

Why entitle a work that provokes tension and emotional intensity Boredom? The tension is directly connected with the elimination of the difference between the man and the beast for the duration of the video. It is sparked by the sound and the time suspension resulting from the fixed camera shot and the slow motion applied during post-production to the movements of the two bodies. Nothing happens, and yet anything could happen. The viewers are induced into a state of expectation by the slow movements, but nothing will happen except a prolonged lack of differentiation between the beast and the human. By creating a feeling of expectation and of suspension, this work evokes the emergence of boredom in the stretching of time, as boredom is first and foremost a mode of perceiving time as interruption.

Boredom is a frame of mind, which is constitutionally a temporal experience. Each frame of mind is different as it involves a special mode of perception of time as more or less stretched. Evidently, when we are having fun we forget about time, as if it disappeared. The time of boredom is instead still, solidified, bare and nonexistent. It imposes itself in its most indomitable presence, as if suspended in a present time that has congealed and stretched to hold its flow. It is as if the relationship between present, past and future had been unhinged. The suture that makes time dynamic and mobile is dissolved in the feeling of boredom, a mode of perceiving time that deprives things of their instrumental properties: there is nothing for me to do.

As Heidegger says, being stops responding and time keeps us held in a limbo. Objects withdraw and time leaves us empty. In profound boredom we can find no escape, not even in gestures that are repetitive and meaningless except for their use when it is a matter of passing time. In profound boredom no past-time can compensate for the heavy presence of immobilized time. Time has emptied us with its oppressive duration; and since in the state of boredom nothing inhibits us, this frame of mind reveals that potentiality is grounded in lack of potential. The frame of mind of boredom is that in which the nature of Dasein patently appears, its openness to potentiality for-Being, to lack of potential and to the indeterminacy of choice caused by this openness.

Boredom expresses the 'dragging' of time between a perception and a reaction. It is as if we were prisoners of a perception incapable of provoking a reaction. Time enchants us and fetters us in its dis-articulated essence, but boredom expresses this very impotence where time throws up all our unexploited possibilities. It is precisely in their unused and useless condition that things reveal their potentiality. Heidegger defines as "overpowering" the state experienced in profound boredom, because the refusal of things to respond shows that precisely their refusal reveals the essence of my relationship with the world: the world's call and my indeterminate openness to it. In Heidegger's words, human existence is defined as Dasein, Being-there, intended as that being that exists in the particular shape of the 'potentiality for-Being', i.e. in sheer potential. My integral openness to the world and the numerous possibilities I can find to express myself become paradoxically more evident precisely when they are interrupted, stretching only the first of the two elements forming the pair potential/action which articulate our being in the world in an active manner. In Heidegger's argumentations:

'This complete expanse of beings in their telling refusal as a whole, and the singular extremity of what makes Dasein as such possible – both at the same time in their own unity become manifest as what is at work in Dasein whenever it must tell itself: It is boring for one. Expanding into the enveloping limit of beings as a whole in the manner of intensifying the extremity of Dasein in the direction of what is originally singular in whatever makes Dasein itself possible – this is the being bored, the boredom that we mean when we say that it is boring for one. This leaving empty that takes us into an expanse together with a holding us in limbo that intensifies extremity is the originary manner in which the attunement that we call boredom attunes us.'(M. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. Indiana University Press, 2001)

If we are not bored the world announces several possibilities of all kinds. On the other hand, in boredom we are not presented with several possibilities, but with the indeterminacy of any possibility we may assume. Boredom manifests pure potential by depriving us of determined possibilities. This originary potentiality is, as we have already observed, grounded in impotence: it

is only from a lack of potentiality that Being there is the 'potential for'. Boredom makes manifest this instance of impotence, but impotence coincides with a state of sheer potentiality and as such it is the very source of all possibilities.

Boredom is conceived by Heidegger as that frame of mind in which human beings experience the closest proximity with animals. We need to clarify the distinction between animals and human beings underlying the possible analogy between the two in the frame of mind of boredom. Being is indeterminate openness to an indeterminate, manifold originary enablement. According to Heidegger it is impossible for an animal to perceive the world as a place full of indeterminate potential. An animal will never get bored in as much as it is captivated by the few elements that characterise its perceptive sphere. Heidegger defines 'disinhibitors' the elements that stimulate an animal. An animal is encircled by a disinhibiting ring which it cannot escape and can only respond to its disinhibitors. This ring constitutes its environment. As has been said, human beings have a world because they do not have an environment. World and environment are different concepts, and being a human means possessing a world rather than relating to an environment. An environment manifests itself to an animal as an uninterrupted presence. Whilst animals, with their attuned senses and their strong instincts act within a uniform, narrow environment, human beings are equipped with senses suitable for all situations, their activities are boundless, and it is in this sense that philosophy deems them as living in the world. The world overflows with indefinite perceptions. Living man experiences uniquely worldly experiences and boredom is the worldliest of experiences in that it reveals that man relates to a limitless number of stimuli, an infinite number of possible directions he can take in the world. In boredom, man suspends his relationship with the disinhibitors and deactivates his single abilities. As Agamben explains, for Heidegger boredom is 'the metaphysical operator in which the passage from poverty in world to world, from animal environment to human world is realized; at issue here is nothing less than anthropogenesis, the becoming Da-sein of living man' (Agamben, 1998, 68). If boredom is the most representative experience of the world for living man, it is also that which represents his separation from animality.

We have obtained humanity thanks to a suspension of animality, a suspension which manifests itself fully in the state of boredom. 'Dasein is simply an animal that has learned to become bored; it has awakened from its captivation to its own captivation. This awakening of the living being to its own being captivated, this anxious and resolute opening to a not-open, is the human.' (Agamben, 2004, 70). If the relations of the human and the world is characterized by an openness, this openness opens onto a more originary closing. The living being has no access to a full revelation, to the meaning of the world. Man and woman are exposed to a non-revelation.

Marta Roberti, by: Working whilst talking. Talking whilst working.
Language at work in Mauro Folci's art