

Grasping Shadows

Understanding the Dark Side in the Visual Arts

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Edward
Hopper,
*Night
Shadows*,
1921

What are
the
shadows
conveying?



Sheet Music
cover, *Me and
My Shadow*,
1927



Walter Gibson's
The Shadow,
1939



A Shadow
Foreshadows:
Poster, *Star
Wars, Episode
1*, 1998



Sergio
Aragnones,
Mad Magazine
Feature, April
1976

Who knows what evils lurk in the hearts of men?
THE SHADOW KNOWS



MAD
madmagazine.com

Shadow in Washington: *NY Times* 18.08.2017



Nelson Shanks,
President Bill Clinton, 2005



From *USA Today*. "Nelson Shanks works on a portrait of former president Bill Clinton. There is a blue dress set up in the studio casting a shadow on the set. Shanks recently told reporters that the shadow represents Monica Lewinsky." (photo by Eileen Blass, *USA Today*)



Disney, *Peter Pan*, 1953



Horses with modeling shadows at the Chauvet Cave, c. 32,000 BCE



Wall Fresco, Pompeii, c. 70 AD



Giotto, *Birth of Jesus*,
Capella dei
Scrovegni,
Padua
(detail),
circa 1303



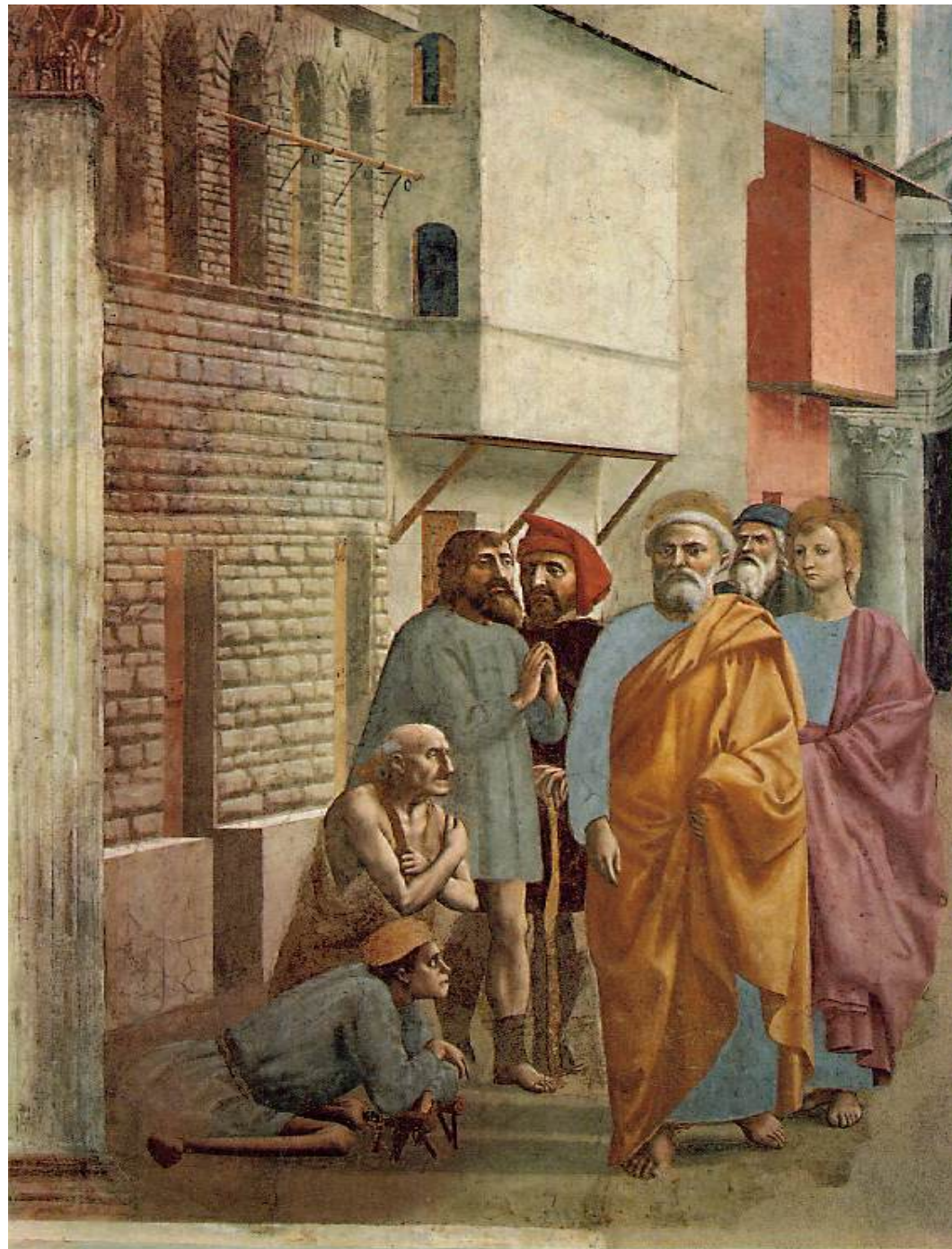
**Giovanni Di
Paolo, *Flight
into Egypt*, 1436**



Van Eyck, the Ghent
Altarpiece of the Mystic
Lamb,
closed position,
1432



Masaccio, *St. Peter Healing the Sick with his Shadow*
(1427-28)



Fra Filippo
Lippi, *Nativity*,
1467-1469



Konrad Witz, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1443-1444



Luca
Signorelli,
Dante in
Purgatory,
c1502



Leonardo on Shadows:

- “shadow is a more powerful agent than light, for it can impede and entirely deprive bodies of their light.”
- "Light too conspicuously cut off by shadows is exceedingly disapproved of by painters."
- instead of harsh illumination, artists should bathe their scenes in a light diffused by cloud or mist--a practice followed by most painters until the Romantic era.

Leonardo, *Virgin of the Rocks*,
Louvre version,
c. 1483-1486



Rembrandt,
Self-Portrait,
1629



Rembrandt,
*The Night
Watch*, 1642



Rembrandt,
*The Night
Watch*
(1642),
detail



Monet,
*Haystacks
in Snow*,
1891



Emile Bernard, *Iron Bridges at Asnières*, 1887



An Influential 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 shadow that projects the inner being of its caster; it's a shadow of *revelation* or *influence*, casting the chill of Scrooge's inhumanity over the festivities.

An Insubstantial Shadow

- 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 shadow that is not substance, but merely a shadow. It tells us to look elsewhere for the real, more solid thing it stems from—in this case it points toward the former, formidable Sir Leicester.

A Completing Shadow

- In *Little Dorrit* Dickens uses a third kind of shadow, a fanciful shadow that can be lost or regained, to complete a person. Little Dorrit tells a story about a lonely woman who treasures the boxed-up shadow of a departed loved one.
- “It was the shadow of Some one who had gone by long before: of Some one who had gone on far away quite out of reach, never, never to come back. It was bright to look at; and when the tiny woman showed it to the Princess, she was proud of it with all her heart, as a great, great treasure.”

An Independent Shadow

- 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 that separates from any caster, and can act on its own, setting its own agenda.
- “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.”

1) The Vital Shadow—a conventionally attached shadow that says, “look at me!—I am connected to the inner being of my caster.”

Shadow=Soul, Spirit, Form

- Every man casts a shadow; not his body only, but his imperfectly mingled spirit. . . .
- --Henry David Thoreau
- 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.
- --Rudolph Arheim, *Art and Visual Perception*.
- "Shadow is the manifestation, by bodies, of their forms. The forms of bodies don't show their particularities without shadow.
 - --Leonardo da Vinci

“Butades, a potter of Sicyon, was the first who invented, at Corinth, the art of modeling portraits . . . It was through his daughter that he made the discovery; who, being deeply in love with a young man about to depart on a long journey, traced the profile of his face, as thrown upon the wall by the light of the lamp.”
--Pliny the Elder, 77-79 AD

Joseph Benoit Suvée, *The Invention of the Art of Drawing*, 1793 (detail)



Bartolomé Murillo, *The Origin of Painting*,
c1660



Friedrich Schinkel, *The Origin of Painting*, 1830



Francine Van Hove, *Dibutades*, 2007



Georg Friedrich Kersting *Man Reading by
Lamplight*, 1814



Gustave Courbet,
The Meeting
(*Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet*),
1854



Emile Friant,
*Ombres
Portées*, 1891



Robert Weine (dir.), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*,
1919



Michael Pacher, *Saint Wolfgang and the Devil*
(c1483)



• 2.) The “Look Elsewhere” Shadow:
a shadow that by its supportive role or foreshadowing quality says “look somewhere else for the real thing.”

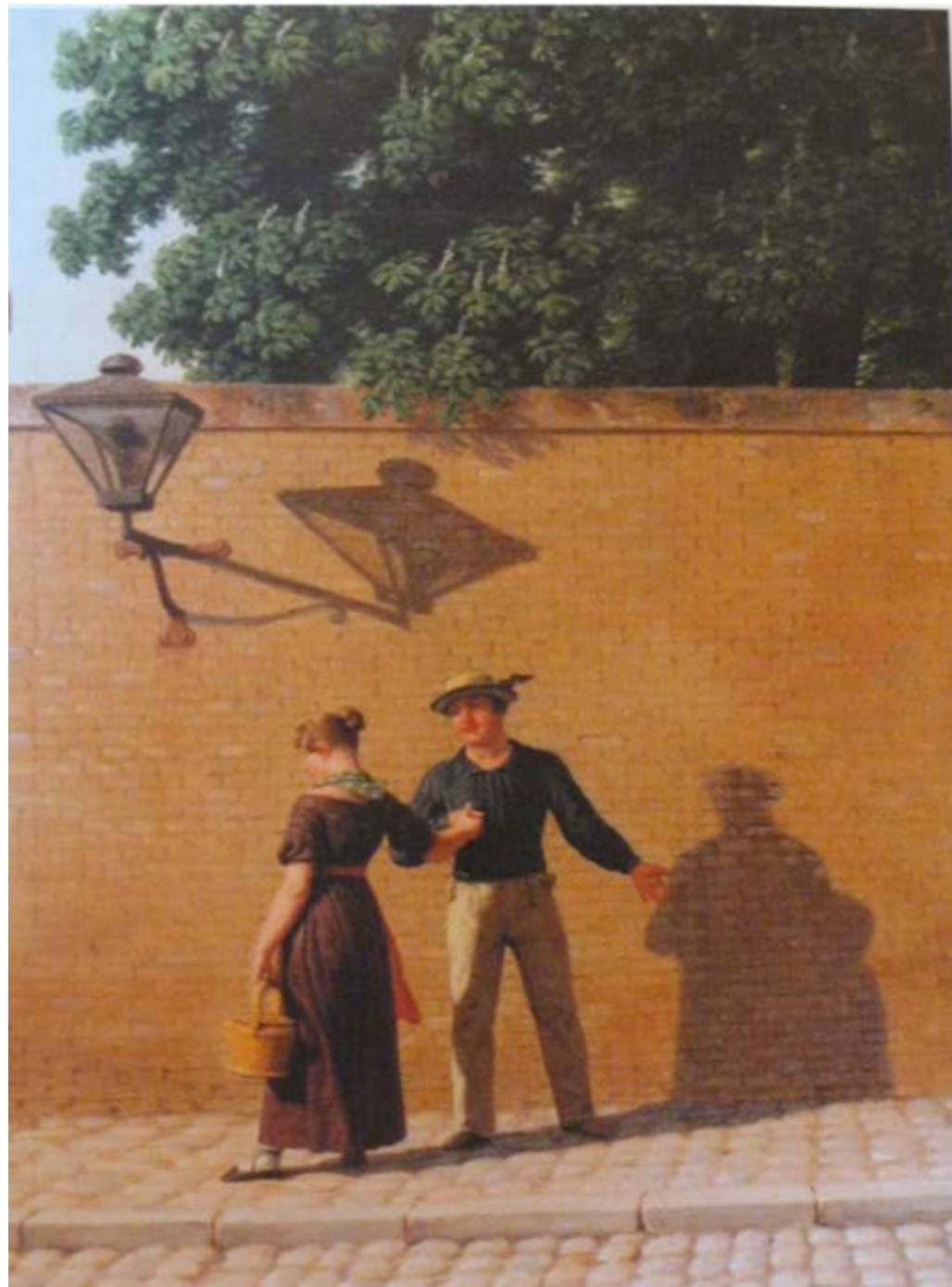
Gerrit Dou,
*Painter with
Pipe and Book*,
1645–50,



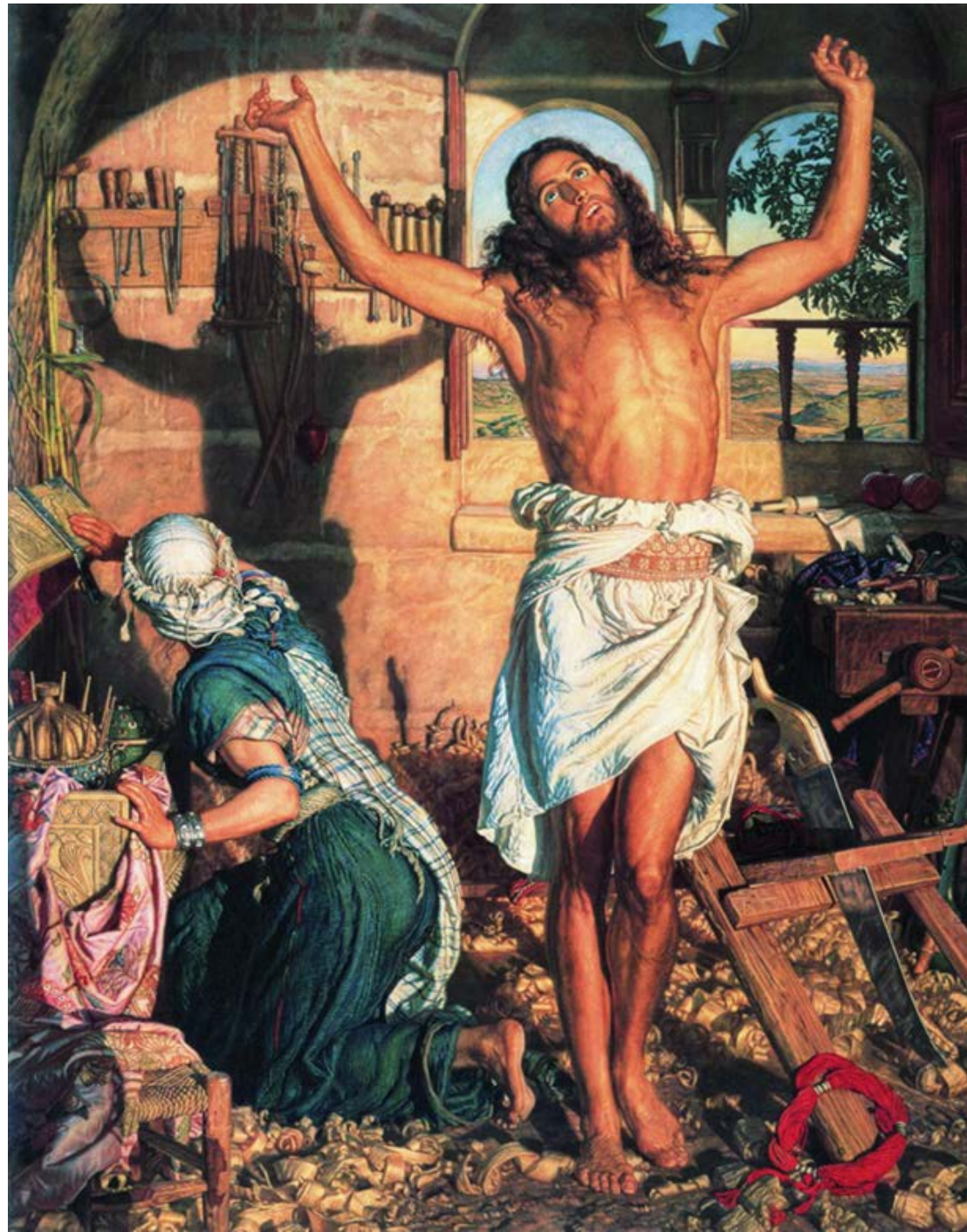
Velázquez, *Apollo in the Forge of Vulcan*, 1630



C. W.
Eckersberg, *A
Sailor Taking
Leave of His
Girl*, 1840



William
Holman
Hunt, *The
Shadow of
Death*, 1870



Larry Kagan, *Nesting*, 2001



Tim Noble and Sue Webster, *Real Life is Rubbish*,
2002



3)The Completing Shadow

- A precarious shadow whose presence completes a person and whose absence signals a fundamental lack of something crucial to full human existence

Konrad Witz,
Annunciation, c1445:
“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.



Francisco Goya
*Witches Elevating
a Man in the Air*
(1797-98)



George
Cruikshank,
*Peter Schlemihl
Selling His
Shadow, 1827*



Delacroix,
*Phantom on
the Terrace*
from
Shakespeare's
Hamlet, 1843



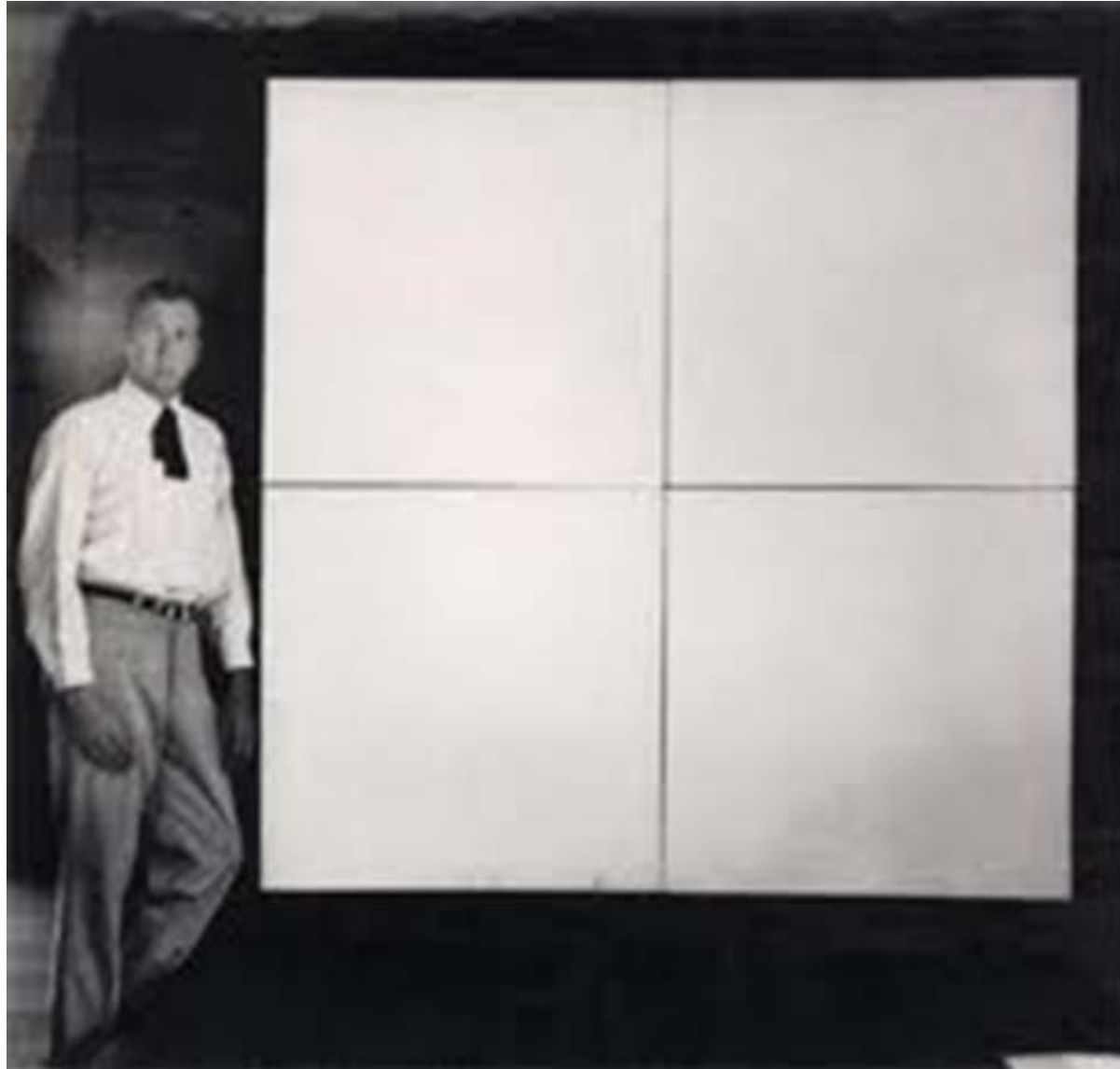
Disney Studios, *Wendy Sewing On Peter's Shadow*,
1953



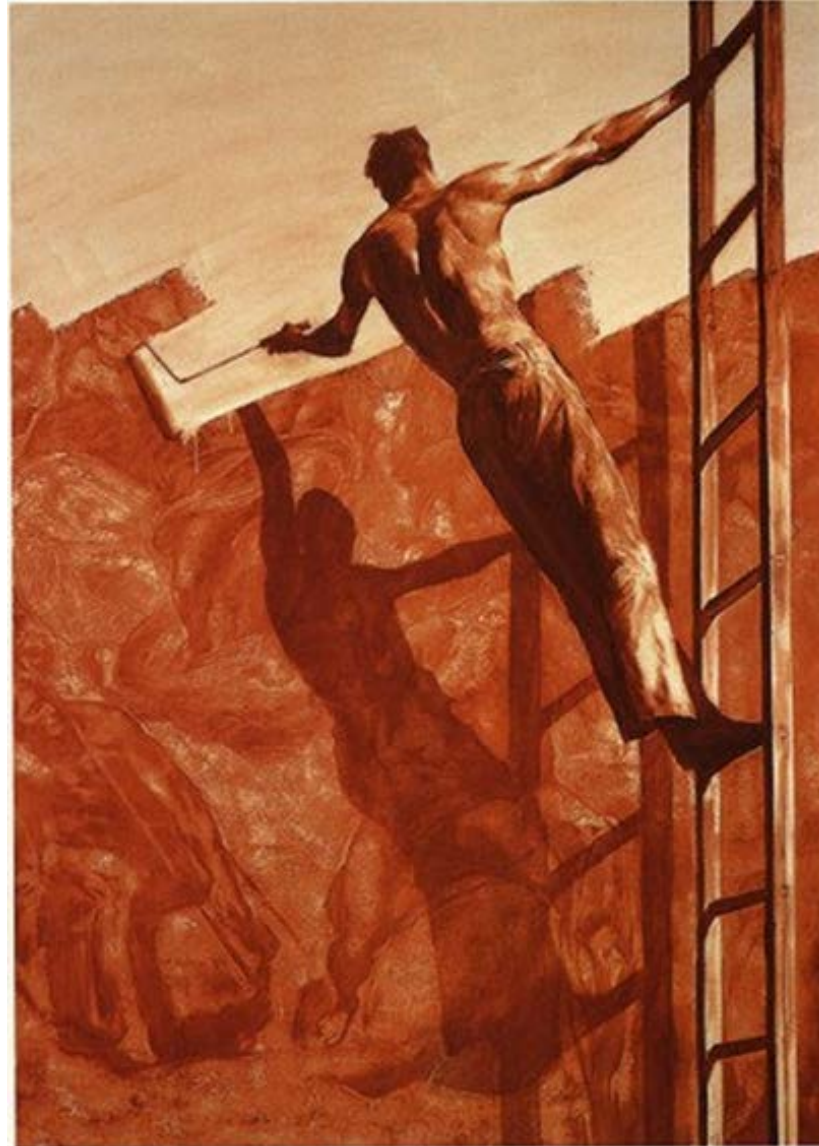
Edvard Munch, *The Lonely Ones* (1889)



Robert Rauschenberg with *White Paintings*, 1951



Mark Tansey, *Triumph Over Mastery*, 1986



4) The Independent Shadow

- A shadow that can exist and act without a visible caster

- “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.”
- -- Paul Gauguin to Emile Bernard, 1888.

William Collins, *Rustic Civility*, 1833



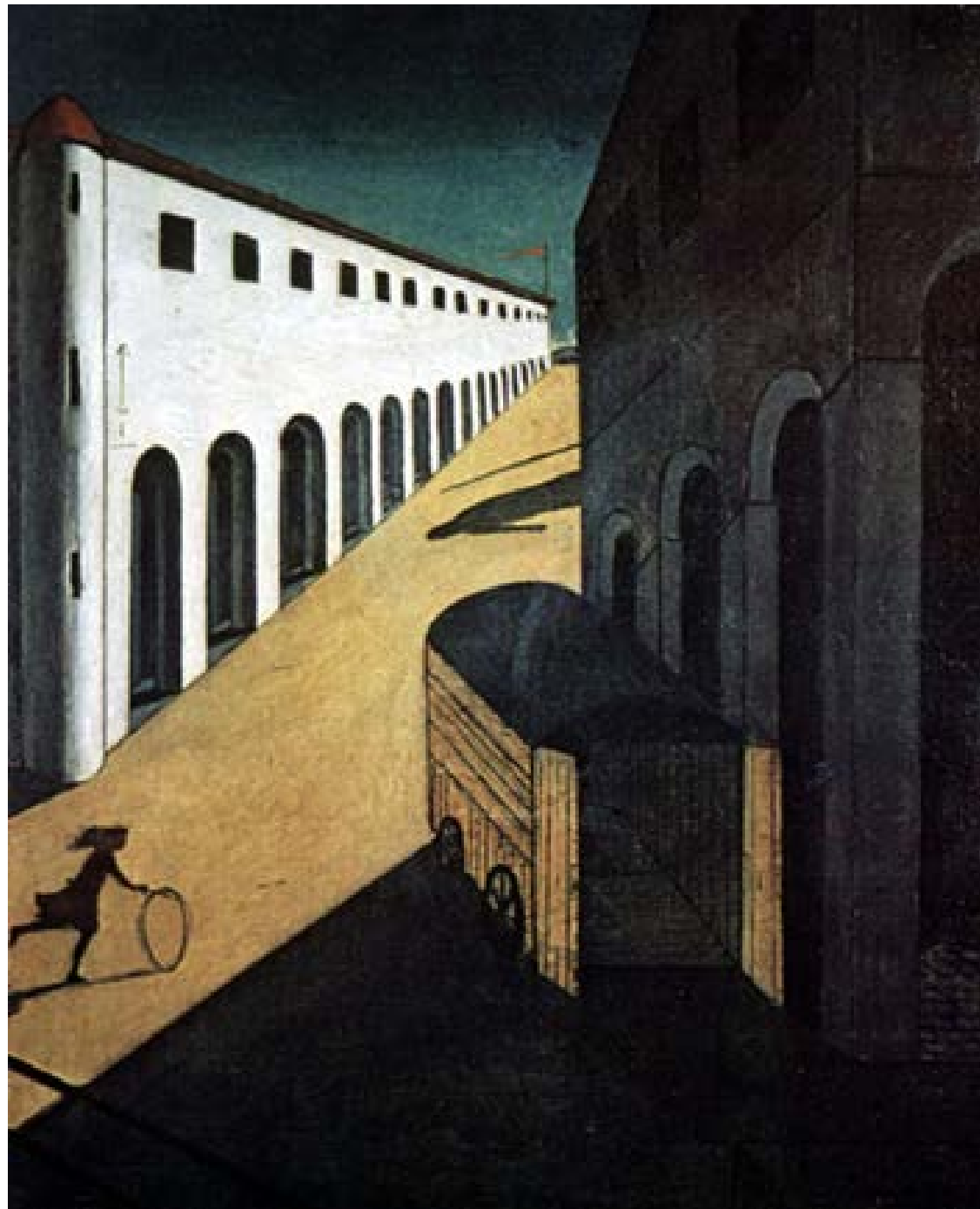
Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Golgotha, Consumatum est*,
1867



William Rimmer, *Flight and Pursuit*, 1872



De Chirico,
*Melancholy
and Mystery
of a Street,*
1914



Pablo Picasso, *The Shadow on the Woman*, 1953



Lee Friedlander, *New York City*, 1966



Disney Studios, *Fantasia*, 1940



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Le Pont des Arts*, 1867



WILLIAM CHAPMAN SHARPE



GRASPING SHADOWS

The Dark Side of Literature,
Painting, Photography, and Film

