist giving shadows to everyone in the picture, both dead and alive.

Leonardo da Vinci played an important role in shadow development for two reasons: first, in his writings he insisted that their power needed to be carefully controlled, and second, he showed painters how to render objects and shadows in a diffused light (as in the *Virgin of the Rocks*, 1483-1486), an approach that was influential up through the 19th century.

Gradually Leonardo's and Masaccio's lessons were absorbed, which is one reason why the chiaroscuro-filled work of Caravaggio and Rembrandt in the 1600s really stands out. Rembrandt in particular uses shadows with a confidence that matches anything that will come after.

In Rembrandt's *Self Portrait* of 1629, he depicts himself as a young man whose eyes are cast in shadow, as if to say how much shadow has affected his vision of the world. There's an especially creative shadow in Rembrandt's *Night Watch* (1642). At first, we see what looks like the free-floating shadow of a hand on the yellow suit of the man in the foreground. But the hand shadow belongs to Captain Frans Banning Cocq (in black, to the left). As it crosses the resplendent clothing of his lieutenant, Willem van Ruytenburch (in yellow), it comes to symbolise the authority of the Night Watch's captain. The shadow-hand leads the eye to the body of his armed subordinate, and thence to the weapon that will carry out the watch's mission. The shadow-hand prepares to grasp the spear, animating the canvas and putting into action the various concepts (bravery, preparedness, nobility of purpose) that the rest of the picture presents. Rembrandt's shadow-hand daringly anticipates a motif, the Independent shadow, that will not feature in painting for another two hundred years.

Two other important developments came to the fore in the later nineteenth century. Colour in shadows, an effect noted by Diderot in the 18th century, received special attention from the Impressionists, as seen in Monet's *Haystacks in the Snow* (1891). And then the post-Impressionists, led by Gaugin, decided that they could

do without shadows because they were just a realistic trick that distracted painters and viewers from colour and form. In Emile Bernard's *Iron Bridges at Asnières* (1887) the artist puts in a shadow for the upturned boat but gives no shadow at all to his people.

As these examples show, artists have used shadows for a variety of emotional and technical purposes: to reveal or conceal, to steer the eye, to forecast events, to create drama, or to make a point about the shadow itself as part of a story, as in the case of St. Peter's shadow, or even to make a point about representation, as Gauguin suggested.

And yet, for all their variety, I believe that there are really only four main kinds of shadow message being conveyed. It's my theory that we can understand painted shadows more fully if we just look at how shadows relate to what's casting them. Shadows can either emanate from objects, or—in art—appear cut off from them. And whether they are realistic or fanciful, they either project the vitality of their casters, or else seem separate from them.

Since shadow meanings in texts and images overlap and reinforce each other, let me use a few quotations from Dickens to help explain my four types of shadow.

In *A Christmas Carol* Dickens tells us that the mere mention of Scrooge at the Cratchits' dinner cast "a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes." This is a strong shadow, a shadow of projected *influence*, casting the chill of Scrooge's inhumanity over the festivities.

At the end of *Bleak House* Dickens describes the aged Sir Leicester Dedlock as "the decrepit shadow of himself." This is the opposite of the influential shadow; it's a weak shadow that contrasts with the solid thing it stems from—in this case it points toward the former, formidable Sir Leicester.

In *Little Dorrit* Dickens uses a third kind of shadow, a fanciful shadow that can be lost or regained, when Little Dorrit tells a story about a woman who treasures the boxed-up shadow of a departed loved one.

Finally, as a magazine editor, Dickens wanted to create a magical figure called The Shadow who could spy all over London, exposing the wicked and lauding the good. This is an Independent shadow – one that can act on its own, setting its own agenda. Dickens described it this way: "a certain Shadow, which may go into any place, by sunlight, moonlight, starlight, firelight, candlelight, and be in all homes, and all nooks and corners … a kind of semi-omniscient, omnipresent, intangible creature … I want him to loom as a fanciful thing all over London."[ix]

As these examples show, the strong shadows project the inner quality of their caster. The weaker shadows cause us to look elsewhere for the real thing--sometimes they reinforce realism by sending us elsewhere in space, but sometimes they send us elsewhere in time as foreshadows or backshadows. The detachable completing shadow is not possible in real life, but it's what people need to be fully human; it can be lost or gained. And finally, independent shadows are those that appear without a caster. The shadow itself is the centre of attention. It's often allied with dark forces and fears, and with Carl Jung's idea that shadows reveal our unconscious desires.

Let's look at these four types of shadow in more detail and see how they function in paintings.

The first, vital shadow appears to be connected to the inner being of its caster and can project an object's or person's essential qualities out into the world. As Thoreau said, "Every man casts a shadow; not his body only, but his imperfectly mingled spirit." Or as the great psychologist of art Rudolph Arnheim put it, "Throughout the world the shadow is considered an outgrowth of the object that casts it … The second, filmy self of the person is identical with or related to his soul or vital power."[x]

Given the powerful connection between shadow and caster, it is not surprising that the Greeks and Romans believed that drawing, painting, and sculpture all began with the tracing of a person's shadow. In Joseph Benoit Suvée's *The Invention of the Art of Drawing* (1793) we see a depiction of that foundational moment. Pliny the Elder tells the story of a young woman who traced her lover's shadow by lamplight before he went away on a long journey. Her father, a potter, was then able to turn the profile into a low relief sculpture. The story shows that not only is art born out of love, but art is a way of making up for the loss of the thing we love. Moreover, the shadow is the key to representation: reducing the three-dimensional world to manageable proportions on a flat surface, the shadow shows us what drawing is. Nature, via the shadow, is the first maker of representations, and humans have to learn to imitate nature to make images of their world.

The shadow-tracing motif has been the subject of many pictures that are concerned with the artist's power. In 1660 Bartolomé Murillo used the story to establish his credentials as president of the Seville Academy. "From the shadow originated the value of the painting you admire so much," reads the legend on his painting. Murillo used a sun-shadow rather than lamplight and appropriated the drawing of the shadow for himself and a friend, making it a man-to-man affair.

In Friedrich Schinkel's *The Origin of Painting* (1830), the artist splits the artistic task between a female art-director who positions a female model, whose shadow is then drawn by a man. But recently the motif has been updated and reinterpreted as a feminist statement in which men can be eliminated from the story altogether, as in Francine Van Hove's *Dibutades* (2007).

Almost any time a person casts a notable shadow, we are in the presence of a vital shadow, such as in Georg Friedrich Kersting's *Man Reading by Lamplight* (1814). Here the lamp creates a shadow that seems to emanate from the reader, showing his thoughts striving upward. In *The Meeting (Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet,* 1854), Courbet gives himself a distinct shadow that points to a milestone and the stage coach to Paris, symbols of his rising career, while those paying homage to him stand in the shade with no individual shadows of their own. Emile Friant designed his *Ombres Portées* (1891) so that the shadow of the male lover, symbol of his sexuality, dares to get closer to the unwilling woman than the suitor can himself.

Movies learned from painting how to use vital shadows expressively, as in this still from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), where the doctor's dangerous power asserts itself.

But if shadows can show the strength of something, they can also do the reverse. In the fifteenth century Michael Pacher showed how St. Wolfgang subdued the devil, and how the power of the holy gospel shrinks Satan's shadow to nearly nothing (*Saint Wolfgang and the Devil*, c.1483).

The opposite of the strong, vital shadow is what I call a "look elsewhere" shadow. It is a shadow that by its supportive role or foreshadowing power says, "look elsewhere for the real thing." This second shadow is mere shadow, not substance. It is what Plato denigrated in his allegory of the cave where he said that we have to turn to the light to escape the shadowy illusions that art and society cast before us.

This second shadow is, quite simply, secondary. Although it provides a mimetic effect, our perceptual mechanism slides over it, in art as in life, in order to focus on the object itself. This everyday sort of shadow makes up the vast majority of the shadows we see in painting, but nonetheless it does something rather extraordinary. It's nothing in itself, but it helps complete the object; lacking substance, it makes the object seem solid and real. Such everyday shadows are crucial for *trompe l'oeil* effects, as in Gerrit Dou's *Painter with Pipe and Book* (1645–50), where the shadows of the painter's head and his book create the impression that they are projecting into space beyond the window frame. Meanwhile, Velázquez has been praised by critics for creating "imperceptible shadows" that are so subtle that they really seem to be shadowy air, as in *Apollo in the Forge of Vulcan* (1630). Avoiding showy effects, these wispy nothings nevertheless help establish the solidity of the scene.

The "look elsewhere" shadow can send us elsewhere in time as well as space. In C. W. Eckersberg's *A Sailor Taking Leave of His Girl* (1840), the sailor gestures toward a shadow on the wall that indicates where his pleading might lead, to his girlfriend's becoming a mother with a child in her lap. In one of the most striking foreshadows ever painted, *The Shadow of Death* (1870), the Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt showed Jesus stretching after a day's work in the carpenter shop. He casts the shadow of his crucifixion on the wall, a shadow that will mean death for him but eternal life for his followers.

Recently, artists have begun working with real shadows, so that the "look elsewhere" shadow does not seem to match with the strange object that casts it, leaving audience wondering how the shadow and substance can line up. Larry Kagan's *Nesting* (2001) uses a mass of curved wire to produce the sharp-edged shadow of nesting boxes, commenting on what unexpected potential is nested inside his sculpture. Taking this motif to a further level, Tim Noble and Sue Webster used a year's worth of their own personal rubbish to create a shadow of themselves, despondently turned away from one another, so that their title, *Real Life is Rubbish* (2002), addresses both their materials and their gloomy self-portrait.

The third shadow, the completing shadow, is a precarious entity whose presence renders a person whole but whose absence signals a fundamental lack of something crucial to full human existence. The completing shadow does not exist in real life but is a crucial indicator of humanity in folklore and religion.

According to the gospel of St Luke, Christianity is born of a shadow. Konrad Witz's *Annunciation* (c. 1445) is one of the rare paintings that tries to depict the angel's words to Mary in a literal way: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). A curious shadow, seeming to come from a column, heads towards Mary and then seems to dive under Mary's skirt. It makes sense only if one knows the medieval tradition that said that Christ was a column that held up his church. In a mystical way Christ helps God the Father Incarnate himself so that He can become a human—and have a shadow of his own.

According to folklore, if someone loses touch with life on earth, then his shadow will disappear. In Francisco Goya's *Witches Elevating a Man in the Air* (1797-98), the bewitched man casts no shadow on the ground, and neither do the witches that are carrying him away. In the popular story of *Peter Schlemihl, the Man Who Lost His Shadow*, a young man trades his shadow to the devil for a purse that will never run out of gold coins. But he soon discovers that no one will have anything to do with a man without a shadow and so, even though he is rich, he is forced to live a life of solitude.

The French painter Eugene Delacroix's engraving of Hamlet's meeting with his father's ghost (*The Phantom on the Terrace*, 1843) shows very clearly the convention that ghosts can't cast shadows, even as it also shows that artists feel the need to put the tiniest of shadow under a ghost's feet, just to make him look like he is walking on the ground.

Metaphorically, people who are emotionally dead can be identified by their lack of a shadow. In Edvard Munch's *The Lonely Ones* (1889), we see how the Post-Impressionist removal of the shadow emphasizes the isolation of two would-be lovers.

But if a person who has lost a shadow is fortunate enough to regain it, as Peter Pan does, the shadow reconnects him to the community, in this case represented by Wendy, who acts like a mother when she sews it on for him.

In 1951 Robert Rauschenberg stunned the art word by making utterly abstract paintings with white house paint and a roller. His friend John Cage called the white paintings "airports of the lights and shadows" because the white surface seemed to register everything that was going on around them. But the figurative painter Mark Tansey was not convinced. In *Triumph Over Mastery* (1986), he depicted a Rauschenberg-like figure rolling white paint over the Last Judgment wall of the Sistine chapel, painting out his own shadow in the process. For Tansey, the artist had destroyed his own being, his own humanity.

The fourth and final shadow is an Independent or liberated shadow. It is a shadow that exists without a visible caster. Rare in painting until the twentieth century, it has now become a common motif in a culture that seems to care as much about shadows and images as it does about actual events and things. At the end of the nineteenth century Paul Gauguin wrote that "if instead of a figure you put the shadow only of a person, that is an original point of departure, the strangeness of which you have calculated."[xi] The groundwork for this perception had been laid by several artists earlier in the century. They used the Independent shadow to suggest the presence of something looming or approaching just off the edge of the canvas.

The catalyst was a painting by William Collins*, Rustic Civility*, which he showed at the Royal Academy in 1833. Artists and critics alike were struck by how Collins evoked the arrival of a horseman at the gate without actually showing him. The motif was rendered even more striking when Jean-Léon Gérôme exhibited *Golgotha, Consumatum est* in 1867. For the first time in history an artist depicted the crucifixion without showing it; and in the process Gérôme showed how a shadow could be more powerful than a direct representation. A few years later, William Rimmer used fleeing and pursuing shadows to create a desperate chase in his *Flight and Pursuit* (1872).

In his "metaphysical" works, such as *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street* (1914), Giorgio De Chirico created an atmosphere of tension and menace by inserting the shadows of mysterious, unseen statues into his eerie scenes of nearly deserted cities.

In *The Shadow on the Woman* (1953) Pablo Picasso represented the shadow of the artist looming over a nude model. The shadow turns the torso of the nude into warmer colours that suggest erotic excitement. It may be a fantasy on the part of the aging artist, whose wife Francoise Gillot had left him a few days earlier. Maybe the sexual shadow is all-powerful -- or maybe it is proof that the famously womanising artist has become a shadow of his former self — the shadow acts where he cannot.

In photography, the independent shadow has taken on a life of its own. In *New York City* (1966), Lee Friedlander used his trademark self-shadow to clever effect, the fur on his subject's collar suggesting the photographer's own spiky hair**.**

And shadows are routinely presented in films as more emotionally powerful than the sight of the real thing. In a classic shot from *Fantasia* (1940), Mickey Mouse, as the Sorcerer's Apprentice, chops the water-carrying broom in half with a mighty blow of his shadow-axe.

I will conclude with one of my favourite shadow pictures, Renoir's *Le Pont des Arts* (1867). Renoir ventures into new territory in the history of art by including an elaborate Independent shadow which serves as a foundation for the picture. Painted *en plein air*, *Le Pont des Arts* depicts a sunny afternoon in Paris at the time of the World's Fair of 1867, a panoramic scene that includes the Louvre, the Pont Neuf, the cathedral of Notre Dame, and sightseers lining up to board the boats waiting at the riverbank.

The shadow that stretches across the base of the painting, with its shapes of lampposts and people, tells us that there is a bridge overhead, the cast-iron Pont du Carrousel, beneath which Renoir himself must have stood as he painted the scene. The shadow-pedestrians overhead cast their shapes diagonally into the image, reinforcing the perspective, and pointing the eye toward the Pont des Arts of the title and *its* pedestrians, as they cross the background of the picture.

Renoir placed his signature in the shadow at the lower right, not far from where he must have stood to paint, as if to signal that art and artist both dwell in passing shadow. And that's where the deeper meaning of the painting lies. Producing his picture in the same year as Gerome's *Crucifixion*, Renoir shows his preference for secular society, turning a holy day into a holiday, placing the shadows of ordinary Parisians in place of the crucifixion, and Paris in the place of Jerusalem. But Renoir's shadow literally underlines the sunny day with darkness. As if crossing the River Styx, the shadow people on the bridge parallel, on a darker path, those black figures who cross the Pont des Arts in the middle distance. They are shades-to-come, Parisians still left in life, in the sun of the upper world, while the shadow world waits below them. For art is only a shadow of life, and life is as fleeting as a shadow. In the end, the painting itself is a Bridge of the Arts, recapitulating the history of painting shadows. Like Murillo's *Origin of Painting*, Renoir uses his shadow baseline to show art's foundation, the rough tracing of human outlines from which the skilful representation will come, and which will serve its viewers as a temporary stay against absence and death.

As I hope I have shown, the wonderful thing about being attuned to shadows is that they actually have quite a lot to say to us if we make an effort to learn their language. And when we start to grasp shadows, I believe, we can see art in a whole new light.

All of what I have said today is spelled out and illustrated in much more detail in my book *Grasping Shadows***,** which also takes up shadows in literature, photography, and film--so I encourage you to have a look at it if you want to pursue this topic further.

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[i] This lecture is based on my book, *Grasping Shadows: The Dark Side in Literature, Painting, Photography, and Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). Full references and analyses can be found there. I am indebted to the work of many scholars; the key texts are E. H. Gombrich, *Shadows: The Depiction of Cast Shadows in Western Art* (London: National Gallery, 1995); Michael Baxandall, *Shadows and Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Victor I. Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow*, trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (London: Reaktion Books, 1997); Max Milner, *L'envers du visible: Essai sur l'ombre* (Paris: Seuil, 2005); and Roberto Casati, *Shadows: Unlocking Their Secrets from Plato to Our Time*, 2000; trans. Abigail Asher (New York: Vintage, 2004).

[ii] Paul Krugman, « Trump Makes Caligula Look Pretty Good," https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/18/opinion/trump-caligula-republican-congress.html?emc=edit_th_20170818&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=25089105

[iii] Michael Miller, "Bill Clinton Portrait Contains Hidden Monica Lewinsky Allusion, Artist Nelson Shanks Reveals," http://www.people.com/article/bill-clinton-portrait-monica-lewinsky-dress-artist-says (accessed Feb. 16, 2016).

[iv] See Stoichita, *History*, 48.

[v] John Ruskin *Modern Painters* IV. Part 5, Ch. 5 (1856; Orpington, Kent: George Allen, 1888), 74.

[vi] Casati, *Shadows*, 159-160.

[vii] Quintilian, *Institutes*, VIII, v26. Nineteenth-century recommendations can be found in John Burnet and Henry Murray, *Practical Hints on Light and Shade in Painting* (London: James S. Virtue, 1838).

[viii] See Roberto Casati, "The copycat solution to the shadow correspondence problem," *Perception* 37 (2008): 495-503.

[ix] Charles Dickens, *Letters,* Pilgrim Edition 5:622-23; cited also in John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens*, volume 2 (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1911), 71.

[x] Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1873), 373; Rudolph Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 317.

[xi] Paul Gauguin to Emile Bernard, Nov. 1888, in *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Emile Bernard*, 1888-1891 (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, 1954), 63-64. Cited and trans. in Nancy Forgione, "'The Shadow Only': Shadow and Silhouette in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris," *The Art Bulletin* 81.3 (1999): 490.