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Boredom's Time. Beyond the Symptomatic Urge to 'Do Something'

Boredom's metaphysical understanding, accomplished by Martin Heidegger in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, relates this phenomenon to the experience of time. In this peculiar experience the individual is found without outer references, alone with his feeling. The perplexity that awakens –together with the possibility of nothingness- appears as a menace; and therefore grows out of nowhere the need, the urge to drive it away. As a counterpoint to this very abstract apprehension of reality by the individual -faced to a paradoxical experience of *what is not*- some very specific strategies work as 'pastimes', seeking to avoid the negative side of boredom's implications. The culture of capitalism offers plenty of options, in this sense, that are available thanks to the separation of productive, working time and 'free time' for leisure, in which entertainment seems almost mandatory. The reference to philosophers committed to a cultural critique (from Ernst Bloch to Peter Sloterdijk) will enlighten the contemporary tendency to refuse an intriguing, primary feeling of time, which has been related to boredom. In the end, the desperate search for comfort, well-being and fun can mask only partially that ontological fear, silently present as one of today's fundamental taboos.