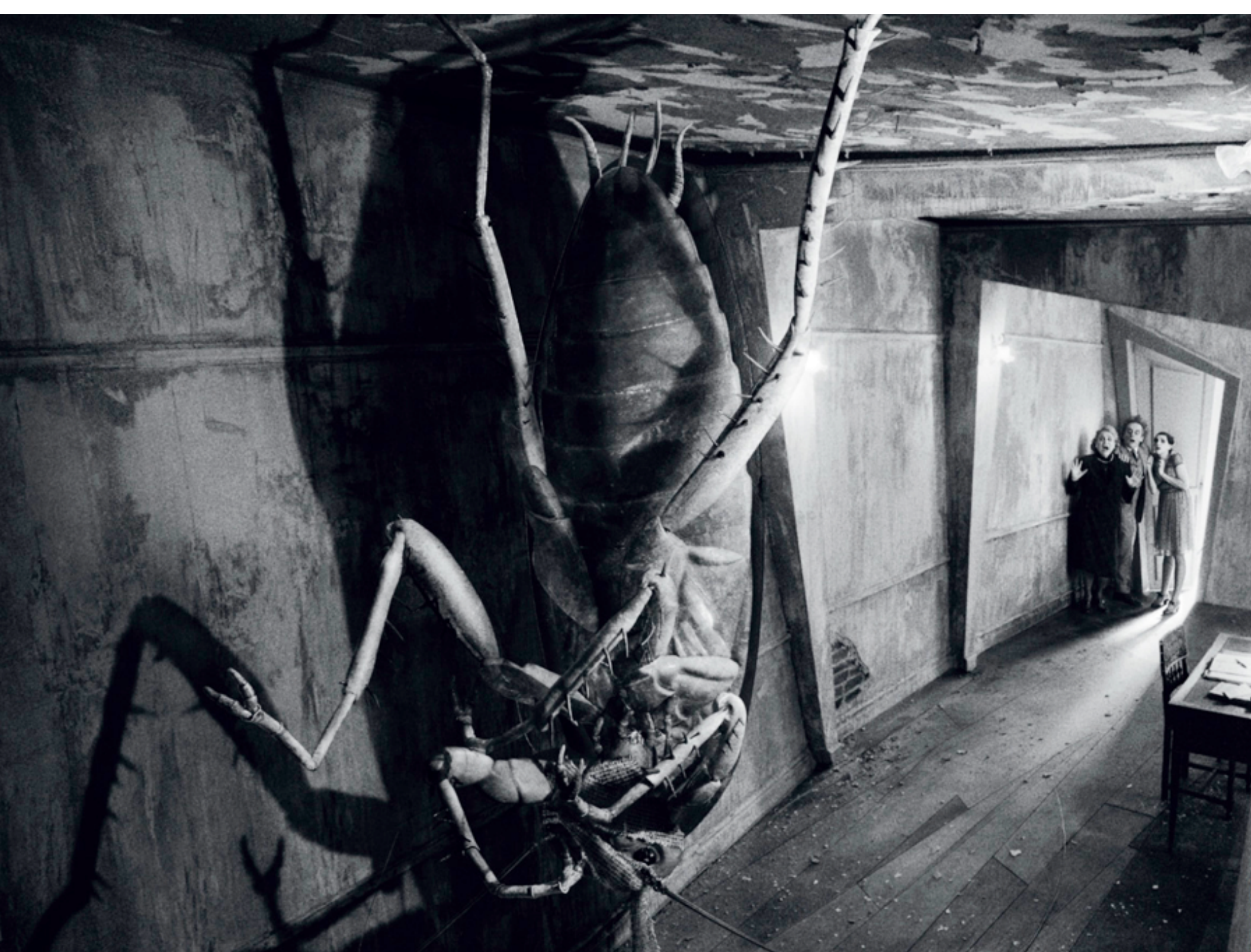




FRANZ KAFKA

1883-1924



A belief is like a guillotine—just as
heavy, just as light.

Coitus is the punishment for the
happiness of being together.

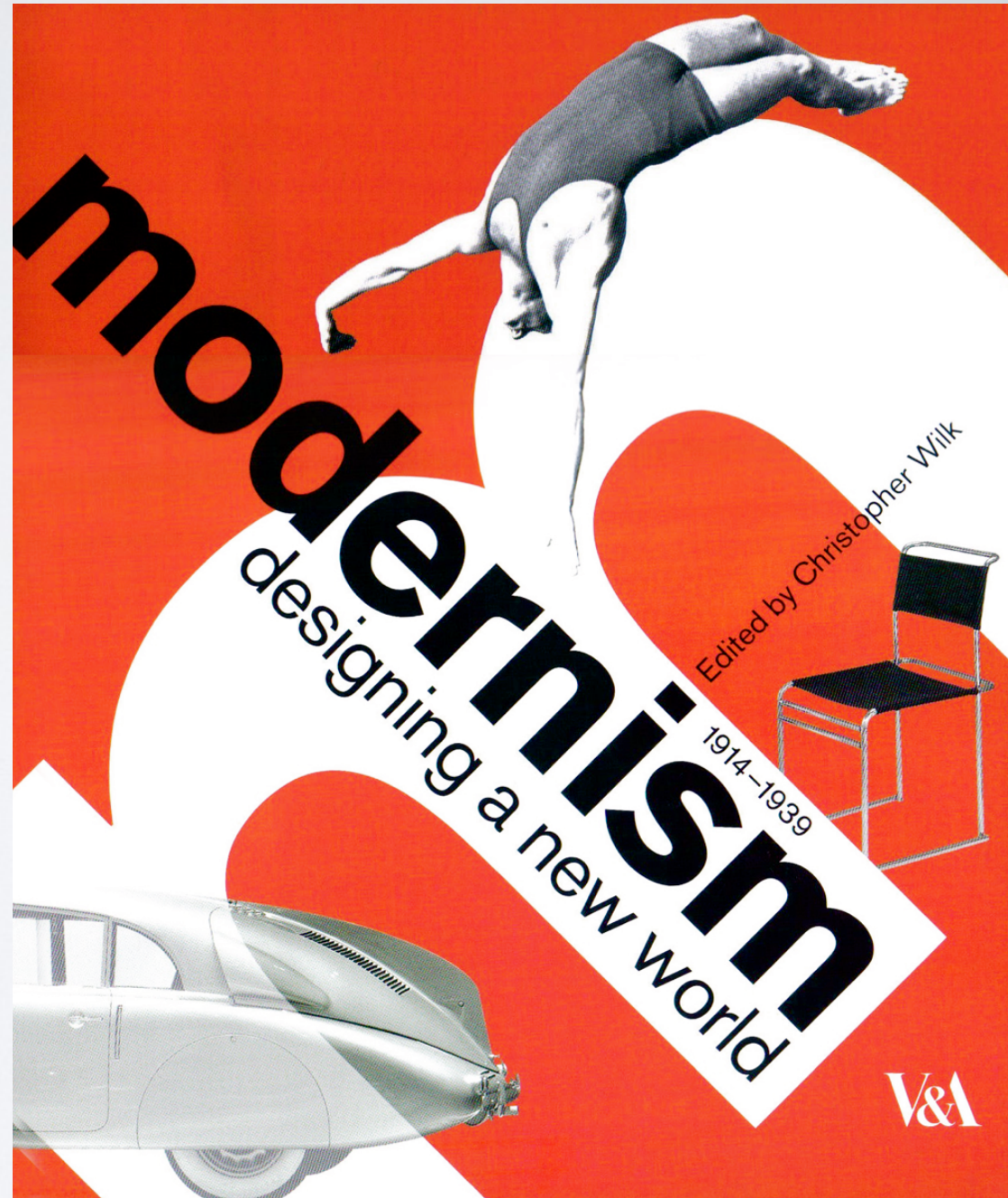
I cannot love my mother because
the German language prevents it.

If it had been possible to build the Tower of Babel without climbing it, it would have been permitted.

The Messiah will come only when he is not needed. He will not come until one day after his arrival. He will not come on the last day, but on the last day of all.

MODERNISM

- The world enters a new phase: constant change, permanent revolution (visible in technology but also social, cultural forms)
- Desire to overcome the past
- Outdated, traditional forms must be replaced by the new
- Constant experimentation, especially on formal level
- New forms produce: shock, disruption, alienation



PICASSO, GUERNICA



PICASSO, GUERNICA



PICASSO
*Nude Wringing
Her Hair*



MODERNISM'S NEW FORMS

- futurism
- dadaism
- surrealism (Salvador Dalí to David Lynch)
- cubism
- serial/atonal/aleatory/
12-tone music



DUCHAMP
Fountain, by R. Mutt

Fountain by R. Mutt

Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz

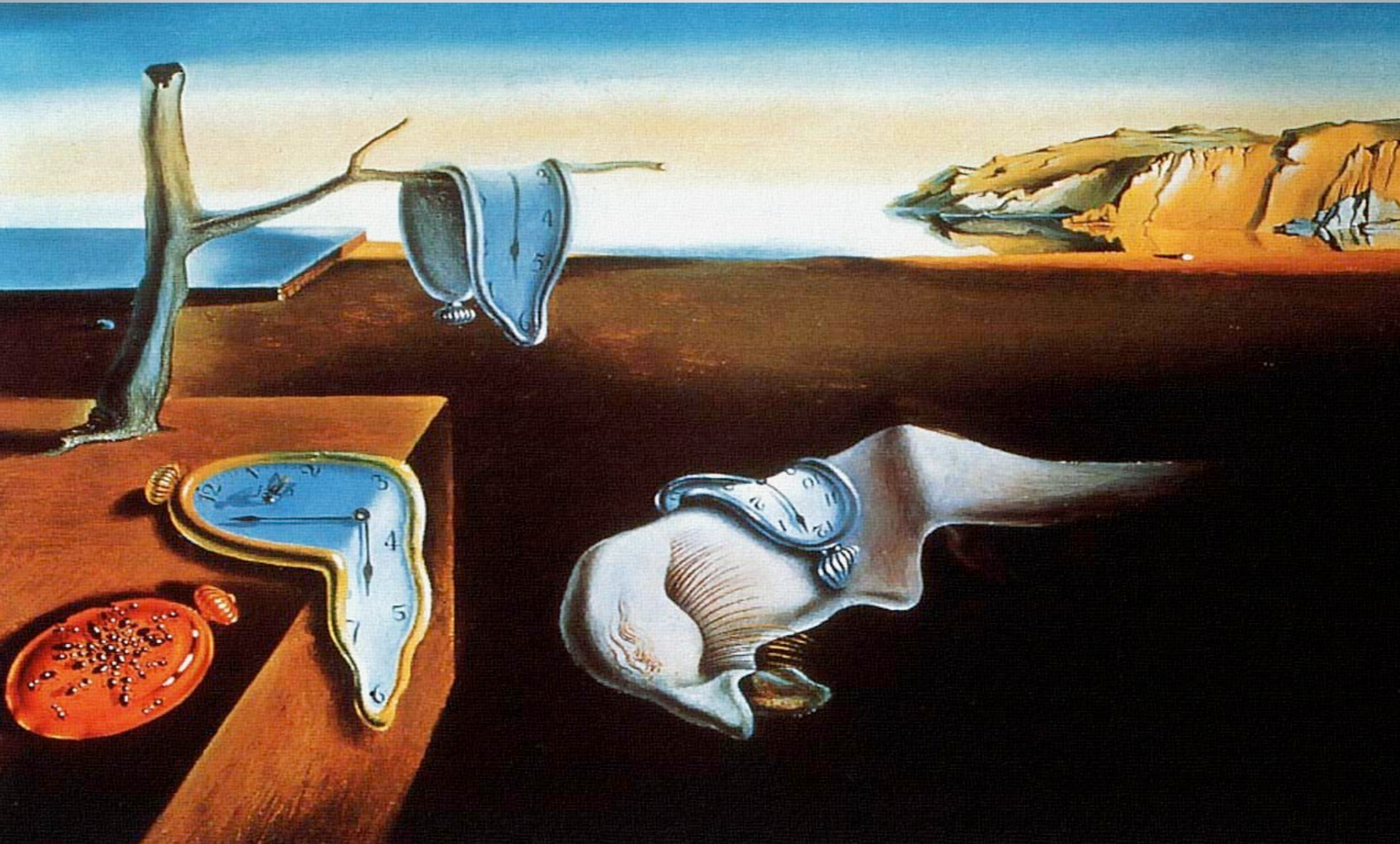


THE EXHIBIT REPUSED BY THE INDEPENDENTS



R. MUTT
1917

DALÌ, *PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY*



Dalì, *Dalì Atomicus*



LYNCH, *ERASERHEAD*



DUCHAMP
*Nude Descending a
Staircase*



WEBERN

String Trio Op. 20

“Sehr langsam”



LITERARY MODERNISM

- futurism
- consciousness
- perception
- perspective
- time
- formal experimentation



MARINETTI, "BATTAGLIA"

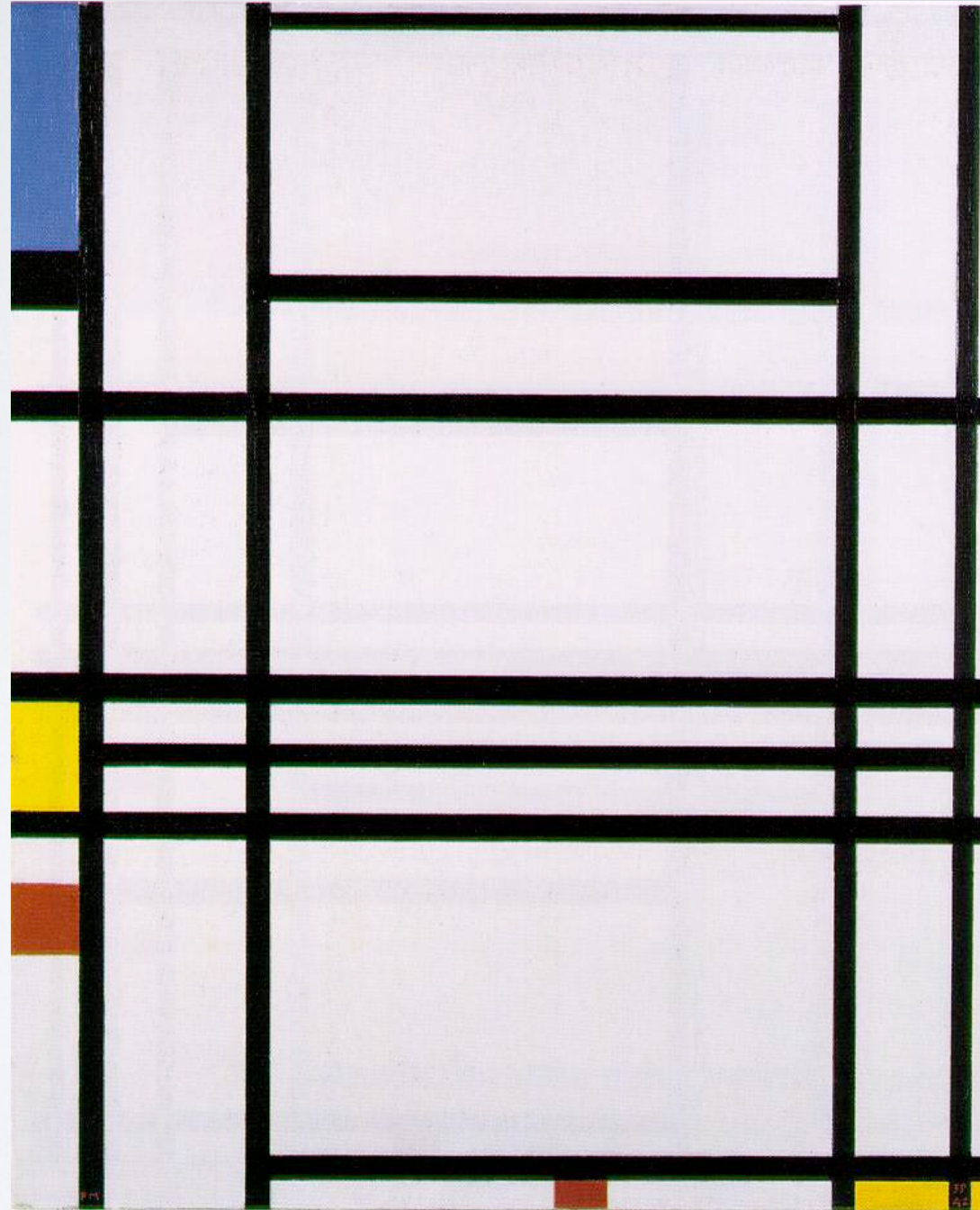
Battle

Weight+Smell

Noon $\frac{3}{4}$ flutes moans dog-days tumbtumb alarm Gargaresch
tearing crackling march Clanging backpacks guns horseshoes
nails cannons horse-manes wheels ammunition wagons Jews
fritters breads-with-oil lullabies ugly-stores stench lustrousness
rheum stench waterpipes mold flux reflux pepper fights filth
whirlwind oranges-in-flower filigree misery dice chess-pieces
maps jasmine+nutmeg+rose arabesque mosaic carrion stings
haphazard-work machine-guns=gravel+surf+frogs Clanging
backpacks guns cannons scorpion atmosphere=lead+lava+300
stenches+50 perfumes...

MODERNISM

- Revolution, not evolution
- Stravinsky, not Brahms; Faulkner, not Dickens
- Keywords: shock, disruption, discontinuity



KAFKA'S LIFE

- Czech-speaking Jew growing up in a German-language state (Bohemia); spoke German with a Czech accent, spoke Czech with a German accent
- Obsessive, neurotic child of domineering father; tortured about sex, his body
- Insurance agent (like Wallace Stevens)
- Tuberculosis, cared for by sister Ottla
- Siblings died in infancy or in the ghetto; All three sisters died in the Holocaust
- Friend Max Brod (the learned ancient Greek to read Plato; French for Flaubert); he told Brod to burn his writings
- ... and most importantly...



- He invented the hard hat.



THE KAFKAESQUE

- Oppressive guilt without cause or origin
- Absurd mechanical functioning of state
- Capricious abuse of patriarchal authority
- Hopelessness, alienation, persecution—and humor
- Reactions of characters don't match situation



THE METAMORPHOSIS

- This is not the story of a man who turns into a bug; *consciousness* (11, 30)
- Speaks, but doesn't communicate (18-19, 21)
- This is the condition of the writer, the parasite of society
- Obviously autobiographical (Samsa=Kafka, salesman, cared for by younger sister, domineering father, etc.)



CONSCIOUSNESS

“Oh, God,” he thought, “what a strenuous profession I’ve chosen—traveling day in, day out! The demands of business are far greater on the road than they are at the home office, and I’m burdened with the annoyances of travel besides: the worry about train connections; the irregular, bad meals; a social life limited to passing acquaintances who never become real friends. To hell with it!” He felt an itch on his belly, and he shoved himself back against the bedpost so he could lift his head more easily. He found the spot that itched: it was covered with small white dots that he couldn’t identify. He went to touch the spot with one of his legs but drew it back immediately, because the touch made him shudder. (11)

CONSCIOUSNESS

Often he would go to great pains to shove an armchair to the window, then crawl up to the windowsill and, bolstered by the armchair, lean against the window. He did so only in some kind of nostalgia for the feeling of freedom he had previously found in looking out the window, for the fact was that every day he saw things that were even a short distance away less and less clearly. He could no longer see the hospital that lay across the way, whose all too massive prospect he had earlier cursed. If he had not known very well that he lived in the quiet, but distinctly urban Charlotte Street, he could have believed that he looked out of his window into a desert. (30)

THE FAILURE OF LANGUAGE

“Did you understand one word?” the chief clerk asked his parents. “Surely he’s making fun of us?” “For God’s sake,” cried his mother in the midst of tears, “he might be seriously ill, and we’re plaguing him. Grete! Grete!” she then screamed. “Mother?” called his sister from the other side. They were communicating through Gregor’s room. “You must go fetch the doctor this minute. Gregor is ill. Quickly, to the doctor. Did you hear Gregor speak just now?” “That was the voice of an animal,” said the chief clerk, noticeably quiet by contrast with the screaming of his mother. (18-19)

ALLEGORY # 1: MASOCHISM

- Masochistic fantasy
- Venus in Furs (11, 35, 36)
- Truth revealed as artist suffers (see “Hunger Artist”)
- Artist’s death restores (37-38)



VENUS IN FURS

Over the table that held his unpacked collection of fabric samples—Samsa was a traveling salesman—hung the picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and fit into an attractive gilt frame. The picture was of a woman clad in a fur hat and a fur stole; she sat upright and held out to the viewer a thick fur muff into which her entire forearm disappeared. (11)

VENUS IN FURS

And so he burst forth from under the sofa—the women were just leaning against the desk in the next room, in order to catch their breath—though he changed the direction of his charge four times, for he really did not know what to save first. On one otherwise empty wall he distinctly saw the picture of the woman dressed completely in furs. He crept hurriedly up to it and pressed himself against the glass, which held him fast and soothed his hot belly. At least no one could take away this picture, which Gregor now completely covered with his body. He turned his head towards the door of the living room in order to observe the women on their return. (35)

DEATH OF ARTIST IS GOOD

But still—still—was this really his father? The same man who lay, tired out, buried deep in his bed, when Gregor was all set to go on a business trip?... Now, he was quite well put together. He was dressed in the kind of close-fitting blue uniform with gold buttons that doormen at the banking houses wore; over the high stiff collar of the coat his pronounced double chin protruded; under his bushy eyebrows the glance of his dark eyes sprang forth fresh and alert; the formerly disheveled white hair was combed flat into a painfully exact, shining part. He threw his hat, which bore a gold monogram—probably that of a bank—in an arc across the room and onto the sofa. (37)

ALLEGORY #2: ALIENATION

- Disruption of biological time, organic community, family
- Experiences work as persecution; no sense of self
- Sexual alienation (22, 45)
- Between the bug body and the fantasy lies work (11)



SEXUAL ALIENATION

He was determined to press on all the way to his sister, to pull on her skirt and let her know that she could come into his room with her violin. No one here knew how to appreciate her playing the way he did. He wanted never to let her out of his room again, at least not as long as he lived. His terrifying shape would finally be of some use to him: he would be at all doors of his room at once, hissing at all intruders. His sister, though, would not be forced, but would rather stay with him willingly. She would sit next to him on the sofa, her ear inclined towards him, and he would confide in her that he had intended to send her to the conservatory. After this declaration, his sister would surely break into tears of emotion, and Gregor would lift himself up to her shoulder and kiss her neck, which she now left uncovered, without ribbon or collar, since she had begun working at the store. (45)

WORK

Over the table that held his unpacked collection of fabric samples—Samsa was a traveling salesman—hung the picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and fit into an attractive gilt frame. The picture was of a woman clad in a fur hat and a fur stole; she sat upright and held out to the viewer a thick fur muff into which her entire forearm disappeared. (11)

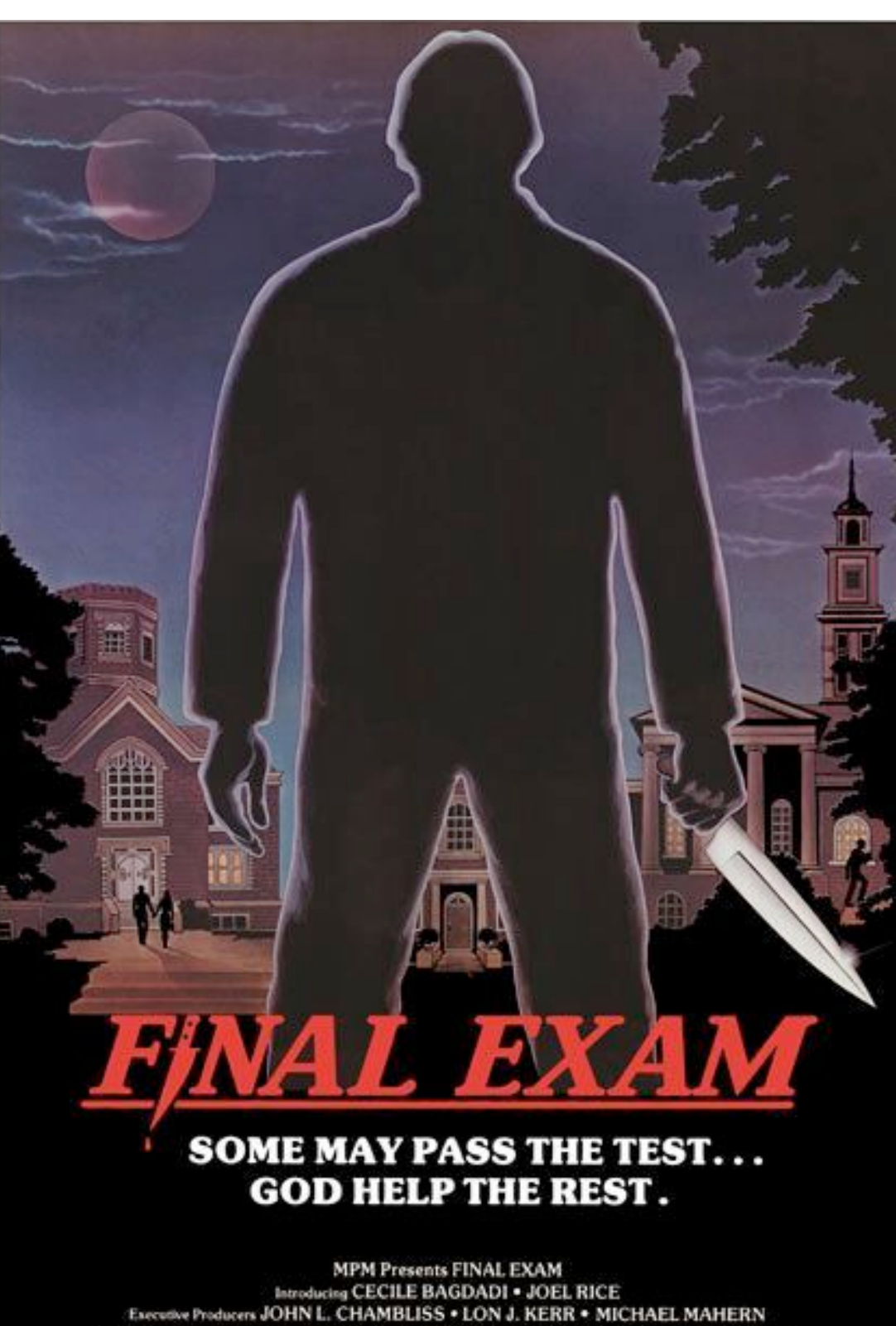
ALLEGORY #3: RELIGION

- Loss of patriarchal authority (“God is dead”) (29)
- Father is absurd parody (24)
- Exile from Eden=rotting apple in the back (49)
- Meaningful original sin becomes unmotivated sense of guilt.
- No salvation: one body withers (50), another flourishes (52)



IRONIC REDEMPTION

Then all three of them left the apartment together, which they had not done for months, and took a trolley to the open air beyond the city. Leaning back comfortably in their seats, they discussed their future prospects, and it emerged that these were not at all bad on closer inspection, for all three of their positions, which they hadn't previously discussed, were altogether favorable at present and, most importantly, had great potential for the future. While they conversed in this way, it occurred to both Mr. and Mrs. Samsa in the same moment in looking at their ever more lively daughter that she had blossomed into a pretty and well-developed young woman. Becoming quieter and almost unconsciously communicating through glances, they realized that it would soon be time to look for a good husband for her. And it seemed to them a confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions, when, at the end of their journey, their daughter rose first and stretched her young body. (52)



FINAL EXAM

.....

- Monday, May 6
- 7-10 PM
- Right in this room!
- 3 sections
 - Short answers to big questions
 - Short answers to small(er) questions
 - Identifications (sounds hard, but they are not)
- All material will be drawn from the readings (of course) and the PowerPoints that are on the course website

Section I: Answer with 4-5 sentences (refer to several important ideas, authors and texts). Answer all 4 questions (6 pts. each; 24 pts. total).

1. What vision of society does the “Enlightenment Project” promote?

Section II: Answer with 4-5 sentences. Answer all 10 questions (5 pts. each; 50 pts. total).

1. Briefly describe some of Whitman's principal poetic themes and techniques.

Section III: Identifications. Give author and title, if any. What features are typical of the author's style? Comment briefly on importance of passage. Answer 5 out of the 8 possible questions (5 pts. each; 25 pts. total).

1. I lost a world the other day.
Has anybody found?
You'll know it by the row of stars
Around its forehead bound.

Final question: A completely trivial question drawn from the lectures, possibly not from the PowerPoints (1 pt. each; 1 pt. total).

1. What tie did Prof. Rushing wear on the day of the second Frankenstein lecture, the one about Frankenstein movies?
