

Intro: The Story of Peter Schlemihl by Adelbert von Chamisso

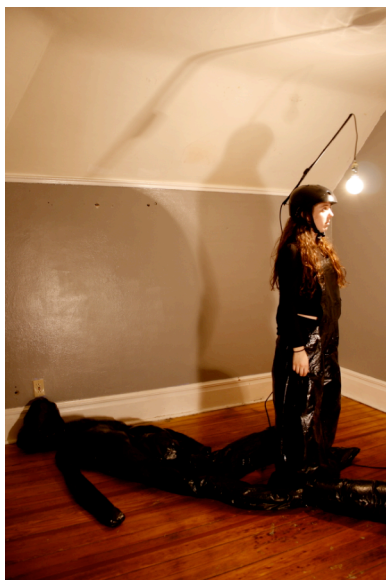
“I had stolen safely down the hill, through the thicket of rose, and now found myself on an open plain: but hearing lest I should be met out of the proper path, crossing the grass, I cast an inquisitive glance around, and started as I beheld the man in the grey cloak advancing towards me. He took off his hat, and made me a lower bow than any mortal had ever favored me with. I gazed at him with the utmost horror and felt like a bird fascinated by a serpent.

He affected himself to have an air of embarrassment, With his eyes on the ground, he bowed several times, drew nearer and at last without looking up, addressed me in a low and hesitating voice, almost in the tone of a suppliant: “Will you, sir, excuse my importunity in venturing to intrude upon you in so unusual a manner? I have a request to make- would you most graciously be please to allow me-! “Hold! For Heaven’s sake!” O exclaimed; “ what can I do for a man who”- I stopped in some confusion, which he seemed to share. After a moment’s pause, he resumed: “During the short time I have had the pleasure to be in your company, I have- permit me, sir, to say- beheld with unspeakable admiration your most beautiful shadow, and remarked the air of noble indifference with which you, at the same time, turn from the glorious picture at your feet, as if disdainingly to vouchsafe a glance at it. Excuse the bold ness of my proposal: but perhaps you would have o objection to sell me your shadow? He stopped, while my head turned round like a mill- wheel. What was I to think of so extraordinary a proposal? To sell me shadow! He must be mad, thought I: and assuming a time more in character with the submissiveness of his own, I replied.” My good friend, are you not content with your own shadow? This would be a bargain of a strange nature indeed!”

“Be pleased, gracious sir, to examine this purse, and made a trail of its contents.” He put his hands in his pocket, and drew forth a large strongly stitched bag of leather, with a couple of strings to match and presented it to me. I seized it- took out ten good pieces, then ten more, and this I repeated again and again, Instantly I help out my hand to him. “Done,” said I, “the bargain is made; my shadow for the purse.” “Agreed” he answered and immediately kneeling down. I beheld him, with extraordinary dexterity, gently loosened my shadow from the grass, lifted it up, fold it together and at last put it in his pocket. He then rose, bowed once more to me and directed his steps towards the rose bushes. I fancied I heard him quietly laughing to himself. However, I help the purse fast by the two strings. The earth was basking beneath the brightness of the sun: but I presently lost all consciousness.



Inflatable Shadow



Peter Pan's shadow becomes a metaphor for identity, this garment, consisting of a pair of overalls constructed out of garbage bags, an inflatable shadow and a helmet with a light bulb attached, represents this component of a shadow as identity. The inflatable shadow that is attached to the wearer is a part of the person but still separate. The shadow can be inflated by the wearer or by an outside person controlling the air flow (which comes from a battery operated fan). This represents the shadow as a separate entity of identity but still acknowledging that the shadow belongs to its owner and does have the same characteristics. Sometimes shadows can represent the parts of identity that people choose not to associate with their real selves. The inflatable shadow represents this idea. The wearer has a light bulb that can be turned on or off, the illusion of this piece is that the shadow can be inflated and deflated on command and correspond with the light bulb. The wearers real shadow is also projected on the wall, which further illuminates that the inflatable shadow is an imitation of a shadow and not real. The shadow can also be inflated or deflated in a manner that doesn't match up with light, as a challenge to realism and showing that the shadow can be separate and have a mind of its own. T.S Elliot said, "That between the idea and reality, falls the shadow." The shadow can represent this obscured idea of what is truth and what is false. There is a feeling that the shadow can leave the wearer, as if it has a mind of its own, this Peter Pan shadow complex of the shadow escaping from its owner explores ideas of what a shadow means to the owner, is it a part of its identity, does it have a personality of its own? Like, Peter Schemil who sells his shadow, what else is he losing?

The overalls were chosen to accompany the inflatable shadow because of their childlike demeanor, which I think is related to the relationship between Peter Pan and his shadow, which connotes such infantile psychology and childhood innocence. The physiologist, Carl Jung describes a condition called the "shadow aspect" which is part of the unconscious mind consisting of repressed weakness, shortcoming and instincts which are superseded during early childhood by the conscious mind.

In early emblem books like Johannes Sambucus' *Emblemata*, the image of the guilty conscience is portrayed as shadow being cast by the sun. The guilty party is shown fighting its shadow. "Armed with a sword, his chest still heaving from the crime he has committed, the man wants to continue on his way. Occasionally he stops to stare in fear at his own shadow. He strikes it and orders it to go away. But when he sees the identical wounds, he shouts. Here is the one who betrayed my crime! OH, how many times have murderers made of their remorse insane illusions, and fate armed them against themselves."

There are connections within this story that exclaim that the shadow becomes a personification of guilt. Psychologist has suggested that this is a childhood interpretation of shadows, that they represent an aspect of guilt.

Another physical relationship that children have with shadows is a fright. There is a primitive fear of shadows and how children are afraid of their own shadows. The developmental stages of children's interpretations of shadows described by Piaget are related to different garment in this series entitled Hood Dress.



Hood Dress



Symmetrical on the front and back, there are four layers of hoods, which grow larger gradually from the top to the bottom. The garment fits over the body like a cape and the hood's zipper shuts to create a cocoon like bubble over the wearer's head. The way that the hood encloses the wearer reflects the definition of a shadow: to conceal and to hide.

The importance of the profile and the emphasis on the side view of this garment represents a thought about the shadow of a profile. In an interview with Victor I. Stocihita, on the History of the Shadow, he states that the soul of the person can be decoded in the interpretation of their profile. The profile is the mirror to one's soul. The face was interpreted not as a surface of signs but as a profile line, or more specifically as the profile line of the cast shadow. There is also a belief that that you can recognize a man's soul in his shadow, and a shadow in his soul.

The four layers represent Piaget's study of children's responses to shadows. Piaget discovered four stages in which children interpret shadows, the first stage, experienced at around the age of five, a child can understand that a shadow is cast by an object, for instance his own hand, but he also considers it as the result of the confluence of the caused, one internal (the shadow emanates from the object, it is part of the object), the other external (the shadow comes from the night, from a dark corner of the room, ect) Piaget pointed at a five year olds shadow and asked him, "What is this?" the boy responded, " It's the shadow of the chair." Actually, he was sitting on the chair but he wasn't able to say, "That's my own shadow, sitting on the chair." Because it was too difficult to recognize himself or his own double, his own projection, in the black spot. The ability to recognize one's own shadow is actually a very difficult process, one that is only mastered at the age of eight or nine. That's when the child realizes that the shadow is not a substance behind the object that is driven away by light, and finally learns to predict where a shadow will fall. It's at this age that the shadow finally becomes synonymous with the absence of light.

This garment is meant to be the personification of shadows in society and what they mean to different people, and how people interact with them and interpret the meanings the shadows.

The Cape



This garment, in relationship to the series, relates to the movement of shadows. The way the garment fits the wearer and the actions and movement that the wearer has when in this garment, mirror the flicker of shadows on the wall at night by fire or candlelight.

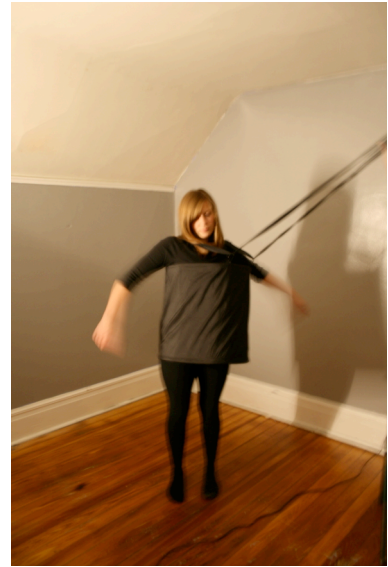
A shadow is the region of darkness where light is blocked, the shape and movement of this garment when it is worn mirrors the area of darkness that is caused when light is blocked. Shadows are the obscurity or deprivation of light and they represent the form of the body that intercepts rays of light. The way that the garment fits the wearer and encloses itself over the wearer's head represents this concept of anonymity and withdrawal. Analogous to the different definitions to shadows this garment hides and screens. The garment also obscures the form of the wearer and conceals the body.

Light distributes shadows around people, objects, and places. It challenges the line between reality and the imaginary. Shadow is the obscurity of light or deprivation of light. What happens when you alter the silhouette of the body, by toying with the standard forms and appearance of clothing? By modifying the silhouette by manipulation of garment, the shadow's being cast on a surface will change.

In the Greek myth, the prisoners in Plato's cave were incapable of gazing directly into the light of knowledge. They had their backs to this bright light and saw only the shadows cast on the cave walls. Plato's point was that they saw only the shadow of reality, not reality itself.. And so, from the beginning on, to attain true knowledge one had to renounce the shadow stage and progress out of the cave, into the sun. In an article History of the Shadow by Victor Stochita he comments that the shadow was a copy of reality.

The visual imagery of shadows, and the idea of blurring reality with a layer of darkness, is represented in this piece.

Shadow Puppets



These two garments, The **Lamp Shade Dress** and the **Accordion Dress**, experiment with the action of interactivity. This idea, in relationship to shadows, corresponds with the movement of shadow puppets and the concept of being manipulated. These garments are meant to be playful and toy with the concept of being able to change the shadow and use the body as a tool for puppetry. Oscar Wilde said, “There are many advantages in puppets. They never argue. They have no crude views about art. They have no public lives” The garments transform the wearer to become a puppet themselves, like a marionette. A marionette is a type of puppet with string controlled by a puppeteer, called a manipulator from above. A puppeteer, who is either hidden or visible to the audience, operates the marionettes; they control movement by using a vertical or horizontal attachment. Marionettes are capable of a greater range of motion and movement possibilities than most other forms of puppets. Puppeteer, David Currell said, “A puppet is not an actor, and a puppet theater is not a human theater in miniature, because what an actor represents a puppet ‘is’.” This relates to the idea that the wearer becomes the puppeteer and the shadow becomes the puppet.



What Came First the Chicken or the Egg?



In the garment entitled **Lantern** which I used as a conclusion to this series, but ironically was the beginning, in the sense that it was the first pieces that I constructed and that this is the only piece that casts light and thus without it shadows cannot be cast. This piece, to me, references a conclusion because of theories like consciences researcher John White, in which the body is alchemically changed into light. This idea of Enlightenment is when the body becomes light, through the transubstantiation of flesh, blood, and bone into an immortal body of light, which is a final stage of human development.

Things that conduct light are called transparent objects and those that do not transmit light are called opaque. One of the properties of an opaque object is that it creates a shadow when it is struck by light. Our bodies are transparent to high-energy lighting sources, i.e.; x-rays and lasers, but it are opaque to visible light. However, in a recent study, a group of scientists hypothesized that the body can conduct light. The objective was to measure the skin reaction to radiation in the visible light spectrum. They found that certain parts of the body are able to conduct light entering it. These “light sensitive” regions coincided with the acupuncture points on the bodies’ surface. These points are actually holes that provide channels to this points that control the bodies vital organs.

This garment was constructed as an experiment to create a form that radiated light from the body. I wanted to use the space around the body that generates light. Morphing wood to bend and create a frame assembled the garment; the spine of the garment is an arch, manipulating the wearer’s back to bend backwards, which allows for the light to be cast in a spot light in front of the wearer. The light source is produced by a corset, which is laced with LED lights. The frame is filled with handmade paper, which is transparent when light is shown though. This material references an aesthetic similar of Japanese lanterns. The way the garment is attached to the wearer restricts the movement, which manipulated the way that light is cast and shifted over a surface, which is either the floor or a wall depending on the wearer’s position.

The paradoxical nature of this garment challenged the order in which is should be displayed. It was the first piece that I constructed in this series and without the light a shadow cannot be cast. But in the way that light relates to the body and the theory of enlightenment is very much a conclusion to the bodies development and an end to the series. Just like the ouroboros the end is the beginning and vice versa where shadow is created by light and light is born from shadow.



Conclusion: The Story of Peter Schlemihl

I looked around, an old woman was shouting after me. “Sir should take care, he has lost his shadow.” “Thanks, little mother!” I threw her a gold piece for her well meant advice and stepped under the trees.

This began to vex me, and I took close care to avoid walking in the sun, but this was not possible everywhere. As soon as I found myself alone in the rolling carriage, I began to weep bitterly. The suspicion had by now begun to mount inside me that, as much gold outweighs merit and virtue on this earth, by so much more is one’s shadow valued above gold; and as I previously sacrificed riches to my conscience, so had I know surrender by shadow for more gold- what was to, what on earth must become of me!

I discussed the future arrangements of my household. It was recommended to me for my service to my person, to obtain a certain Bental. Whose honest and sensible physiognomy won me at once? It was this man, whose devotion accompanied and consoled me, from that time, on through the misery of life, helping me to endure my dismal lot. I spent the whole day in my rooms with servants in want of a situation, with cobblers, tailors and merchants.

I once sent Bental with a valuable ring to the most famous artist in town, whom I invited to pay me a visit. He came: I ordered my servants away, locked the door, sat down with the man, and after I had praised his art I came with heavy heart to the point, having first made him swear the strictest secrecy.

“Sir,” I began, “could you by any chance paint, for a man who has lost his shadow in the most unfortunate way in the world, a false shadow?”

“You mean a human shadow?”

“That is certainly what I mean”

“But,” he asked further, “through what clumsiness, through what carelessness, could he have lost his own shadow?”

“How it came about,” I replied “is neither here nor there; but this much – ” I lied brazenly to him,

“In Russia, where he was on a journey last winter, an extraordinarily cold snap froze his shadow so tightly to the ground that he was unable to work it loose.”

“The false sheet shadow I could paint for him,” the artist replied, “would only be such a one as he would lose again with the slightest motion- especially so for a man who kept such a weak hold on his own innate shadow as can be ascertained for you tale: Let he who has no shadow not walk in the sun, that is the safest and most sensible course.” Then he stood up and took his leave, while fixing me with a piercing look that my eye could not bear. I sank back into my armchair and hid my face in my hands.

In my story I shall now have to rush though a time on which I would- how eagerly like to linger. But the color that animate it, and which alone can revive it has faded inside me. The pains- the happiness, the docile delusion.

I am vanished from the Earth. Serve as a useful lesson to many of her inhabitants. But you, my friend; If you wish to love among mankind, then learn to revere your shadow first and foremost. But if you only wish to to live for your own, for your better self’s sake- oh- then you need no advice.

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