



DAY 1 (15 MAY)

INAUGURATION

Mariusz Finkielsztein, Izabela Wagner-Saffray

Tyszkiewicz-Potocki Palace, Krakowskie Przedmiescie 32, Ballroom

11:00-
13:00

PRINCIPLES OF BOREDOM

Moderator: **Mariusz Finkielsztein** (University of Warsaw)

Mariusz Finkielsztein (University of Warsaw)

*Boredom is Everywhere: Towards Boredom Studies - Cross-Disciplinary
Overview*

Janina Duszyńska (University of Nicolaus Copernicus, Torun)
Anatomy of Boredom



Programme: International Interdisciplinary Boredom Conference (14-16 May 2015)

	Krystian Gradz (University of Warsaw) <i>Melancholy and Boredom</i>	
13:00-14:00	LUNCH <i>Tyszkiewicz-Potocki Palace, Krakowskie Przedmiescie 32, Ballroom</i>	
	<u>PSYCHOLOGY OF BOREDOM</u> Moderator: Maria Flakus (University of Silesia, Katowice)	<u>PEDAGOGY OF BOREDOM</u> Moderator: Iga Kazimierczyk (University of Warsaw)
14:00-15:15	<i>Tyszkiewicz-Potocki Palace, Krakowskie Przedmiescie 32, Ballroom</i> Wijnand van Tilburg (Keynote 1) (University of Southampton) Eric Igou (University of Limerick)	<i>Government Conference Room (2nd floor), Krakowskie Przedmieście 24</i> Małgorzata Tyszkowska (Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz) <i>Boredom in Preschool as a Warning Signal for a Tutor/Teacher</i>



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	<p><i>Boredom Begs to Differ: Differrentiating Boredom Among Negative Emotions as Lay Concept, State, and Individual Difference</i></p> <p><i>Searching for Meaning: Why Boredom Polarizes Intergroup Attitudes, Intensifies Political Ideology, and Fosters Nostalgia</i></p>	<p>Aleksandra Antonik (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan) <i>Clever and Bored. Causes and Implications of Underachievement in Gifted Students</i></p> <p>Iga Kazimierczyk (University of Warsaw) <i>What do you Feel when you're Bored out? Pupils Talk about Boredom in School</i></p>
15:15- 15:30	COFFEE BREAK	
15:30- 17:00	<p><u>PSYCHOLOGY OF BOREDOM</u> Moderator: Maria Flakus (University of Silesia, Katowice)</p>	<p><u>ACADEMIC BOREDOM</u> Moderator: Izabela Wagner-Saffray (University of Warsaw)</p>



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*Tyszkiewicz-Potocki Palace, Krakowskie
Przedmiescie 32, Ballroom*

*Government Conference Room
(2nd floor), Krakowskie Przedmieście 24*

**Agata Złotogórska, Marta
Molińska**

*(Adam Mickiewicz University,
Poznan)
Cognitive Functions of Boredom*

Zbigniew Głowala
*(Jagiellonian University, Krakow)
"The Funereal Parade of Yawn-
enforcing Facts". Conferences,
Lectures and Articles in the
Academic Novel*

Małgorzata Osowiecka
*(University of Social Sciences and
Humanities, Faculty in Sopot)*

Jakub Kuś
*(University of Social Sciences and
Humanities, Faculty in Wrocław)*

Justyna Kramarczyk

**Danuta Nowak, Joanna
Kasprowicz**
*(University of Zielona Góra)
Boredom at the University -
Whether Students Are Bored?*

Daniel Kontowski
(University of Warsaw)



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	<p>(Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan) <i>Creative Boredom: What Good Can Come from Boredom in Multitasking Network Culture?</i></p> <p>Maria Flakus (University of Silesia, Katowice) <i>Psychotherapy with the Boring Patient - Boredom as a Clinical Issue</i></p>	<p><i>High-impact Educational Practices - against Academic Boredom</i></p>
17:00-17:10	COFFEE BREAK	
17:10-18:00	<p><u>OPEN SESSION</u> Moderator: Mariusz Finkielstein (University of Warsaw)</p> <p><i>Tyszkiewicz-Potocki Palace, Krakowskie Przedmieście 32, Ballroom</i></p>	



	<p>Patrycja Grzyś (University of Gdansk) <i>The Great Plague of Dullness - Briefly about Polish Cityscape</i></p>
<p>DAY 2 (16 MAY)</p>	
	<p><u>KEYNOTE 2</u></p>
<p>10:00- 11:00</p>	<p>Lee Anna Maynard (Georgia Regents University) <i>Time to Think, Time to Fear: British Literature's Gothic Boredom</i></p> <p><i>Institute of Sociology, Stefan Nowak's Room, Karowa 18</i></p>
<p>11:00- 11:10</p>	<p>COFFEE BREAK</p>
<p>11:10- 12:30</p>	<p><u>PHILOSOPHY OF BOREDOM</u></p> <p>Moderator: Lars Svendsen (University of Bergen)</p> <p><i>Institute of Sociology, Stefan Nowak's Room, Karowa 18</i></p>



	<p>Jaboco Zabalo (University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona) <i>Metaphysics of Boredom. On how Nietzsche Became Heidegger</i></p> <p>Monika Chylińska (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin) <i>Is the Bored Mind an Unconstrained Mind?</i></p> <p>Piotr Sawczyński (Jagiellonian University, Krakow) <i>Can Doing Nothing Emancipate Us? Giorgio Agamben on Boredom and the Political</i></p>
12:30- 12:45	COFFEE BREAK
12:45- 14:00	<p><u>HISTORY OF BOREDOM</u> Moderator: Ian Higgins (University of Leicester)</p> <p><i>Institute of Sociology, Stefan Nowak's Room, Karowa 18</i></p>



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	<p>Edyta Pełkowska (University of Warsaw) <i>Between Historical Events, Feelings and ... Boredom? - Polish Female Memoire Writers at the Turn of the 18th and 19th Centuries</i></p> <p>Jeffrey Auerbach (California State University) <i>Boredom and the British Empire</i></p>
14:00- 15:00	<p>LUNCH <i>Institute of Sociology, Stefan Nowak's Room, Karowa 18</i></p>
15:00- 16:45	<p><u>SOCIOLOGY AND BOREDOM</u> Moderator: Cinthya Guzman (University of Toronto) <i>Institute of Sociology, Stefan Nowak's Room, Karowa 18</i></p> <p>Cinthya Guzman (University of Toronto) <i>Problematic or Productive - Experiences of Boredom in Everyday Life</i></p>



	<p>Małgorzata Kubacka (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan) <i>Boredom in Everyday Life Experience - Shameful or Affirmed</i></p> <p>Wojciech Sobolewski (University of Warsaw) <i>Boredom in Theatre - a Sociological Study of Theatre Audience</i></p>
16:45- 17:00	<p>COFFEE BREAK</p>
17:00- 18:15	<p><u>LITERATURE OF BOREDOM</u> Moderator: Lee Anna Maynard (Georgia Regents University)</p> <p><i>Institute of Sociology, Stefan Nowak's Room, Karowa 18</i></p> <p>Wojciech Boryszewski (University of Warmia and Mazury, Olsztyn) <i>Existential Boredom and Melancholia in "The French Lieutenant's Woman"</i> <i>by John Fowles</i></p> <p>Aleksandra Sowa-Zduńczyk (University of Silesia, Katowice)</p>



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	<i>The Art of Routine. A Boredom in Two Poems by Stanislaw Baranczak and Elizabeth Bishop</i>
18:30-	<u>WARSAW NIGHT OF MUSEUMS</u>



BOREDOM IS EVERYWHERE: TOWARDS BOREDOM STUDIES – CROSS-DISCIPLINARY OVERVIEW

Boredom has been analyzed by scientists and scholars from many different fields: anthropology, biology, history, sociology, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy and literature studies. All of them have various methods, conceptualizations and research questions – boredom is their bonding point. Taking all these works together the broad picture of boredom emerges. It turns out that boredom is practically everywhere: in every social class, in every historical period (albeit under different names) – it can be found in almost every aspect of human life. And not only human - there are even articles concerning animal boredom!

I would like to present a cross-disciplinary overview of the notions about boredom. I intend to sketch a horizon of scientific and cultural thought related to boredom. By combining all these remarks I mean to show how complex such mundane emotion as boredom can be and in how many contexts it can be considered.



ANATOMY OF BOREDOM

Purpose of my paper is analysis of the phenomenon of boredom. Defining this emotion constitutes problem. To this subject is devoted the first part of the paper. Problem defining this subject is result of different possible reasons for coming into existence of boredom, of causes which seems contrary to oneself. With reference to the above we can distinguish two basic kinds of boredom: boredom "ordinary" and existential boredom. Although reasons for coming into existence of both kinds of boredom are different, however effects can be similar, the long-term bore can lead existences of the individual to loss of feeling the meaning. This subject seems particularly important in the days of the aspiration of the individual to the individualism, of full freedom in carrying the own potential out. Focusing on this destination can lead to coming into existence of feeling surfeit, and from the fullness to the bore. Boredom from surfeit and boredom from the deficiency of stimuli can lead to destructive behaviours directed against very individual and against other objects. Recapitulating discussions which in the meaning of the Darwinism is performing the adaptive role of boredom is the last part of the address.



MELANCHOLY AND BOREDOM

The paper I would like to present is an attempt at determining the relationship between the notions of melancholy and boredom. Quite accurately, Elizabeth S. Godstein draws attention to the way a cultural and historical context determine the phenomena in question; for what she calls "a rhetoric of reflection" makes a particular appellation - melancholy, neurasthenia, boredom, or depression to name just a few - apposite to the social and cultural conditioning of the subject. While melancholy persists in its representations as a multi-faceted and an ontological element of one's reflective being in the world, boredom emerged only a few centuries ago to designate the condition - or experience - that the modern subject finds themselves in: an industrialized world. Following the introduction and subsequent institutionalization of psychiatric discourse, another notion surfaced: depression, which became prevalent in the times of "liquid modernity . " It seems that the phenomenon referred to by these varied terms is long- established, however, its history testifies to different interpretations ascribed to it depending on the times one lives in.



BOREDOM BEGS TO DIFFER: DIFFERENTIATING BOREDOM AMONG NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AS LAY CONCEPT, STATE, AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE

Despite gathering psychological interest in boredom and its various implications, boredom remains poorly understood; an issue that various scholars have raised (e.g., Vodanovich, 2003; Eastwood et al., 2012; Leary, et al., 1986; Van Tilburg & Igou, 2012). At the core of this lack of understanding lies the question of whether boredom can and should be distinguished from other negative emotions. This limited understanding of boredom's distinctiveness is problematic. Insufficient differentiation may erroneously lead to confounding boredom with other negative emotions. Yet, unwarranted differentiation between boredom and other negative emotions may lead to overestimation of uniqueness in boredom's origins, experiences, and impact. We examined, in three quantitative empirical studies, whether boredom differs from other negative emotions and then probed why boredom differed from these. Using a multidimensional scaling approach (Shepard, 1980), we estimated the relative dissimilarities between boredom and other negative emotions (sadness, anger, frustration, fear, disgust, feeling depressed, guilt, shame, regret, and disappointment). Results indicated that boredom is highly distinct from these in terms of (a) lay concept (Study 1), (b) state experience (Study 2), and (c) as individual difference (Study 3). Results further indicated that the differences between boredom and the other emotions can be attributed to (a) boredom's relatively mild negative affective valence, (b) low arousal, (c) low relevance to morality, (d) low perceived challenge, (e) low perceived meaningfulness, and (f) low attention. Results were strikingly consistent across three studies and portray boredom as a unique, discrete emotion that should not be confused with other negative emotions.



SEARCHING FOR MEANING: WHY BOREDOM POLARIZES INTERGROUP ATTITUDES, INTENSIFIES POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, AND FOSTERS NOSTALGIA

Boredom is an unpleasant emotion with many detrimental effects: boredom is associated with aggression, pathological gambling, depression, loneliness, anxiety, hostility, reduced work enjoyment, unhealthy eating, risky driving, and many more (Vodanovich, 2003). Not surprisingly, boredom is typically considered a nuisance. Notwithstanding this negative connotation of boredom, we propose that boredom serves an important self-regulatory function: Boredom affectively signals that an individual's behavior or situation is devoid of purpose and subsequently motivates attempts at resolving this conflict. Albeit some responses to this conflict can be undesirable, they nonetheless originate in an adaptive self-regulation process. This functional view of boredom was examined by testing the impact of experimentally induced boredom on attitudes towards in-groups and out-groups (Van Tilburg & Igou, 2011), political ideology (Van Tilburg & Igou, 2015), and nostalgic reverie (Van Tilburg et al., 2013). Importantly, each of these three potential outcomes of boredom has the potential to offer people a sense of purpose (e.g., Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). The results consistently indicate that boredom instigates attempts to resolve the perceived lack of purpose at hand by pursuing meaningful behavior. Importantly, this process can yield both arguably undesirable consequences (e.g., outgroup derogation and political polarization) but also desirable repose (e.g., nostalgic reverie). The findings portray boredom as an emotion that, notwithstanding its many undesirable correlates, fulfills a psychologically adaptive function.



BOREDOM IN PRESCHOOL AS A WARNING SIGNAL FOR A TUTOR/TEACHER

According to Robert Plutchik's theory of emotions, boredom is one of the emotions possessing weaker intensity, and is classified as a negative emotion. In a preschool group, boredom is a warning signal that something wrong is happening. In order to avoid stronger emotions such as disgust or loathing, which might be the emotional succession to boredom, teacher has to face the problem. Surveyed teachers of preschool education, parents and even children themselves point out the main reasons for boredom, and for all of the three groups they are very alike. We can distinguish three main causes of boredom: a lack of variability in activities, incompetence when playing alone, and tasks, both too easy and too hard, given to a child. A solution to the problem of boredom in kindergarten seems to be diversity, pointed out by all of the three surveyed groups: teachers, parents and children. This diversity should concern forms of work with a child, activities, and the didactic content being taught. Individualization and pluralization are also necessary when working with a preschool group (mentioned by Howard Gardner, creator of the multiple intelligences theory). This means adjusting the methods of work to the whole group by the means of pluralization, and at the same time to every child by the means of individualization. Diversed forms of activities, and adjustment of the appropriate methods of work with a child to the individual way of child's learning and his interests, are the key solution in the fight against preschool boredom.



CLEVER AND BORED. CAUSES AND IMPLICATIONS OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT IN GIFTED STUDENTS

A slogan saying that „a school is boring” can point out various things and rarely means boredom literally. Most often it is connected with the curriculum content level of difficulty that can be either too difficult or too easy. Gifted children having a high intellectual potential, are often constantly underchallenged which can lead to belief, that school is boring so it is just not worth to learn at all. Such child doesn't develop learning abilities and an internal motivation that is necessary to achieve a success in upper classes. When the curriculum becomes challenging, the student starts facing problems that overwhelm him or her and traps under underachievement cycle continuing making them feel less and less capable. A teacher plays an important role in the whole process, as can increase or decrease the symptoms. The lecture is meant to explain reasons of underachievement in gifted students and to show how to recognize and overcome it.



WHAT DO YOU FEEL WHE YOU'RE BORED OUT? PUPILS TALK

ABOUT BOREDOM IN SCHOOL

In my speech I would like to present the preliminary results and conclusions of my research on boredom among pupils in primary school. The research includes two groups of pupils - from grades 1-3 and 4-6. I will present and describe the similarities and differences in the results for both of these groups and discuss ideas for the next steps of the research. The main goal of my dissertation is to describe and explain the phenomenon of pupils' boredom - explored from their perspective and described by their teachers. I'm trying to find out how pupils understand, feel, name and categorize boredom. In the area of my interest is the study of external factors of boredom rather than internal (emotional, temperamental, personal). In the dissertation I accepted the distinction between two types: boredom of a long-term and short-term. I do not use fully accessible typology, developed precisely by boredom's researchers - none of them refer strictly to the school environment and to children's boredom. I differentiated specific types of pupils' boredom as a result of the pilot survey and the conclusion took from the literature. In the area of long-term: "standby", delaing, overstimulating, blase. In the area of short-term: situational, productive, pseudoboredom.



COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS OF BOREDOM

The boredom, an unpleasant state of sense of slow-flowing time in which people does not enjoy the activity, is ubiquitous and occurs frequently in a daily life. Although a variety of causes of this state have been proposed (for example emotional, behavioral, motivational and cognitive), it is not clear why people experience boredom. Here, we explore potential cognitive functions of this state. Generally, researchers connect boredom with a low need for cognition and place as opposed to the state of seeking stimulation. It is also related to a low activity- absorption and low engagement. The research in boredom propensity indicates that it is related to executive dysfunctioning: weaker inhibitory control, attentional lapses, vigilance decrement and memory failures. Experiencing boredom during the day predicts cognitive failures. Transferring these data into everyday-functioning, this state decreases school and work performance, reduces job-satisfaction and makes general sense of wellbeing worse. Consequently, boredom causes recognition that the current goal is no longer stimulating and motivates to change the current situation, which results mind wandering and seeking new tasks. Cognitive function of boredom is shifting attention to new, external or internal stimuli, so mind can get involved in new activity or challenge. The purpose of this work is to propose a cognitive function of boredom through review of relevant research, and encourage further experimental work to support this claim.



CREATIVE BOREDOM: WHAT GOOD CAN COME FROM BOREDOM IN MULTITASKING NETWORK CULTURE?

Development of new technologies, especially the Internet, has led to significant changes in the functioning of their users. Internet, as no other medium before, allowed to cross geographical barriers and caused the evolution of many social groups. In addition to the undoubted positive aspects, it is worth to note that the multiplicity of online resources has also negative consequences in cognitive sphere like problems with concentration or with memory. Internet is a tool which encourages users to behave in multitasking way, for example checking email or browsing social networks in the same time. Media multitasking creates specific “work illusion” – heavy multitaskers have impression that they work a lot or do several tasks simultaneously, but in fact their efficiency and quality of work is relatively low. Using of the Internet in unfocussed way, called also “cyberloafing”, can also be one of the best ways to deal with boredom. Many researchers of this phenomenon indicates that multitasking gives people the possibility of ostensible crossing the barriers. It provides us with stimulation from numerous sources and generates the illusory struggle with boredom. The main purpose of our presentation is to show that, paradoxically, chaotic multitasking has destructive influence on the quality of cognitive processes and the creativity level. Increased multitasking goes hand in hand with the weakening of these aspects of thinking, which are responsible for creativity. It turns out that sometimes boredom can be essential component and the starting point for better participation in changing reality.



PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH THE BORING PATIENT –

BOREDOM AS A CLINICAL ISSUE

The clinical practice shows that certain patients evoke boredom in their psychotherapists. Some of these unpleasant affective reactions can be bound with patients' symptomatology and level of personality pathology. Owing to that fact, boredom can be contextualized as a particular type of countertransference. It is well known that poor recognition of countertransference can lead therapy into impasse. However, when countertransference is recognized correctly, will constitute some of the feelings that exist between therapist and patient. Moreover, careful analysis of the countertransference will help to identify patient's projections, which provides some valuable information about patient's primitive mental life, internal reality and patterns of relations. Verbalization and interpretation of boredom can also bring some positive input into relation with therapist, preventing the therapeutic alliance. The author takes under consideration value and significance of experiencing and monitoring boredom in therapeutic relations.



“THE FUNAREAL PARADE OF YAWN-ENFORCING FACTS.”
CONFERENCES, LECTURES AND ARTICLES IN THE ACADEMIC
NOVEL

To an outsider, academic work may seem unclear, abstract, and rather unappealing. The campus novel helps to dispel such a misguided notion. The genre does satirise academe but it also acquaints the readers with academic life. It seems, however, that the authors of the campus novel, all too eager to criticise academia for its flaws, (un)consciously scorn the university. Such bitter mockery may result in the readers’ distrust towards academia for the image of a scholar presented in the campus novel verges on self-parody (the authors are usually scholars themselves) and may derogate from the prestige of the university. Nevertheless, an incompetent and clumsy scholar that features heavily in the campus novel should not be taken seriously since selfdeprecating humour is an inherent element of the genre. The intention is clear: to show how very human scholars are and to disprove the negative image of an academic as a self important intellectual. Discouraged from conducting research and disappointed with the lack of professional success, the scholars try to relieve the boredom of academic life. The characters in David Lodge’s *Small World* attend conferences, the protagonist in Malcolm Bradbury’s *The History Man* seduces his female students and colleagues and Jim Dixon from Kingsley Amis’s *Lucky Jim*, whose latest article contains nothing but the “funereal parade of yawn-enforcing facts”, seeks solace in alcohol. The purpose of the paper is to examine boredom presented in the modern campus novel as an inherent element of academic work.



THE GREAT PLAGUE OF DULLNESS –

BRIEFLY ABOUT POLISH CITYSCAPE

Phenomenon of boredom among the cityscape is extremely overwhelming. Simultaneously it is very rarely taken in serious academic discourses. Boredom that occurs in space is strictly connected with people's existence. It accompanied all of us every day. The same shops in the same galleries, the same buildings recurring as houses from catalogs strictly arranged in housing estates designed with the same plans. Boredom in this case may be considered in the psychological, sociological or visual way. I would like to focus on the visual part, because in the age of post-modern world it is the visuality that plays fully dominant role in the perception of the surrounding space. Sense of sight is the one that is mainly responsible for the perception of space and therefore creating an actual experience - especially nowadays. Physiognomy of urban space as a space of people's everyday presence represents kind a pattern in which we base our further actions. Thus we should ask ourselves if the current landscape of a city is a good model? The Great Plague of Dullness interweaving with desperate attempts of artistic expression causes degradation of this space and lack of desire to change, therefore - to remain in boredom. Feeling of boredom in the city is synonymous with its death as an organism, which by definition should be full of life conglomeration of elements that attract attention at every step, in the positive sense of this expression. Boredom is therefore a serious problem which is simply not yet realized. It is high time to take boredom seriously.



TIME TO THINK, TIME TO FEAR:

BRITISH LITERATURE'S GOTHIC BOREDOM

Boredom's function in British culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be tracked and charted through its varying depictions in texts ranging from ladylike domestic novels to breathless gothic page-turners. Characters' experiences of boredom can offer critiques of social institutions, cultural mores, and gender roles, but they can also generate spaces for introspection, inspiration, and self-determination. My talk will not only explore the primary forms boredom takes in the texts of this time period and their psychological underpinnings but also specifically interrogate boredom's presence and negative potential in gothic and proto-gothic novels such as M.G. Lewis's "The Monk" (1796) and Samuel Richardson's "Clarissa" (1747-48). Boredom – which sometimes equates with time to think – is a state especially linked to certain degrees of social class and the lives of the women depicted in 18th- and 19th-century novels. As an upper-class and often imperiled woman is frequently the focus of gothic novels, boredom's inclusion in gothic literature seems almost unavoidable. Since boredom is both a socioeconomic accomplishment (this woman has the leisure to be bored) and a sometimes culturally-suspect state (what will that woman contrive to alleviate her boredom?), gothic novels' women characters must navigate a difficult course between approbation and condemnation. Often, these characters are situated in constrained environments that insist upon boredom, such as strictly-governed nunneries, isolated estates, and genteel house-arrest. My presentation will assess the effects and significance of boredom as imposed on these famous gothic and proto-gothic heroines.



METAPHYSICS OF BOREDOM. ON HOW NIETZSCHE BECAME **HEIDEGGER**

Martin Heidegger is well known for having treated the subject of boredom in his work “The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics”, establishing a clear approach on the existential presence of nonsense and void in human life. Our purpose is to show with philosophical examples the anthropological validity of his paradigm, that is to be studied in connection to Nietzsche, whom he called ‘the last metaphysical thinker’. It is our believe that such a consideration (of an author that above all wanted to regain an immediate and intense life-experience) actually reveals his own position in relation to the hermeneutical meaning that his works posit. His analysis on boredom are therefore to be read from Nietzsche’s critique of nihilism, i.e., from the incapacity of creating values.



CAN COING NOTHING EMANCIPATE US? GIORGIO AGAMBEN ON BOREDOM AND THE POLITICAL

The aim of the presentation is to consider the political potential of boredom. Boredom, conventionally thought of as the state of uncommitted passivity, does not really correspond to an activistic domain of politics. Predominantly, it has either been associated with politics as a state to be overcome by political actions or – at best – as an ambiguous stimulus to political thinking. In my presentation, I would like to make this one-sided view more problematic by analyzing Giorgio Agamben's peculiar proposition to think of boredom *as* a politics. Inspired, among all, by Walter Benjamin's “The Arcades Project”, Agamben's philosophy of potentiality aims at making the potential of non-action a constitutive element of any political enterprise.

I mean to test Agamben's crucial concepts, as well as his important reading of Herman Melville's “Bartleby”, to see if treating boredom as a means of emancipation seems justified and can really be called productive.



BETWEEN HISTORICAL EVENTS, FEELING AND... BOREDOM? –
POLISH FEMALE MEMOIRE WRITERS AT THE TURN OF THE 18th
AND 19th CENTURIES

What was expected of the lady living in the late 1700s or early 1800s? Should she be bored or fully occupied? If the latter is the answer, then boredom could become a chance to express some independence. Thanks to the tremendous sources: ego-documents of noble women (a new phenomenon of the time), I will be able to answer this question. Authors of said documents were of different age and position, thus their works are wonderful and rich source for such studies. The research will be done in the perspective of a specific period in a history of the European culture. The times of Napoleon, Rousseau, the philosophy of Enlightenment, novels and famous characters marked the individual as the point of reference. We can see it in ego-documents of that time: memoires, diaries and letters. Women gained new possibilities of expressing themselves – they were members of free masonry, hosted and participated at literary and political salons, owned and administered the great land estates, were engaged in politics. This leads to the second question of my paper: what were their reasons for writing memoirs? Was it to immortalize themselves? Or maybe it was a boredom that led them to writing? This issue was not a subject of any Polish literature and historical studies so far (except maybe for Andrzej Cieński). This paper's aim is to change that situation.



BOREDOM AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

In “Burmese Days” (1934), George Orwell produced a memorable portrait of the boredom and alienation that characterized colonial life in Burma during the last decades of the British Empire. It was, he wrote, a “bloody hole,” with “tepid” air, “lazy” servants, and nothing to do all day but sit at the whites-only European Club and drink whisky. But when did British India, of which Burma was a part, become such a melancholy and monotonous place, and to what extent was it characteristic of the British Empire more broadly? This paper argues that despite the many and famous tales of glory and adventure, a significant and overlooked feature of the nineteenth-century British imperial experience was boredom and disappointment. All across the empire, from the hill stations of India to the gold mines of South Africa, from the Australian bush to the Malayan jungle, men and women found the landscape monotonous, the physical and psychological distance from home enervating, the routine of everyday life tedious, and their work dull and unfulfilling. This was a product of the increasing bureaucratization of imperial administration; heightened expectations about imperial travel and settlement; decreasing opportunities to explore the unexplored; increasing isolation from indigenous communities; and the lopsidedness and infrequency of imperial warfare. Together, these led to a loss of meaning and purpose that is well documented in private letters and diaries. This paper, therefore, traces the historical emergence of boredom in the imperial context, but is attentive as well to its psychological underpinnings and broader significance.



PROBLEMATIC OR PRODUCTIVE –

EXPERIENCE OF BOREDOM IN EVERYDAY LIFE

This project aims to examine the experiences of boredom in everyday life, in order to illuminate how people interact with their boredom and understand its purpose. This was achieved by interviewing 10 individuals, ages 30 – 65 years old, and residents of Canada. Boredom has often been studied through a quantitative approach that operationalizes it as a clearly understood negative experience. This project, however, uses in-depth semi-structured interviews to provide examples of how boredom is a diverse and subjective experience, which allows it to be both problematic and productive, rather than just one. As such, I argue that boredom is multi-faceted, in that, it can push and motivate people to renew themselves, but that it can also create feelings of anxiety within individuals. Others however, saw this need to renew and stimulate as an unsustainable ideal, and found meaning within the slow down of time. Amongst all of this, boredom could also be a sign of a society running on constant everfleeting stimulations, which deserves critical attention. Boredom offers us a look at how individuals experience life, and conceptualize existential meaning for themselves. While the study does not offer a representational examination of boredom, it does shed light on this ubiquitous experience by providing examples of boredom that have gone overlooked in the current literature.



BOREDOM IN EVERYDAY LIFE EXPERIENCE –

SHAMEFUL OR AFFIRMED

Since boredom became ‘democratized’ phenomenon (as E. Goodstein claims), it has also been considered as a threat both in social and therapeutical discourses. According to Emile Tardieu all human activities are just feeble attempts to avoid the trap of boredom. In contemporary world which is overloaded with information and opportunities, being bored is often found as being boring, not interesting, ordinary person. As Patricia Spacks noticed, modern subject suffers because of boredom. Boredom disempowers the individual and makes it disenchanted. In liquid modernity finding contentment, engagement or fulfillment seems to be a difficult to gain but still desirable challenge. Thus boredom could be seen as inadequate phenomenon in (post)modern everyday life. It should be eliminated or replaced by necessarily new and necessarily thrilling experiences. But social reality seems to be much more complicated. If everything becomes questionable nowadays, also the demand for life to be interesting does. Being bored, being boring, being just an ordinary person, refraining from acting, jettisoning the idea of fully occupied jobholder, revolting conspicuous consumption or following *normcore* might be considered as the signs of another social processes caused by uncertainty and unfulfillable desires which are pervasively existing. The affirmation of sloth, idleness or a new gaze of self-realisation concept are just parts of the ‘reflexive project of the self’ described by Anthony Giddens. Boredom is going to play prominent role in modern times and in creation of subjective individuals.



BOREDOM IN THEATRE –

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THEATRE AUDIENCE

The article tackles the problem of audience boredom in theatre. During a very specific show called „Request concert” audience members start behaving in a most peculiar way. The specific space of the show and the fact that the audience is not allowed to sit, creates a situation in which audience becomes bored. Boredom thus has its own dynamic. It manifests in different ways such as yawning, sleeping, talking, staring blankly into space. As a qualitative sociologist and using a specific method – participant observation – one can only analyse what the subjects allow the scholar to see. This article will define boredom based on a case study of a theatre audience during the „Request Concert”. It will also describe its dynamic and look for possible reasons for the boredom to occur. Looking at the structure of the space in a way Howard Becker looked at the social space of art in Jazz, allows sociologist to describe and analyze boredom in terms of social and structural phenomenon.



**THE SIGN OF BEING BORED, AN INVITATION TO SWEET
RELAXATION OR THE NEGLECTED POWER OF RESISTANCE?
YAWNING IN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

Yawning is mostly associated with the two kinds of human conditions: when we are bored (and it is then quite unkind sign of our state, that is understand across cultures) and when we want to go to sleep (and this state we share with animals). Yawning is always accompanied by a distinctive facial grimace, so it is nothing incomprehensible that there are not so many presentations of such state in art. Moreover, yawning in Western culture was always perceived as something not important, not beautiful, the state before sleeping (very important in visual culture), as something interim, that has no power and no meaning. In my presentation, I would like to analyze some paintings and sculptures presenting the process of yawning and show that their meaning is not so simple and that the yawning that they presented can be perceived as quite powerful in the context of the history of art. In my presentation I will focus on following paintings: Edvard Munch's "Girl Yawning" (that I will analyze in comparison with famous and influential "Scream"), Franz Xaver Messerschmidt's "The Yawning Man" (German-Austrian artist whose sculptures presented people's physiognomy are really important step in the process of sculptures-portraits evolution), Joseph Ducreux's "Self-portrait" who tried to show in his paintings the real face expression, real feelings and go beyond official portraiture of his epoch and Johnny Hoglund's works that are inspired by the observation of yawning (yawning is treated by the artist as the very special process of changing of our face, as a state of transition). I will also refer to other presentation, but the four mentioned above will be the core part of my analysis. In my presentation I would like to wonder how can we situate the process of yawning in the context of assumptions about boredom – it is a part of our discovering a home in the world – following the Heidegger reflection or the perverse opposition to the coercion of attractiveness and activity? Is yawning similar to boredom important part of our private anthropology and the sign of intimacy?