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Puppets & Performing Objects?

Peter Schumann

TDR: The Drama Review, Volume 43, Number 3 (T 163), Fall 1999, pp. 56-61  
(Article)

Published by Cambridge University Press



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# What, At the End of This Century, Is the Situation of Puppets & Performing Objects?

*Peter Schumann*



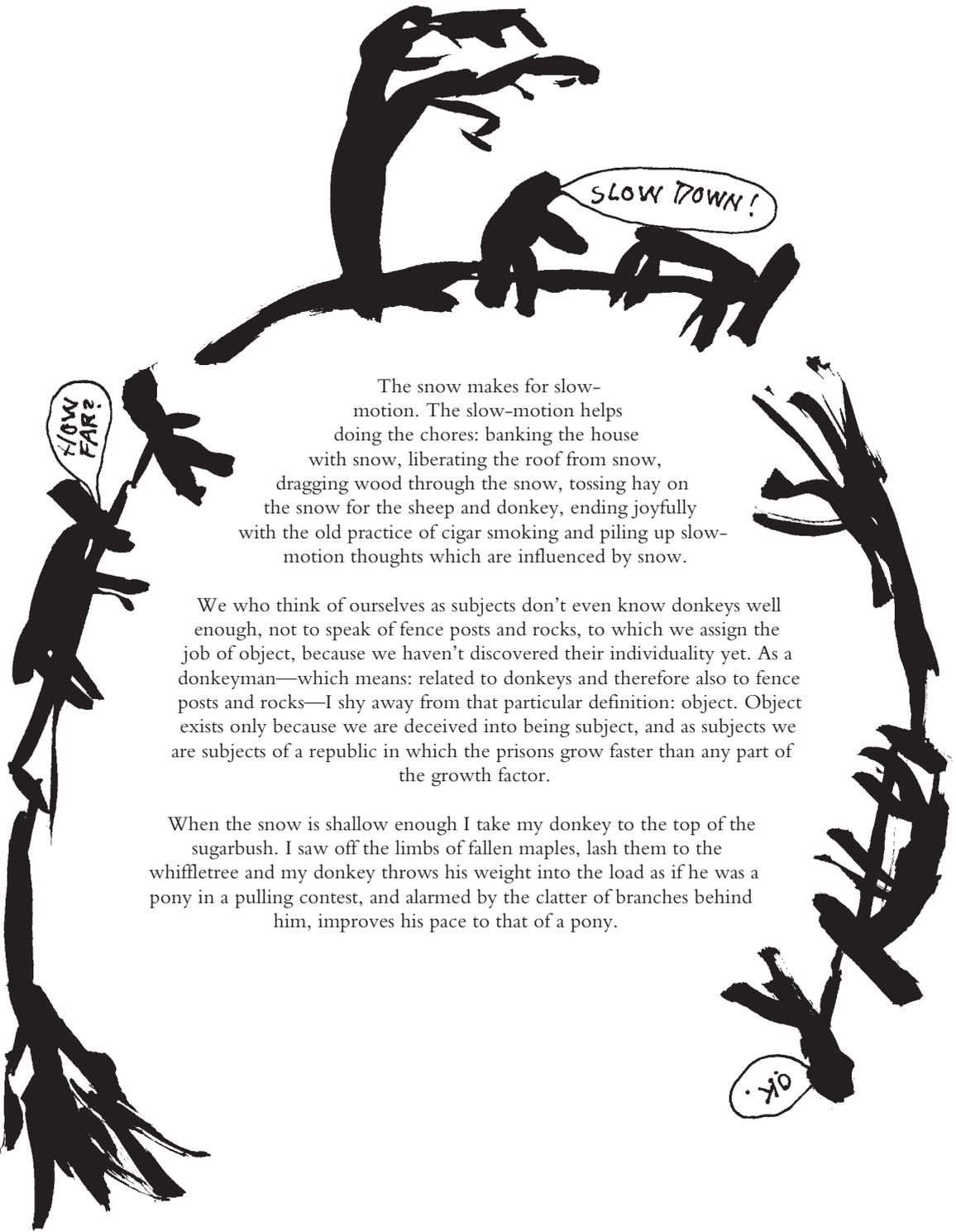
People exist as citizens, and puppets are insurrectionists and therefore shunned by correct citizens—unless they pretend to be something other than what they are, like: fluffy, lovely, or digestible.<sup>1</sup>

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Peter Schumann.



At below zero, sun and snow make a brightness so bright you can't think, and that state creates exactly the kind of laziness that produces thinking.



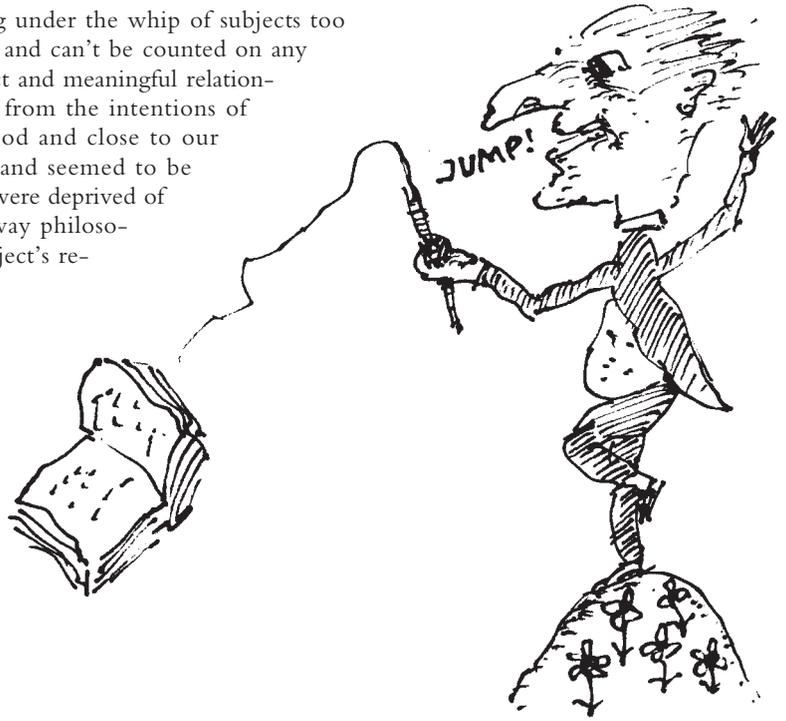


The snow makes for slow-motion. The slow-motion helps doing the chores: banking the house with snow, liberating the roof from snow, dragging wood through the snow, tossing hay on the snow for the sheep and donkey, ending joyfully with the old practice of cigar smoking and piling up slow-motion thoughts which are influenced by snow.

We who think of ourselves as subjects don't even know donkeys well enough, not to speak of fence posts and rocks, to which we assign the job of object, because we haven't discovered their individuality yet. As a donkeyman—which means: related to donkeys and therefore also to fence posts and rocks—I shy away from that particular definition: object. Object exists only because we are deceived into being subject, and as subjects we are subjects of a republic in which the prisons grow faster than any part of the growth factor.

When the snow is shallow enough I take my donkey to the top of the sugarbush. I saw off the limbs of fallen maples, lash them to the whiffletree and my donkey throws his weight into the load as if he was a pony in a pulling contest, and alarmed by the clatter of branches behind him, improves his pace to that of a pony.

Objects have been performing under the whip of subjects too long and are now disobedient and can't be counted on any longer. They avoid real contact and meaningful relationships and divorce themselves from the intentions of subjects. They used to be good and close to our hearts. They almost liked us and seemed to be grateful for our attention, but were deprived of their dignity by the throw-away philosophy, which resulted in the object's revenge: garbage.

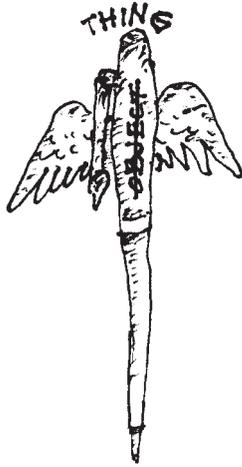


Why are puppets subversive? Because the meaning of everything is so ordained and in collaboration with the general sense of everything, and they, being only puppets, are not obliged to this sense and instead take delight in the opposite sense, which is the sense of donkeys confronting the existing transportation system.





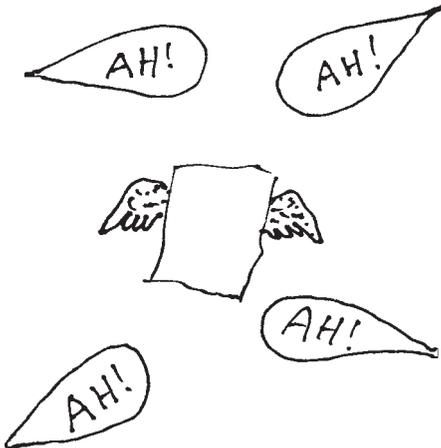
Objects, which also proselytize as objectivity and objectification,



lack the soul of their brothers, the things with their big families, the somethings, everythings, and anythings.

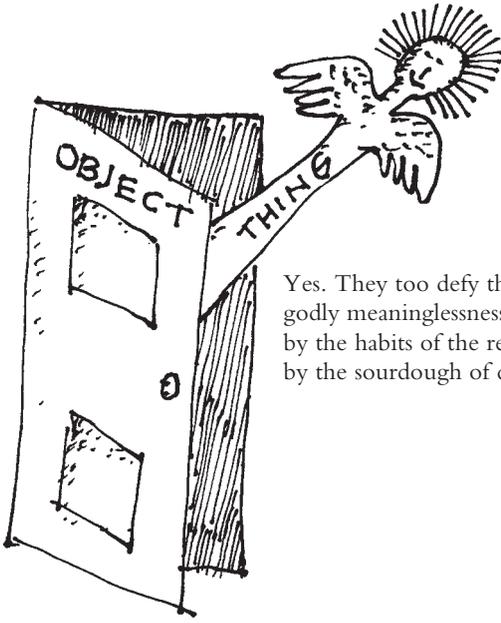


Can things fly?



Yes. I have seen angels in the drafty streets of NYC who were actually tossed-away wrapping papers, but obviously joyful and superhuman in their ability to brighten up masses of dark stinky air stuck between high-rises.

## Are things in league with puppets?



Yes. They too defy their subservience and the ungodly meaninglessness to which they are delegated by the habits of the republic; they too are infested by the sourdough of cultural insurrection.

### Notes

1. Why are puppets insurrectionists? Because nobody but puppets could possibly be insurrectionists, because (1) insurrectionism as recommended by the Declaration of Independence is never right for the politics at hand, and (2) it's totally illegal, just ask the dead Black Panthers or the John Africa family of Philadelphia.
2. Canadian scientists figured out that the distribution of our first-world habits to the rest of the globe would need four planets with equally wonderful resources. We have one already, all we need is three more! Or is it more reasonable to assume that the master design isn't for more planets but for continuation and intensification of the existing slave-labor system that provides for these habits of ours?

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**Peter Schumann** founded *Bread and Puppet Theater* in New York City in 1963. After seven years of touring the company throughout New York City, the U.S., and Europe, *Bread and Puppet* moved to Vermont, where they are currently based. In Glover, the company continues to build and rehearse shows, organize parades, and to tour internationally. Among his many awards are two Village Voice Obies (1968 and '78) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1986).