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The Art of Attentive Looking – What Annie Dillard Shows us about the Nature of Boredom

To talk about boredom means sometimes to talk about such phenomena as novelty, excitement or attention. Namely, to be bored can be understood as: [a] not seeing new things, [b] not being excited or [c] not paying attention to anything. These days we are already conscious that it's not the world that is boring itself – these are our minds that experience boredom. However, it is maintained that for our "information-seeking" minds it's much easier to feel bored when there are no exciting data, no novelty, no interesting circumstances etc.

Annie Dillard – the author of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* – shows us how to live in the monotonous surrounding without the experience of boredom. The key, as she indirectly explains, could be our way of perceiving things: if we possess the art of looking at the world.

The main aim of my presentation won't be, however, to repeat Dillard's valuable observations but – with her little help – to reveal some important features of the phenomenon of our interest. Mainly, I will describe boredom's possible connections with human attention and awareness. I would like to show that simply paying close attention to something is already not being bored. Hereby, I would like to add some sentences to Lars Svendsen's thesis that boredom is fundamentally related with not taking care of anything. I would argue that "care" could be understood as merely "attention" or that "taking care" of anything can simply mean "to give an attentive look" on a thing.