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Boredom and the Lived Body - Between Fullness and Emptiness

In my presentation, I aim to outline a sketch of a phenomenology of boredom as a modification of a corporeal self's mediated motion towards fulfilment. This motion is located in the fullness of the world, an environmentally-socially constituted medial place of appearing of beings. Boredom modifies the self's habitation of said fullness. While – episodic – superficial boredom does not threaten said habitation per se, deep boredom is to be described as a sinking into emptiness. I attempt to show boredom to be ‚caused‘ by an excess of one's sense-mediated appropriation of alterity. This excess of mediality coincides with a specific loss of reality, which I take to be grounded in a lack of experiences of the Real, non-sensical alterity. Methodologically, I approach boredom from a phenomenology of embodied meaning-constitution primarily informed by the thinking of Martin Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas and Hans Rainer Sepp. The corporeal self is to be described as both a meaning-constituting being inhabiting the fullness of the world and as individuated by its non-sensical corporeality. It is precisely this tension between sense and non-sense which becomes virulent in deep boredom. The normal or ‚natural‘ flow of experience is marked by a ‚speaking‘ relation of self and the fullness of the world. As a ‚partner‘ in dialogue, the world and what appears in it is known, its otherness is always already reduced to a level of basic familiarity. Based on a sensual, momentarily fulfilling assimilation (Levinas) a domestication (Sepp) of alterity is a pre-condition for both alienating and more emphatically fulfilling or resonant (H. Rosa) relations to the fullness of the world. Superficial boredom is to be located inside a ‚natural‘ world-relation. Deep boredom marks a rupture of the relation to the fullness of the world. Since the fullness of the world is the medial field where the self defines itself in its occupation with otherness (things, living beings, persons), deep boredom describes a motion of sinking into emptiness that deeply affects identity. The emptiness the individual sinks into is uninhabitable, driving the individual towards a fullness it can not reach. Here, Heidegger's (well

discussed) findings in *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* and *Was ist Metaphysik* are central. They are complemented by approaches focusing on the corporeal aspect of this sinking. First steps in this direction have been taken by P. Kouba (2009) who, using Levinas, has described episodes of deep boredom as an experience of there is. Picking up on Hans Rainer Sepp's thinking, I propose to understand boredom under the aspect of an excess of mediality which correlates with a lack of an experience of the Real. The Real marks an experience of non-assimilatable otherness; resistance. My descriptions ultimately support a well-known dialectics of deep boredom; an 'unbearable lightness' of the fulfilment of desires leads to and correlates with an (increasing) inability to find fulfilment. Isn't it ultimately the tension of resistance [unavailability] and assimilation [availability] which gives fulfilment of desire its delicious taste? Deep boredom thus leads to further questions: What is the right measure of assimilation? How is this measure to be found? Is momentary fulfilment really enough?