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Siri, I'm Bored?

A conception of boredom is not new to philosophy. Modern technology nevertheless changed the meaning of boredom. Nowadays it can be conceived as a consequence of modern technology.

The Enlightenment introduced the idea that human beings are not simply observers of the world, they can also construct and transform it. Modern technology serves as a means to fulfil the human privilege to construct the world. It gradually transforms everything, including human beings, into instruments or cogs that serve the purpose of efficiency. The human being in a modern technological world is not considered as a person, neither are its achievements evaluated on craftsmanship. Their value coincides with the degree of efficiency. Eventually, all spheres of life are aimed at the economical use of time.

In this paper, I argue that the orientation on efficiency associated with modern technology results in a novel manifestation of boredom. Specifically, I will show that modern technology is an opportunity for boredom to arise. It creates free time that cannot be spent meaningfully. In previous ages, boredom seldom occurred because free time was filled with traditions and rituals. Nowadays, every sphere of life is posited in function of efficiency; changing the meaning of free time. It has become almost impossible to meaningfully fill the free time in this human realization of technology. I shall argue that exactly this shift in significance and interpretation of free time gives rise to modern boredom.