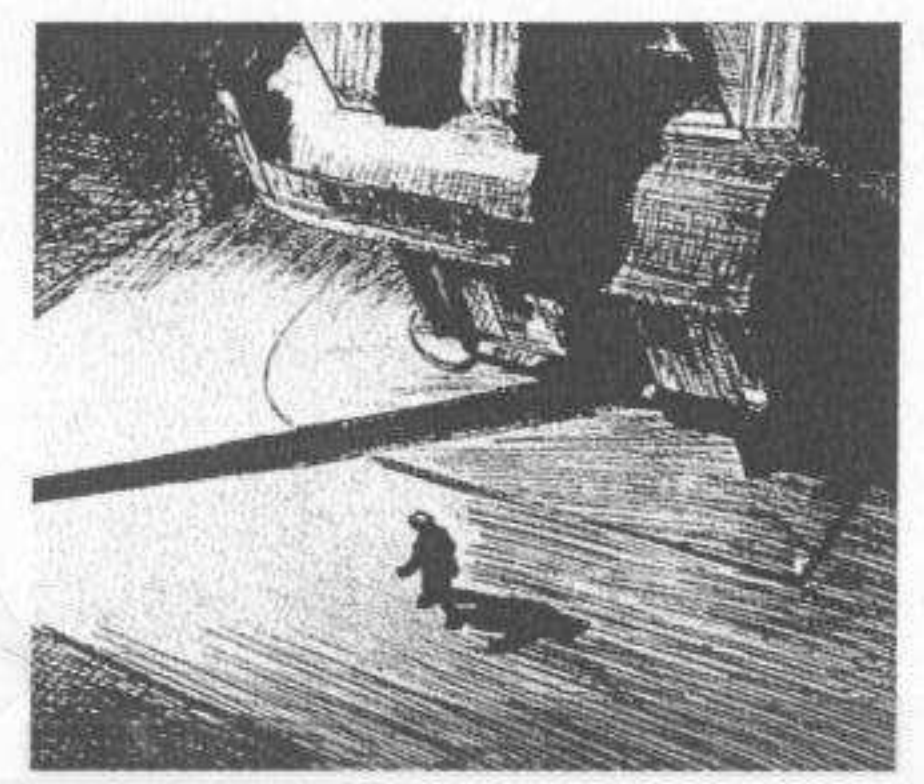




*The City, 1927*  
Oil on canvas, 70 x 94 cm  
University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson,  
Gift of C. Leonard Pfeiffer

*Night Shadows, 1921*  
Etching, 17.6 x 20.8 cm  
Collection of Whitney Museum of American  
Art, New York, Josephine N. Hopper Bequest  
70.1048



à symbolizing  
cet égard ↗

emanates

flagrant zone  
obvious

Composition pelouse 2  
awent, stored way

bending  
disturbing  
in coherence

By the end of the 1920s, Hopper's pictures of houses, landscapes and city scenes had already acquired an emblematic function, standing for the conditions of human life. A painting done in 1927, *The City* (p. 40), is characteristic in this respect. To an extent it is a self-quotation, alluding to earlier drawings such as the 1921 *Night Shadows* (p. 31), in which Hopper had used dramatic perspective and diagonals to establish an unusual compositional structure that reminds us of his debt to Edgar Degas. The dramatic impact of *Night Shadows* derives from the angle at which we see the nighttime walker, his shadow, and the tree's shadow. This last is not only outsize; it also intersects the right angle of the street corner almost precisely in the middle, as if the composition were a geometrical exercise. Central perspective is subverted. The tree's shadow cuts across an almost white area at the left of the picture. It is a dynamic composition, and it generates an unmistakable sense of menace, as if the man's walking route (which is taking him into the brightly-lit area) were taking him beyond a divide and into a danger zone.

*The City* is similarly expressive. The façades and streets are similarly geometrical in layout. The path intersects the lawn at left in similar fashion (like the shadow intersecting the pool of light). Apart from a single striped awning, the windows of the houses are blind and vacant. The figures in the street constitute a vestigial human presence. There is little more to be said about them, except that they seem to be leaning into the wind as they walk. If we look again, we see that they all appear to be leaning in different directions. Calm as the composition seems as a whole, the tranquillity is ruffled in an unsettling way by this curious inconsistency.





Rooms for Tourists  
 30 x 46. Finished in Studio, Sept. 1945  
 Windows - 11/16" tall, 1/2" wide, 1/2" deep, 1/2" thick  
 Linn Caspers don't paint, prepared by F. M. H.  
 White House (gray) on back right, plain by Charles Seid (1945)  
 Eye flower, 1/2" x 1/2" of 1/2" deep, 1/2" thick, 1/2" wide  
 Top of hedge under sign, lit from inside hedge light green. 11 windows yellow  
 Blue back sky, side of house blue back, hedge green, back, 1/2" deep, 1/2" wide  
 Green shutters, frame of porch door - little bit light side of door blue green. 1/2" x 1/2"  
 Linn Caspers cut in front, white window curtain frame, light yellow shutters

Stephen Clark. Clark from August 1944, 1/2" x 1/2" of 1/2" deep, 1/2" wide  
 New room by the window of John

Record Book, volume III, page 13, entry for painting *Rooms for Tourists*, September 1945  
 Ink and pencil on paper, 30.2 x 18.4 cm  
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. ?  
 Special Collection, The Museum of Modern Art



Edvard Munch  
*Stormy Night*, 1893  
 Stormen  
 Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 131 cm  
 Collection, The Museum of Modern Art,  
 New York

3 *Two Puritans* adopts the same strategy. Both pictures, unlike *House by the Railroad* (where the divide is dictated by chance), conjure up a sense of deliberate exclusion. The house in *Solitude* is marked off from Civilization by the woods it is set in, and in *Two Puritans* we see two houses that are not only divided off by tree-trunks in the foreground but are also separated from each other by white fencing. With ample irony, these verticals function as phallic symbols, and so counterpoint the implications of the title.

4 Both paintings introduce a psychologizing and dramatic element to the demarcation of interiors and exteriors; and the tendency becomes even more pronounced in Hopper's 1945 painting *Rooms for Tourists* (p. 43). It is an ambivalent, Freudian world in which the things that comfort us and the things we find unsettling are implicitly shown to have the same origins. The house defies the night, offering comfort and (in every sense) accommodation. The lighted rooms and the sign by the hedge promise security. Nonetheless, Hopper places a question mark over the comfort and the security, so to speak: there is nobody to be seen in the house, and the very light has a mysterious quality, as if it all derived from a single source that irradiated through the house. The painting transcends realism. The house perhaps recalls the strangely lit-up house in Munch's *Stormy Night* (cf. p. 42). It is worth noticing that the house is the only thing in Hopper's painting that is lit from some (unidentified) source beyond. The two light sources, within and without, meet at the front of the house. The quirky, defamiliarizing effect of the light might be compared with that in René Magritte's *L'Empire des Lumières II* (p. 90).

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 situated  
 fence  
 palisade

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illuminée

strange



*Rooms for Tourists*, 1945  
 Oil on canvas, 76.8 x 107 cm  
 Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven,  
 Connecticut, Bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark,  
 B.A. 1903