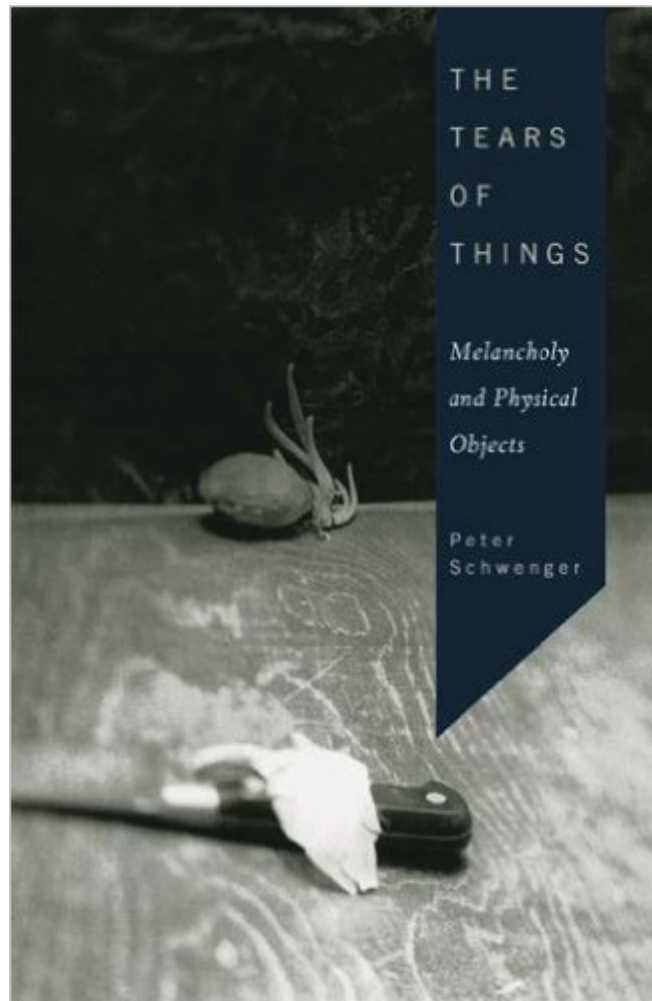


The book was found

# The Tears Of Things: Melancholy And Physical Objects



## Synopsis

We surround ourselves with material things that are invested with memories but can only stand for what we have lost. Physical objects—such as one's own body—situate and define us; yet at the same time they are fundamentally indifferent to us. The melancholy of this rift is a rich source of inspiration for artists. Peter Schwenger deftly weaves together philosophical and psychoanalytical theory with artistic practice. Concerned in part with the act of collecting, *The Tears of Things* is itself a collection of exemplary art objects—literary and cultural attempts to control and possess things—including paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe and René Magritte; sculpture by Louise Bourgeois and Marcel Duchamp; Joseph Cornell's boxes; Edward Gorey's graphic art; fiction by Virginia Woolf, Georges Perec, and Louise Erdrich; the hallucinatory encyclopedias of Jorge Luis Borges and Luigi Serafini; and the corpse photographs of Joel Peter Witkin. However, these representations of objects perpetually fall short of our aspirations. Schwenger examines what is left over—debris and waste—and asks what art can make of these. What emerges is not an art that reassembles but one that questions what it means to assemble in the first place. Contained in this catalog of waste is that ultimate still life, the cadaver, where the subject-object dichotomy receives its final ironic reconciliation. Peter Schwenger is professor of English at Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is the author of *Fantasm and Fiction: On Textual Envisioning*, *Letter Bomb: Nuclear Holocaust and the Exploding Word*, and *Phallic Critiques: Masculinity and Twentieth-Century Literature*.

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Univ Of Minnesota Press; 1 edition (March 13, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0816646317

ISBN-13: 978-0816646319

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #678,190 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #181 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Philosophy > Aesthetics #510 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Aesthetics #3410 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Criticism

## Customer Reviews

I found Schwenger's model of melancholy, locating it in the tensile space between self and other, drawing on Freud and Lacan, to be utterly compelling and persuasive. I am an author who is writing academically for the first time about creating and I was very moved and inspired by this beautifully written, approachable book. From a personal point of view, being very interested in childhood poetics, I would have loved to have seen more attention paid to toys and Winnicott's concept of the transitional object in terms of melancholia, but I understand there are always limitations in any work. I do love the way Schwenger writes - it's a dream narrative in its own right.

I loved this book. It provided much insight and put words to many of the concepts that I was unconsciously expressing in my own artwork, and therefore allowed me to be more aware and purposeful in contemplating and expressing those ideas. As I read, I felt like I was uncovering my own motives for making objects, motives that I had always felt, but could not quite understand or articulate. *The Tears of Things* is an excellent read for both the maker and collector of "things".

In his book-length essay with elements of philosophy, art criticism, and literary critique, Schwenger ruminates on the incompleteness of perception, "always falling short of full possession [as comprehension or understanding], giving rise to a melancholy that is felt by the subject and is ultimately for [italics in original] the subject." The author--a professor of English at Mount St. Vincent U. in Canada--detects the limits of the connection with things in a world of physical objects, including an individual's own body; which limits inevitably give rise to feeling of melancholy and loneliness. Art works of Georgia O'Keeffe and Rene Magritte, writings of Borges and Virginia Woolf, and sculpture by Duchamp and Louise Bourgeois are among the many and varied art by recognized modern artists the author brings in for his illumination of this mood of melancholy which is ordinarily faint in the hustle and bustle of daily life and its simple, practical relationship with things. One appreciates the author's unapologetic use of psychology in this sensitive movement in this central, yet for the most part unrealized feature of human existence. The psychology brings an illumination and reach to the subject which semantics, semiology, aesthetics, and the study of "material culture" cannot with their formalistic, postmodernist methods and styles. Schwenger finds in the end that although it is bound in with anxieties over "real and metaphysical death," since it is essentially a desire refusing "to conclude...always impelled past conclusion," melancholy is a part of the life force.

As an artist contemplating making more stuff in a world full of stuff this book is excellent at looking at how we relate to objects. Very useful.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects Making Things Talk: Practical Methods for Connecting Physical Objects Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840  
Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness A  
Melancholy Affair at the Weldon Railroad: The Vermont Brigade, June 23, 1864 Nature and Other  
Things Box Set (6 in 1): Artistic Tattoo, Steampunk, Henna and Space Objects to Relieve Stress  
(Stress-Relief & Creativity) Enchanted Objects: Design, Human Desire, and the Internet of Things  
How to Use Graphic Design to Sell Things, Explain Things, Make Things Look Better, Make People  
Laugh, Make People Cry, and (Every Once in a While) Change the World  
Pocket Companion  
for Physical Examination and Health Assessment, 6e (Jarvis, Pocket Companion for Physical  
Examination and Health Assessment) Bates' Nursing Guide to Physical Examination and History  
Taking (Guide to Physical Exam & History Taking (Bates)) Physical Chemistry Plus  
MasteringChemistry with eText -- Access Card Package (3rd Edition) (Engel Physical Chemistry  
Series) Differential Diagnosis for Physical Therapists: Screening for Referral, 5e (Differential  
Diagnosis In Physical Therapy) Seidel's Physical Examination Handbook, 8e (Seidel, Mosby's  
Physical Examination Handbook) Pedretti's Occupational Therapy: Practice Skills for Physical  
Dysfunction, 7e (Occupational Therapy Skills for Physical Dysfunction (Pedretti)) Orthopedic  
Physical Assessment, 5e (Orthopedic Physical Assessment (Magee)) Student Laboratory Manual  
for Seidel's Guide to Physical Examination, 8e (MOSBY'S GUIDE TO PHYSICAL EXAMINATION  
STUDENT WORKBOOK) Handbook of Pediatric Physical Therapy (Long, Handbook of Pediatric  
Physical Therapy) Pedretti's Occupational Therapy: Practice Skills for Physical Dysfunction, 6e  
(Occupational Therapy Skills for Physical Dysfunction (Pedretti)) Physical Assessment of the  
Newborn: A Comprehensive Approach to the Art of Physical Examination Tears of the Silenced: A  
True Crime and an American Tragedy; Severe Child Abuse and Leaving the Amish

[Dmca](#)