

Chapter Two

The First Form of Boredom: Becoming Bored by Something

§19. The questionableness of boredom. Awakening this fundamental attunement as letting it be awake, as guarding against it falling asleep.

By drawing attention to this profound boredom, it now seems as though we have done what we were attempting to avoid from the outset, namely ascertaining a fundamental attunement. Yet have we ascertained a fundamental attunement? By no means. We cannot ascertain one at all; indeed we are quite unable to do so, since it is entirely possible for everyone to deny that such an attunement is there. We have not ascertained one at all—indeed everyone will say we have arbitrarily asserted that such an attunement is at hand. Yet what is at issue is not whether we deny it or assert it. Let us simply recall what we asked: Do things ultimately stand in such a way with us that a profound boredom draws back and forth like a silent fog in the abysses of Dasein?

Nevertheless, so long as this boredom remains questionable, we cannot awaken it. Or can we perhaps do so after all? What does it mean to say that this boredom is questionable for us? Initially this amounts to saying in formal terms that we do not know whether this attunement pervades us or not. Who, 'we'? *We* do not know this. This not knowing and not being acquainted with this boredom—does it not precisely also belong to the way in which we are, to *our* situation? Why do we not know about it? Because it is perhaps not there at all? Or—because we *do not want* to know about it? Or do we know about it after all? Are we 'merely' lacking courage concerning what we know? In the end we do not want to know of it, but constantly seek *to escape* it. If we constantly seek to escape from it in this way, we ultimately have a bad conscience in so doing, we cling to the excuses associated with such bad conscience, and are consoled by persuading ourselves and proving to ourselves that we do not know of it—therefore it is not there.

How do we escape this boredom [*Langeweile*], in which we find, as we ourselves say, that *time* becomes drawn out, becomes long [*lang*]?¹ Simply by at all times making an effort, whether consciously or unconsciously, to pass the time, by welcoming highly important and essential preoccupations for the

1. [Tr: Heidegger is here alluding to the literal meaning of the German word for boredom, *Langeweile*: literally 'long while'. The temporal sense of *Weile* and its stretching will be important for the following analyses of the attunement of boredom.]

sole reason that they take up our time. Who will deny this? Yet do we then still need to first ascertain the fact that this boredom is there?

Yet what does it mean to say that we *drive away* [vertreiben] and *shake off* boredom? We constantly cause it to *fall asleep*. For evidently we cannot annihilate it by passing the time, however intensively. We ‘know’—in a strange kind of knowing—that boredom can return at any time. Thus it is already there. We shake it off. We succeed in making it fall asleep. We wish to know nothing of it. This does not at all mean that we do not wish to be conscious of it, but rather that we do not wish to let it be awake—it, this boredom which, in the end, is already awake. With open eyes it looks into our Da-sein (albeit entirely from a distance), and with this gaze already penetrates us and attunes us through and through.

Yet if it is already awake, then surely it does not need to be awakened. Indeed not. Awakening this fundamental attunement does not mean making it awake in the first place, but *letting it be awake, guarding against it falling asleep*. We can easily see from this that our task has not become any easier. Perhaps this task is essentially more difficult, similar to the way in which we can experience at any time that it is easier to wake someone up by startling them than to guard against them falling asleep. Yet whether our task is difficult or easy is not what is essential here.

We here face a far more essential difficulty. Not to let boredom fall asleep is a strange or almost insane demand [*Zumutung*]. Is it not entirely opposed to what all natural and sound human comportment is concerned with every day and every hour, namely to pass the time and precisely not to let boredom arise, that is, to shake it off and make it fall asleep whenever it approaches? And *we* are supposed to let it be awake! Boredom—who is not acquainted with it in the most varied forms and disguises in which it arises, in the way it often befalls us only for a moment, the way it torments and depresses us for longer periods too. Who does not know that we have already set about suppressing it and are concerned to drive it away as soon as it approaches; that this does not always succeed, that indeed precisely when we set upon it with all the means at our disposal it becomes stubborn, obstinate; that it then really does persist and returns more frequently, slowly propelling us to the threshold of melancholy [*Schwermut*]? Even when we succeed in shaking it off—do we not then know at the same time that it may well return? Do we not have the strange knowledge that what we have fortunately seen driven away and made to vanish could at any time be there once again? And does this belong to it if it shows itself to us in this way?

Yet to where does it vanish, and from where does this insidious creature that maintains its monstrous essence in our Dasein return? Who is not acquainted with it—and yet, who can say freely what this universally familiar phenomenon properly is? What is this boredom, such that faced with it we set ourselves the

demand to let *it*, this very attunement, be awake? Or is this boredom that is familiar to us here in this way, and of which we now speak so indeterminately, a mere shadow of our actual boredom? We indeed asked and are repeatedly asking: Have things ultimately gone so far with us that a *profound* boredom draws back and forth like a silent fog in the abysses of Dasein?

§20. *The fundamental attunement of boredom, its relation to time, and the three metaphysical questions concerning world, finitude, individuation.*

This *profound boredom* is the *fundamental attunement*. We pass the *time*, in order to master it, because time becomes long in boredom. Time becomes long for us. Is it supposed to be short, then? Does not each of us wish for a truly long time for ourselves? And whenever it does become long for us, we pass the time and ward off its becoming long! We do not want to have a long time, but we have it nevertheless. Boredom, long time: especially in Alemannic usage, it is no accident that ‘to have long time’ means the same as ‘to be homesick’. In this German usage, if someone has long-time for . . . this means he is homesick for. . . . Is this accidental? Or is it only with difficulty that we are able to grasp and draw upon the wisdom of language? Profound boredom—a homesickness. Homesickness—philosophizing, we heard somewhere, is supposed to be a homesickness. Boredom—a fundamental attunement of philosophizing. *Boredom—what is it?*

Boredom, *Langeweile*—whatever its ultimate essence may be—shows, particularly in our German word, an almost obvious *relation to time*, a way in which we stand with respect to time, a feeling of time. Boredom and the question of boredom thus lead us to the problem of time. We must first let ourselves enter the problem of time, in order to determine boredom as a particular relation to it. Or is it the other way around, does boredom first lead us to time, to an understanding of *how time resonates in the ground of Da-sein* and how it is only because of this that we can ‘act’ and ‘manoeuvre’ in our customary superficial way? Or are we failing to ask correctly concerning either the first relation—that of boredom to time—or the second—that of time to boredom?

Yet after all we are not in fact posing the problem of time, the question of what time is, but are posing the three quite different questions of what *world*, *finitude*, and *individuation* are. Our philosophizing is meant to be moving and maintaining itself in the direction of, and along the path of these three questions. What is more, these three questions are supposed to spring *from a fundamental attunement* for us. This attunement, profound boredom—if only we knew what it is, or were even pervaded by this attunement! Yet even assuming that we were pervaded by this fundamental attunement, what in the

world does boredom have to do with the question concerning world, finitude, and individuation? We can perceive that this fundamental attunement of boredom is tied up with time and the problem of time. *Or are our three questions ultimately tied up with the question of time?* Is there not an ancient conviction that the world and time both originated together, that both are equally old, equally original and related to one another? Is there not a less venerable, self-evident opinion according to which whatever is finite is temporal? Then finitude would be bound up with time just as much as world. Are we not acquainted with the ancient doctrine of metaphysics according to which something individual becomes this individual thing by virtue of its specific position in time, so that like the first two questions of world and finitude, the problem of individuation would also be a problem of time? Time for its part stands in a relation of boredom to us. Boredom is accordingly the fundamental attunement of our philosophizing, in which we develop the three questions of world, finitude, and individuation. Time is thereby itself something that determines us in the working out of these three guiding questions. If time is tied up with boredom, and on the other hand is somehow the basis for our three questions, then the fundamental attunement of boredom constitutes an exceptional relation to time in human Dasein, and thereby offers an exceptional possibility of answering the three questions. Perhaps all this is indeed the case. Yet if so, then what has been said after all remains only a pre-cursory opening up of a broad and as yet obscure perspective. All this is meant merely to serve toward making more comprehensible the state of helplessness we shall get into *if we are now to become involved in boredom with the intention of explicating the three metaphysical questions above.*

For what remains obscure to us is precisely the extent to which boredom is supposed to be our fundamental attunement, and evidently an essential fundamental attunement. Perhaps nothing at all rings a bell with us, and nothing is conjured up. Where might the reason lie for this? Perhaps we are not acquainted with *this* boredom because we do not at all understand boredom *in its essence*. Perhaps we do not understand its essence because it *has never yet become essential* for us. And in the end it cannot become essential for us, because it not only belongs at first and for the most part to those attunements that we shake off in our everyday lives, but to those attunements that we do not allow to attune us as attunements even when they are there. Perhaps that very boredom which often merely flashes past us, as it were, is more essential than *that* boredom with which we are explicitly concerned whenever this or that particular thing bores us by making us feel ill at ease. Perhaps that boredom is more essential which attunes us neither favourably nor unfavourably, and yet does attune us, but attunes us in such a way that it seems as though we were not attuned at all.

This *superficial boredom* is even meant to lead us into *profound* boredom, or, to put it more appropriately, the superficial boredom is supposed to manifest itself

as the profound boredom and to attune us through and through in the ground of Dasein. This fleeting, cursory, *inessential* boredom must become *essential*. How are we to bring this about? Are we explicitly and intentionally to produce boredom in ourselves? Not at all. We do not need to undertake anything in this respect. On the contrary, we are always already undertaking too much. This boredom becomes essential of its own accord, if only we are not opposed to it, if we do not always immediately react to protect ourselves, if instead we make room for it. This is what we must first learn: *not to resist straightaway* but *to let resonate*. Yet how are we to make room for this initially inessential, ungraspable boredom? Only by not being opposed to it, but letting it approach us and tell us what it wants, what is going on with it. Yet even to do this, it is necessary in the first place that we remove from indeterminacy whatever we thus name and apparently know as boredom. We must do this, however, not in the sense of dissecting some psychological experience, but in such a way that we thereby approach ourselves. Whom? Ourselves—*ourselves as a Da-sein*. (Ambiguity!)

§21. The interpretation of boredom starting from that which is boring. That which is boring as that which holds us in limbo and leaves us empty. The questionableness of the three conventional schemata of interpretation: the cause-effect relation, something psychological, and transference.

Boredom: if we gather together all our analyses hitherto, then we have now said a number of things about it, and yet we are certain of this: We have not yet understood it as *attunement*. We already know, and do not now wish to forget, that it is not in the first place a matter of interpreting this or that attunement, but that the understanding of attunement ultimately demands of us a transformation in our fundamental conception of man. Attunement, correctly understood, first gives us the possibility of grasping the Da-sein of man as such. Attunements are not a class of lived experience, such that the realm and order of experiences would themselves remain untouched. Thus, from the very beginning we are intentionally not starting out from boredom, if only because it would then look all too much as though we wanted to subject to analysis some spiritual experience in our consciousness. We are not really starting from boredom, but from *boringness*. Put formally, boringness is what makes something *boring* what it is whenever it is *boring* us.

Something *boring*—a thing, a book, a play, a ceremony, yet also a person, a group of people, indeed even an environment or a place—such boring things are not boredom itself. Or can even boredom be boring in the end? We shall leave these questions open and postpone them until we are led to them ourselves. We are acquainted with such boring things because in and through their

boringness they cause boredom in us. We become bored by boring things, so that we are thereby bored. This already presents us with several aspects: [1.] *that which is boring in its boringness*; [2.] *becoming bored by this boring thing and being bored with such a thing*; [3.] *boredom* itself. Are these three pieces which belong together? Or is it merely [1.] and [2.] which belong together? Or are they in general one and the same, in each case seen from a different perspective? Presumably they are not simply ranged alongside one another. Yet how do they relate to one another? Is what is named in third place merely a combination? All this remains questionable. In any case we can already see one thing: boredom is not simply an inner spiritual experience, rather something about it, namely *that which bores* and which lets being bored arise, comes toward us precisely *from out of things themselves*. It is much rather the case that boredom is outside, seated in what is boring, and creeps into us from the outside. Strange—ungraspable though this is at first, we must follow what *everyday* speaking, comportment, and judgment actually expresses: that things themselves, people themselves, events and places themselves are *boring*.

Yet—it will at once be retorted—of what help is it to us to attempt to begin our interpretation of boredom by characterizing what is boring? For as soon as we start with what is boring, we will find ourselves saying: it is whatever bores us and thus causes boredom. After all, only out of boredom can we understand what that which is boring is in its boringness, and not the other way around. Therefore we must indeed begin with boredom itself. This is a plausible consideration. And yet it rests on an illusion that conceals the entire problem. For what does it mean to say that certain things and people cause boredom in us? Why precisely these things and that person, this place and not another? Furthermore, why this thing now and not at another time, and why does what bored us earlier suddenly not do so at all? There must, after all, be something that bores us in all these things. What is it? Where does it come from? That which bores us, we say, causes boredom. What is this *causation*? Does it correspond to some process like the onset of cold which causes the column of mercury in a thermometer to sink? Cause—effect! Marvellous! Is it some kind of process, as when one billiard ball strikes another and thereby causes movement in the second?

We will not get anywhere at all on this track, quite apart from the fact that even this cause-effect relation, as we have illustrated it with reference to two bodies making contact and striking one another, is already entirely problematic. How does boredom bore—how is such a thing possible? I emphasize time and again that we may not turn away from the fact that we find *things themselves* boring and say of them that *they themselves* are boring. We cannot escape at all from the task of first, albeit not definitively, saying what that which is boring and which influences us is in its boringness. This is why we are asking with respect to the boringness of whatever is boring: what is this? We are

asking: what does boring mean?, and are simultaneously asking: what kind of a property is this?

We find something boring. We find it so and say: it *is* boring. Yet—when we say and mean that this or that ‘is boring’, then at first we no longer think at all of the fact that it causes boredom or has caused it in us, that it bores us. The expression ‘boring’ is an *objective* characteristic. A book, for example, is badly written, tastelessly printed and presented; it is *boring*. The book itself—in itself—is boring, not only boring for us to read and while reading it, but it itself, the intrinsic construction of the book, is boring. Perhaps it is not necessary at all that in reading this boring book we are bored, just as on the other hand it is possible for us to be bored while reading a book which is nevertheless interesting. We say such things as a matter of course.

Boring—by this we mean wearisome, tedious; it does not stimulate and excite, it does not give anything, has nothing to say to us, does not concern us in any way. This is not yet a determination of its essence, however, but merely an explanation that initially suggests itself. Yet if we explain whatever is boring in this way, we have indeed unexpectedly proceeded to interpret the initially objective character of the book’s boringness as something which *concerns us in such and such a way* and therefore stands in such and such a relation to us as subjects, to our subjectivity, influences us in such and such a way, determines our attunement [*uns . . . be-stimmt*]. Then boringness is not some exclusively objective property of the book after all, such as its bad cover, for instance. The characteristic of ‘boring’ thus *belongs to the object* and is at the same time *related to the subject*.

Yet if we look more closely, this is valid only for boringness and not for the property of the book, the fact that it has been badly bound. ‘Bad’ can here mean: tasteless, and this already indicates that even this objective characteristic is related to the subject. That which does not arouse any pleasure in us, but rather the opposite, is tasteless. But ‘bad cover’ can certainly also mean: not finished in fine, genuine, and above all durable material. Yet even here, where a characteristic of the material itself is meant, the subject-relatedness is not absent. For what does ‘non-durable’, ‘non-lasting’ mean? It means in and during the use we make of it, which may last a long time and thus be demanding. Thus this characteristic too is relative to our dealings with the book and its cover. Therefore even those properties of things which are apparently most objective are related to the subject. It is thus nothing exceptional for the property ‘boring’ to belong to the object and be related to the subject; rather it is like this with every property. Nonetheless, we somehow sense that the character of the boringness of a book is something quite different from the fact that it is badly written and suchlike.

Naturally—the reply will be—this is, after all, an old truth which all idealist philosophy has always maintained, namely that properties do not accrue to

things themselves, but are representations, ideas that we as subjects transfer onto objects. This is surely quite evident precisely in our case, concerning the characteristic of boringness. This case is merely one example of a generally recognized fact. All such properties—boring, cheerful, sad (event), funny (game)—these properties which have to do with attunement are related to the subject in a special sense; not only that, they stem directly from the subject and its situation. We *transfer* subsequently those attunements which things cause in us onto the things themselves. Ever since Aristotle's *Poetics* we have had the expression 'metaphor' (μεταφορά) for this. Even in Aristotle's *Poetics* it was seen that in language and poetic depiction there are particular statements and coinages in which we transfer (μεταφέρειν) these attunements that things cause in us—sadness, cheerfulness, boringness—out of ourselves and onto things. After all, we know from school that the language of poets, and everyday linguistic usage, are permeated by such metaphors. We speak of a 'laughing meadow' and do not mean that the meadow itself is laughing, we speak of a 'cheerful room', of a 'melancholy landscape'. The landscape is not itself melancholy [*schwermütig*], but merely attunes us in such a way, causes this attunement in us. And similarly with the 'boring book'.

Certainly, this is the general view and conclusive explanation. However, does it explain anything? Even if we admit for the moment that we transfer onto things the effect of an attunement caused in us, *why* do we transfer such characteristics of attunements onto things? After all, this does not happen by chance or arbitrarily, but evidently because we find something *about things* which demands of its own accord, as it were, that we address and name them in this way and not otherwise. We may not explain away this fact lightly, before we have become clear in general about what lies in the fact that we find the landscape melancholy, the room cheerful, the book boring. Even if we admit for the moment that we do 'transfer' something here, then we do so in the opinion that what is transferred somehow pertains to the thing itself. Surely it may at least be asked and even must be asked: *What* is it, then, that here causes the attunement or *gives rise to transference*? If it already lies in the things themselves, can we then simply speak of a transference? All this is not so self-evident after all. In that case, we are no longer transferring something, but in some way *apprehending it from the things themselves*.

What have we gained from this appraisal? Nothing at all—with respect to a definition of what is boring as such. Perhaps we have unexpectedly hit upon a more general problem, namely what kind of property we are dealing with in general. Right now we see only this much—initially in a rough and ready characterization coming from the outside: these characteristics are on the one hand objective ones, taken from the objects themselves, from out of them, yet at the same time subjective ones, and according to the common explanation transferred from subjects onto objects. Characteristics such as 'boring' there-

fore *belong to the object* and yet are *taken from the subject*. Yet these are contradictory, incompatible determinations. In any case we are unable to see how they are possible in their unity. Nor has it been decided whether this twofold characterization actually fits the facts of the matter at all, or whether it does not rather distort them from the outset, no matter how self-evident it may appear. Yet if we are thus unclear about the general characteristic of the boringness of a thing taken as a property, may we then hope to explain this particular property in the right way? Do we then not simply lack any purchase on the problem? Indeed. This tells us only one thing: If we are thus surrounded by difficulties, then it is all the more important to keep our eyes open. Hence we do not want to explain the facts of the matter by rash theories—no matter how current or acknowledged they may be.

Let us return to our first characterization of boringness and of that which is boring. We shall repeat what we mean by it, and how we can explicate boringness in its meaningful context. We can take two points from this:

[1.] We say that the book is ‘wearisome’, ‘tedious’. What we address as *boring* we draw *from the thing itself*, and also mean it as belonging to this thing.

[2.] At the same time we say that the book is not stimulating or exciting, it does not offer anything, does not affect us. If we paraphrase and explain this quite spontaneously, then we are speaking unexpectedly of a characteristic which does not have any content of its own. Rather what is essential about it lies precisely *in its relation to us*, in the way in which we are *affected* or not affected.

Hitherto we have emphasized only the relation to the subject. We were surprised by it and perhaps also even led astray. Yet we have completely overlooked the way in which we here explain this characteristic of boringness by direct paraphrase. This is precisely what is important. We did not say that what is boring is that which *causes* boredom in us. Nor did we merely avoid *saying* this in order, for instance, not to have to explain the same by way of the same (tautology); for there is no tautology here. Nor did we even *think* that the *boringness* of what is boring consists in *causing* boredom. We did not think of this—of this interpretation—because we have no such experience at all. For, as already mentioned, it is certainly possible that in reading we have not been bored at all, that we did not ‘have the feeling’ that boredom was being induced in us. And yet we call the book boring, and this without saying anything untrue and without lying. We call the book boring straightaway, because *straightaway* we do not at all understand ‘boring’ as though it were synonymous with inducing boredom. We straightaway take ‘boring’ as meaning *wearisome*, *tedious*, which is not to say indifferent. For if something is wearisome and tedious, then this entails that it has not left us completely indifferent, but on the contrary: we are present while reading, given over to it, but not taken [*hingenommen*] by it. Wearisome means: it does not rivet us; we are given over to it, yet not taken by it, but merely held in limbo [*hingehalten*]

by it. Tedious means: it does not engross us, we are left empty [*leer gelassen*]. If we can see these moments together in their unity somewhat more clearly, then perhaps we have made an *initial* gain, or—to put it more cautiously—are moving in the proximity of a proper interpretation: that which bores, which is boring, is *that which holds us in limbo and yet leaves us empty*.

Let us note that the whole view that something is induced in us, that the state of boredom is aroused, has now vanished. We are not saying that boredom has been induced in us. Maybe not—yet surely we are merely paraphrasing this and mean in effect that boredom is caused. Not at all. Do we wish to say instead that we were affected in such and such a way and in this find ourselves disposed in such and such a way? We do not mean this either; for we do not first and foremost merely wish to say what sort of effect the book had on us, but rather what character the book itself has. Hence when we say: the book is thus, this means that it can affect someone in such and such a way and in so doing can let someone find themselves disposed in such and such a way. Yet even this is not what we wish to express, but rather that the book is such that it brings us into an attunement that we would like to see suppressed.

We are speaking *from out of* an attunement which factually is not 'provoked' at all, and not with respect to some possible effect that might be caused in us. For this reason we cannot transfer it onto the thing that supposedly causes it either. Nor are we speaking from out of an attunement that could be evoked merely in its pure possibility, but from out of an attunement which we know *could arise at any time*, but which we suppress, which we do not wish to let arise. Is there a difference here? We say: from out of an attunement, but *not* out of a *caused effect*; from out of a possible attunement, one that may possibly befall us. It is from out of an attunement that we find something thus and thus and address it thus. This does *not* mean *transferring* an *effect* and its characteristics *onto the inducing cause*.

Yet have we advanced even a single step with all these discussions? Not at all! On the contrary, now everything really has become confused. The simple state of affairs—we call a book boring, i.e., it causes boredom in us—is completely muddled and interpreted in a contrived and incomprehensible way. And yet—we do not wish to force ourselves to arrive at a bare definition of boringness and boredom in our first attempt, but to understand the problem. However little consolation the result may be at first sight, we have nevertheless experienced something essential: [1.] What is boring is not so called simply because it effects boredom in us. The book is not the outer cause, nor is the resulting boredom the inner effect. [2.] Therefore, in elucidating the facts of the matter, we must disregard the cause-effect relation. [3.] The book must nonetheless make itself felt, not, however, as an inducing cause, but rather as that which *attunes* us. This is where the question lies. [4.] If the book is boring, then this thing outside the soul has in itself something of the possible, perhaps

even suppressed attunement that is in us. Thus, although it is inside, *the attunement plays around* the thing outside at the same time, and indeed without our transferring any induced attunement from within us outside onto the thing. [5.] The thing can ultimately be boring only because the attunement already plays around it. It does not cause the boredom, yet nor does it receive it merely as something attributed by the subject. In short: boredom—and thus ultimately every attunement—is a hybrid, partly objective, partly subjective.

§22. *Methodological directive for the interpretation of becoming bored: avoiding the approach of an analysis of consciousness, and maintaining the immediacy of everyday Dasein: interpretation of boredom in terms of passing the time as our immediate relation to boredom.*

It is not this result that interests us, however, but the question: *Why* is attunement such a hybrid? Has this something to do with attunement itself, or with the way in which we explain it and attempt to explain it? Is attunement ultimately something totally different and free from any hybrid characteristics?

We may be permitted to ask these questions, yet then reminded of what we really sought to do, and have now achieved. We wanted, after all, to deal with the boringness of what is boring and specifically not with boredom, and yet we have been led to boredom after all. Certainly, we see that boredom is connected with becoming bored and with being bored. Yet we can see with equal clarity that if we now consider becoming bored and being bored, we may no longer consider them as some subjective state occurring in a subject. Instead we must from the outset and in principle take into account what is boring as well—each specific thing.

What does all this tell us? We cannot characterize what is boring as such at all, unless we clearly see what it is in general, namely something that attunes us in such and such a way. This means that we are already encountering an essential question: *What does it mean to attune?* We cannot simply say that to attune means to cause an attunement. We have thus discovered this *question*—a possible problem, one which is unavoidable and far more essential than any seemingly plausible explanation of this questionable characteristic, ‘boring’.

With great laboriousness we have thus merely arrived at a negative result. Yet do we need to go to such lengths just to see this? Can we not achieve this result much more directly, and indeed with a positive content at the same time? Becoming bored obviously means becoming bored *by* something, being bored obviously means being bored *with* and *in doing* something. Conversely, something boring is ‘*related*’ to becoming bored, or at least to a potential for becoming bored. That is clear. If we put it like this, then it seems as though

we might have gained a new basis. And yet this clarity reveals itself as an illusion as soon as we recall that this relating of a subjective state of attunement to an objective thing, and vice-versa, is entirely questionable. This is precisely what led us astray in a mistaken direction of questioning.

If we now investigate becoming bored and being bored, then it is initially of little help to say that being bored is being bored with . . . and in . . . It is especially of no help if we proceed in such a way as to understand what is boring as an object to which we relate, though in a different way than in knowing or willing. For the *problem* is precisely this *relatedness, its fundamental character*. To put it in general terms: determining our attunement is here to be grasped as something attuning us in such and such a way, and this *being attuned* is to be grasped as the *fundamental nature of our Dasein*. To ask this concretely once again: Whenever we love something, a thing or indeed a human being, is what or who we love merely the cause arising somewhere of a state arising in us, a state we transfer onto what we call our beloved? Of course not, it will be said, for the beloved is simply the object of our loving. Yet what does 'object' mean here? Something our love stumbles across and clings to? Or is all this not merely stated in a superficial way, but fundamentally wrong? Is it not the case that in love we do not stumble upon an object at all, yet nonetheless love something? This may stand merely as an indication that if we leave aside the cause-effect relation, we have not taken any positive step forward. Indeed the problem has become more acute.

On the other hand, there does now seem to be more prospect of getting behind the riddle of boredom if we examine the state of becoming bored and being bored. But we have been warned. Not only that in so doing we are not to neglect what is boring and that which bores us, but that this becoming bored and being bored is not some state that merely arises, one that we lay before us for investigation like some laboratory preparation. Yet how else are we to proceed? We must after all bring ourselves into some *relationship* to this state if we wish to make any assertions about it. Which is the appropriate relationship? Surely we can regard as valid the general rule of placing an object under the best conditions of observability. This rule is valid in the sciences. And thus in philosophy too. No—it is the other way around: It is not because this rule is valid in the sciences that it is valid for us, but it is valid in the sciences because this rule is grounded in an originary, essential connection. In accordance with this, the *substantive content and kind of being* of a *being* prescribe the *possible manifestness* (truth) *belonging to it*. The various regions of beings and the individual things there are, each according to their substantive content and kind of being, are dependent upon a particular kind of truth, of unconcealment. This openness, which pertains to every being in accordance with its substantive content and in accordance with its way of being, in each case *prefigures* in turn the specific possible and appropriate *ways of access to the being that is itself to be grasped*. Through the respective kind

of truth, which is tied up with being, the way, the possibility, and the means of appropriating or warding off beings, of possessing beings or losing them, are prefigured. This is not to say in any way that such access is one of theoretical interrogation and observation—in the scientific sense—but only to say that if scientific knowledge is to be gained, then in accordance with its intention and its possibilities it must satisfy that essential connection between being and truth. For this reason explicit rules become necessary for the sciences. The necessity of having to proceed methodologically, i.e., of investigating a being according to its kind, does not exist because science demands such a thing, but is called for by science on the basis of the essential belonging together of being and truth.

We, however, do not wish to observe boredom. Perhaps such a thing is altogether impossible. Yet we do want to experience something about boredom, about its essence, about the way in which its essence unfolds. Can we do this in any other way than by *transposing* ourselves into an attunement of boredom and then observing it, or by *imagining* a certain boredom and then asking what belongs to it? For surely it is all the same whether we are investigating an actual case of boredom or an imagined, i.e., merely possible case. After all, we are not interested in this particular boredom that we have right now, but boredom itself as such and what belongs to it, i.e., to every *possible* case. Thus an imagined case of boredom will fulfil the same function for us.

So it seems, indeed. If we transpose ourselves into boredom or imagine we are doing so and then get to work on it and observe it, we shall satisfy the fundamental rule of investigation. And yet, precise though this assignment of tasks may seem, it misses our task. It makes the lived experience of attunement into an object swimming in the stream of consciousness which we as observers gaze after. In this way we *precisely do not enter our ordinary relationship to boredom*, nor its relationship to us. When we make it into an object in this way then we refuse it precisely the role it is supposed to have in keeping with the most proper intention of our questioning. We refuse it the possibility of unfolding its essence as such, as the boredom in which we are bored, so that we may thereby experience its essence.

If what is boring and that which bores us, and together with this, boredom itself, is something which is uncomfortable for us, something that we do *not* wish to let arise, something that we immediately try to drive away when it arises—if boredom is something that we are fundamentally *opposed to* from the very beginning, then it will originally manifest itself as that to which we are opposed *wherever* we are opposed to it, *wherever* we drive it away—whether we do so consciously or unconsciously. This occurs wherever we create a diversion from boredom for ourselves, where we in each case *pass the time* in such and such a way and with this intent. Precisely wherever we are opposed to it, boredom *itself* must want to assert itself, and wherever it presses to the fore in such a way, it must *impress itself upon us* in its essence.

Thus it is precisely in *passing the time* that we first gain the correct *orientation* in which we can *encounter* boredom *undisguised*. Consequently we may not make boredom into an object of contemplation as some state that arises on its own, but must consider it in the way that we move within it, i.e., in the way that we seek to drive it away.

However—it will be objected—boredom is now indeed not being isolated as some lived experience, free-floating, the naked object of some observation, and we are indeed now letting it emerge; we first have it precisely when we are involved in driving it away. Yet the state of affairs has essentially not altered. How do things stand with our passing the time? Are we not now making this, instead of boredom, into the object of some observation—only in such a way that boredom is, as it were, simultaneously hidden within our passing the time as that which we drive away? In that case we do not have a pure, isolated action of boredom, but our reaction against it, the reaction *and* that which it reacts against, not *one* lived experience, but two which are coupled together. It does indeed seem like this, and yet things are otherwise. We have not merely pushed a second lived experience in front of it—if only for the reason that we do not first need to connect our passing the time as a particular lived experience, as it were, but constantly maintain ourselves within it, and indeed in such a way that in so doing we know nothing, strictly speaking, of lived experiences in the soul and suchlike.

Now we can see for the first time what is decisive in all our methodological considerations. It is not a matter of concocting a region of lived experiences, of working our way into a stratum of interrelations of consciousness. We must precisely avoid losing ourselves in some particular sphere which has been artificially prepared or forced upon us by traditional perspectives that have ossified, instead of preserving and maintaining the immediacy of everyday *Dasein*. What is required is not the effort of working ourselves into a particular attitude, but the reverse: what is required is the *releasement* [Gelassenheit] of *our free, everyday perspective*—free from psychological and other theories of consciousness, of the stream of lived experience and suchlike. Because, however, we are permeated by such theories—often understood in their most obvious sense and in keeping with an elucidation of the meaning of the words—it is indeed much more difficult to plant such releasement in oneself than to learn and memorize one or more theories. It is from this perspective that we must comprehend the apparent laboriousness with which we are attempting to work our way toward such a trivial phenomenon as boredom. Working our way toward it in this manner means dispelling all those attitudes that tend to impose themselves upon us.

Our task now is not the interpretation of what is boring as such, but becoming bored by such a thing, being bored with. . . . Here we must heed the fact that becoming bored by . . . and being bored with . . . do not simply

coincide. It indeed seems as though they are both caused by something boring and do not, for instance, represent two different kinds of attunement, but one and the same: on the one hand insofar as the attunement is seen from the perspective of its cause, from that which is having an active effect, so that the attunement may thus be characterized passively as becoming bored; on the other hand, however, the same attunement may be characterized as being bored insofar as we have it within us, insofar as it is something everyone finds within them. And yet there is a distinction between the two which must be pointed out at this stage and which, in accordance with the very nature of this distinction, is important for the path our appraisal is to take.

In becoming bored by something we are precisely still held fast by that which is boring, we do not yet let it go, or we are compelled by it, bound to it for whatever reason, even though we have previously freely given ourselves over to it. In being bored with . . . , on the other hand, a certain detachment from that which is boring has already occurred. That which is boring is indeed at hand, yet we are bored without that which is boring specifically or explicitly boring us; we are bored—almost as though the boredom came from us and as though the boredom continued to propagate itself, without needing to be caused by or bound to what is boring any more. In becoming bored by this book, however, we are still concentrating on the thing at issue, indeed precisely on this. In being bored with . . . the boredom is no longer nailed fast to something, but is already beginning to diffuse. Boredom has then not arisen from this particular boring thing, on the contrary it radiates out over other things. It, boredom itself, now gives our Dasein a strange horizon over and beyond the particular boring thing. It does not merely relate to the particular thing that is boring us, but settles over several things, over other things: everything becomes boring.

We cannot even ask yet what this distinction in attunement properly is and what underlies it, let alone give an answer at this stage, since we have not yet seriously clarified what kind of attunement in general lies in becoming bored and in being bored.

For the purposes of showing this we shall therefore initially discard once more the distinction we have indicated, in order to take up the question concerning it at a later stage in a more incisive form. What is common to both phenomena is that we are bored by and with something specific, albeit in a different way.

§23. *Becoming bored and passing the time.*

We shall not consider *becoming bored* and being bored in themselves, but shall consider this boredom as that which we drive away [*vertreiben*], or seek to drive

away, namely by *passing the time* [Zeitvertreib]. This is not something that we resort to of our own accord, as it were, without any boredom having set in, but a passing the time which lays claim upon us specifically out of and in opposition to a particular boredom.

**a) Passing the time as a driving away of
boredom that drives time on.**

We are sitting, for example, in the tasteless station of some lonely minor railway. It is four hours until the next train arrives. The district is uninspiring. We do have a book in our rucksack, though—shall we read? No. Or think through a problem, some question? We are unable to. We read the timetables or study the table giving the various distances from this station to other places we are not otherwise acquainted with at all. We look at the clock—only a quarter of an hour has gone by. Then we go out onto the local road. We walk up and down, just to have something to do. But it is no use. Then we count the trees along the road, look at our watch again—exactly five minutes since we last looked at it. Fed up with walking back and forth, we sit down on a stone, draw all kinds of figures in the sand, and in so doing catch ourselves looking at our watch yet again—half an hour—and so on.

An everyday situation with well-known, banal, yet quite spontaneous forms of passing the time. What are we really passing here? This question is strangely ambivalent. As the phrase says, we pass the time. Yet what does it mean here to pass the time? We cannot, after all, shake time off. To pass here means to make it pass by, to propel it, drive it on so that it passes. Our passing the time, however, is in itself really a passing of boredom, where passing now means: driving away, shaking off. Passing the time is *a driving away of boredom that drives time on*.¹

What are we trying to chase away here in wanting to kill time—i.e., *what is time?* In passing the time we do not chase time away. Not only because this is ultimately altogether impossible, but because the whole attitude of passing the time—as we shall see later—is *not* really directed toward *time*, even though in doing so we constantly look at the clock. What do we really want in constantly looking at the clock? We merely want to see time passed. What time? The time until the train arrives. We constantly look at the clock because we are waiting for that point in time. We are fed up waiting, we want to have done with this waiting. We shake off boredom. Is the boredom that springs from this looking at the clock some kind of waiting, then? By no means. Being bored with something, after all, is not a waiting for something. In our example the most

1. 'Zeitvertreib ist ein Zeit antreibendes Wegtreiben der Langeweile.' [The German for passing the time, *Zeitvertreib*, literally means a 'driving away of time'.—Tr]

we can say is that it is waiting itself that is boring and that bores us, but boredom is not itself a waiting. Furthermore, not every waiting is necessarily boring. On the contrary, waiting can be full of suspense. In which case there is then no room for boredom at all. We thought we were already on the trail of boredom with the phenomenon of passing the time, yet once again it has disappeared.

To what extent, however, is the *waiting* in our example *boring*? What constitutes its boringness? Perhaps it is because it is a having to wait, i.e., because we are forced, coerced into a particular situation. This is why we become impatient. Thus what really oppresses us is more this impatience. We want to escape from our impatience. Is boredom then this impatience? Is boredom therefore not some waiting, but this being impatient, not wanting or being able to wait, and for this reason being ill-humoured? Yet is boredom really an attunement of ill humour or even an impatience? Certainly impatience can arise in connection with boredom. Nevertheless, it is neither identical with boredom, nor even a property of it. There is neither a patient nor an impatient boredom. The impatience rather has to do with the manner and way in which we want to get boredom under control and are often unable to get it under control. Our passing the time has this peculiar character of a fluttering unease that brings this impatience with it. For what happens in becoming bored is that our unease while having to wait does not allow us to find anything that could grip us, satisfy us or let us be patient.

Being bored is neither a waiting nor a being impatient. This having to wait and our impatience may be present and surround boredom, but they never constitute boredom itself.

Before we continue with our interpretation of boredom, we shall recall once more the steps we have taken hitherto. We carried out a provisional examination of boredom from various angles. These considerations led us to see: [1.] That an interpretation of boredom is evidently necessary; for boredom is indeed known to us, yet we do not really know it intimately. Indeed, when we look more closely we find the essence of this attunement quite ungraspable: it disappears. [2.] We saw that when we attempt such an interpretation of boredom it is initially not at all clear *where* we should begin, in what direction we should inquire and guide the interpretation, or *how* we are to make this known phenomenon thematic. A general methodological maxim could indeed provide the guideline that all investigation must see to it that each object is brought under the best conditions of observability. We soon saw, however, that this apparently quite universal and self-evident maxim is something that science merely applies, something that goes back to a fundamental relation between being and truth. This universal directive therefore has nothing to tell us so long as it remains unclear in what way whatever we are investigating—namely this attunement—is, and what kind of truth belongs to it; whether this relation,

and the way in which the attunement is, are in each case such that they can be made the object of scientific observation. We then also saw that this maxim not only tells us nothing, but fundamentally leads us astray, that whenever we follow it, it misleads us into bringing such a lived experience, called boredom, before us as an observable object, with apparently legitimate, yet fundamentally exaggerated and mistaken precision. It is rather a matter of seeing boredom *as it bores us*, and of grasping it as it occupies us. It always *shows itself* in such a way that we immediately turn *against* it. Whenever we make boredom an object—if we may say such a thing—we must from the outset let it emerge as something that we turn against, not in an arbitrary manner, but—to put it crudely—in this peculiar reaction that is provoked of its own accord by the emergent boredom, and which we call *passing the time*. We must approach this peculiar *unity* of a *boredom* and a *passing the time* in which a confrontation with boredom somehow occurs. Finally, we saw that we have thereby extended our field of appraisal beyond an isolated lived experience to its unity with passing the time. We saw, however—this will emerge more clearly at a later stage—that although we are also making present to ourselves an example of passing the time, it is immediately closer to us than this and that we constantly reside within it. What is at issue, then, is precisely transposing ourselves back into this immediacy of everyday comportment, away from all the theories and methodological efforts that seem necessary. Our investigation must nonetheless show that this does not mean we can proceed in an arbitrary manner. In passing the time we rescue ourselves from boredom. To show this we provided a simple depiction of one particular boring situation. We are beginning with the phenomenon of passing the time and asking initially what is really being passed here. It is not time that is being passed, although in a way it does make sense to say so, as we shall see. Boredom is passed off or driven off by our driving time on in a certain sense. When we say that *passing the time is a driving away of boredom that drives time on*, this seems to be a very precise definition of *passing the time*. Yet upon closer investigation we see that this definition is incorrect. For in this driving time on and driving boredom away something has already been said about *boredom*, namely this moment of driving time on, driving it by. We can then no longer say that in doing so we are driving boredom away. In other words, when we take the definition in this formal way, we may no longer speak of boredom itself. This is mentioned only as an aside, so that you do not become set on this definition. More important is the concrete question: What does all this mean? Toward the end I pointed to what *oppresses us* [*uns bedrängt*] in this boring situation. It is the peculiar *waiting* that we want to have done with, so that the suggestion is that perhaps boredom is this *waiting*. Finally, we saw that waiting and boredom are not identical. Rather waiting itself can have the character of boringness, yet need not do so.

b) Passing the time and looking at our watch. Becoming bored as being affected in a paralysing way by time as it drags.

Strange: in this way we experience many kinds of things, yet it is precisely boredom itself that we cannot manage to grasp—almost as though we were looking for something that does not exist at all. It is *not* all the things we thought it was. It vanishes and flutters away from us. And yet—this impatient waiting, the walking up and down, counting trees, and all the other abandoned activities attest precisely to the fact that the boredom is there. We confirm and reinforce this evidence when we say that we are *almost dying of boredom*. Perhaps against our intentions and against our will we are betraying something mysterious in saying this: namely that boredom ultimately *grasps at the roots of Dasein*, i.e., prevails in the ownmost ground of Dasein. Or is it instead merely an exaggerated and exaggerating way of putting things when we talk of a consuming, deadly boredom? We shall leave open how much it may be just cliché and habit to say such things on particular occasions. In any case, these expressions are not accidental. Boredom is there, is something specific, and yet is nevertheless always surrounded by these extraneous circumstances in which we become sidetracked time and again in our ongoing investigations.

Thus it will ultimately not be of any help to us either if we approach boredom from the perspective of passing the time, in order to see what we are struggling against in passing the time. Or perhaps we have not yet sufficiently transposed ourselves into such passing the time and repeatedly let ourselves be distracted too readily by things that boredom could ultimately be—impatience, waiting, things that persuade us that they might be what we are looking for. Why so? The phenomenon has many aspects. What do we need? We need a secure guideline, a *reliable measure*. If we start from our general characterization once more, then boredom and our passing the time which is opposed to it now become clearer to us: What is at issue in boredom [*Langeweile*] is a while [*Weile*], tarrying a while [*Verweilen*], a peculiar remaining, enduring. And thus time, after all. And as opposed to that, passing the time. In such passing the time we see the peculiar comportment of continually pulling out our watch, the watch by which we measure time. Thus what is decisive in passing the time, and indeed in *what* it shakes off, namely boredom, is, after all, *time*. Passing the time is therefore a shortening of time that drives time on, namely the time that seeks to become long [*lang*]. It is thus an intervention into time as a *confrontation with time*. We must therefore begin here and ask what is happening to time in this context, how we relate to time, and so on.

If by way of the phenomenon of passing the time we indeed wish to catch sight of what is shaken off in it, namely boredom, it will be a good idea to focus on that occurrence within our passing the time which we have already mentioned on several occasions: this continual *looking at our watch*.

In doing so, however, we must take careful note of the fact that this looking at our watch is not itself a passing the time. It does not belong on the same level as counting trees or walking back and forth. It is not a way or means of passing the time, but only a sign that we want to pass the time, or more precisely that our passing the time is not really succeeding, that the boredom is still tormenting us, and is doing so increasingly. Looking at our watch already indicates, by its helpless gesture, our failure to pass the time, and thus indicates that we are *becoming increasingly bored*. This is why we look repeatedly at our watch—yet this is not some purely mechanical action. *What* do we wish to ascertain? Just what time it is in general? No, in itself this does not interest us at all. Rather we wish to ascertain how much time is left until the train departs, or whether the time until the train arrives will soon have elapsed, i.e., whether we must continue to struggle against the emergent boredom by this unsuccessful killing of time, strangely lacking in any goal. It is not a matter of simply spending time, but of killing it, of making it pass *more quickly*. This means that it is going *slowly*. Does being bored then mean grasping the fact that time is going slowly? Yet in boredom we do not ascertain anything, nor do we grasp anything, nor do we make time the object of investigation. On the contrary, in boredom we are *bound* precisely by—nothing. Not even by time, the slowness of time. And where does this slowness stem from? In what does this slowness consist? Is it because time is *too long*? Does this long while of boredom arise because we have four hours to wait? Can we not also be bored with something that perhaps only lasts a quarter of an hour? Perhaps we are not bored at all with a party that continues an entire night. Thus the length of time plays no role, not because time is too long, i.e., not because the measurable stretch of time which we objectively plot on our watch is too great—not because the progress of time is slow, but because it is *too* slow. We fight *against* the progress of time which is slowing down and is *too* slow for us, and which in boredom *holds us in limbo*. We fight against this peculiar vacillating and dragging of time. This vacillating and dragging of time contains whatever it is that is burdensome and paralyzing.

Yet ought time to pass more quickly, then? And if so, how quickly? What speed is time supposed to have? Does it have a speed at all? Time evidently takes its regular course, unfurls almost like the regular pulse of some unassailable monster: sixty seconds in every minute, and sixty minutes in every hour. Yet does time consist of hours, minutes, and seconds? Or are these not merely measures in which *we* entrap it, something we do because, as inhabitants of the earth, we move upon this planet in a particular relation to the sun? Do we need these measures and a commensurate regularity only for the purpose of measuring time? Can we say how quickly or slowly time itself passes, whether it has a speed at all and whether it allows this speed to change? Does time really take an unwavering, regular course? Or is it not rather of a highly

temperamental essence? Are there not hours that are like a moment? Are there not minutes that are like an eternity? Does it merely seem like this to us, or is time really sometimes short, sometimes long, sometimes fleeting, sometimes crawling and never regular? Is it really like this? Or is time really as shown by our watches, as it presses upon us daily and hourly? Or are we here merely deceived, persuaded of something by a measuring instrument that is perhaps indispensable? Are we merely persuaded of this calculable time in the face of which that time which cannot be calculated sinks to the level of an illusion and is merely subjective, as our banal cleverness is able to tell us? Precisely that time which, in our supreme bliss, is as fleeting as the glance of some profound eye, yet in our deepest need is as burdening and inert as a slow-moving, almost stagnant river—this very time is merely subjective and not properly real! What is reality here, and where does illusion begin? Or may we not ask in this way at all? With the apparently trivial observation that in boredom, time passes too slowly, we see that we have already entered the greatest obscurity and difficulty.

However things may stand in this respect, from the perspective of passing the time and according to its ownmost intention we can say that what is at issue in passing the time is *wanting to overcome the vacillation of time*. To be slow and to drag are not the same thing; that which drags is indeed necessarily slow in a certain sense—but not everything that is slow necessarily drags. The time that drags must be coerced into passing more quickly, so that its being paralysed does not paralyse us, so that the boredom disappears. The result for our *guiding problem* of what *becoming bored* properly is then reads: *Becoming bored is a peculiar being affected in a paralysing way by time as it drags and by time in general, a being affected which oppresses us in its own way. Thus we must further inquire as to how time oppresses us here in becoming bored. Time—yet we saw precisely in our attempt to grasp the slowness, the dragging of time, that time has become altogether enigmatic for us. Not only is our relationship to time in our becoming bored now obscure, but time itself is obscure. What can this mean: becoming bored is a being affected by time, by time as it drags, and in a paralysing way? Is it only in boredom that we are affected by time? Are we not constantly bound to time, pressed and oppressed by time, even when we believe and say that our time is entirely at our own disposal?*

This being affected by time in boredom, however, is evidently a *peculiar impressing* [Andrängen] *of the power of that time* to which we are bound. This entails that time can oppress us or leave us in peace, sometimes in this way, sometimes in that. This is ultimately bound up with its own capacity for transformation. *Becoming bored* and *boredom* in general are then evidently entirely *rooted in this enigmatic essence of time*. What is more—if boredom is an attunement, then time and the way in which it is as time, i.e., the way in which it *temporalizes itself*, plays a peculiar part in Da-sein's being attuned in general.

We are increasingly tempted to pose the whole problem of boredom simply in terms of the problem of time. And yet we ought not to give in to this temptation, even if it were to simplify our investigation to a certain extent. We must stick with boredom, so that *precisely through its essence we may take a look into the concealed essence of time* and thereby into the connection between the two.

c) Being held in limbo by time as it drags.

Accordingly, we shall consider anew the way the question is posed and our orientation in questioning. We shall attempt *to let becoming bored be seen from the perspective of passing the time, as that to which the latter is opposed*. Passing the time is a way of taking action against the dragging of time that oppresses us. Yet it is equally clear that in driving time on so that it passes by, we are not *directed toward time*. In passing the time we are not specifically occupied with time. Nor do we see how such a thing could be possible at all. We do not, after all, stare at the seconds flowing by, in order to drive them on. On the contrary, even though we often look at the clock, we look away again just as quickly. Toward what? Toward nothing in particular. Yet how so? We do not look at anything in particular because nothing in particular offers itself to us. Indeed the inherent predicament of becoming bored is precisely that we cannot find anything in particular. We indeed look for something. Yet we are looking for something that will divert our attention. Divert it from what? From being oppressed by time as it drags. We are seeking to pass the time, i.e., precisely not to be occupied with time, not to dwell upon time or to ponder it. Passing the time: strangely, this means an occupation that diverts our attention away from time as it drags and from its oppressing us.

What is this oppression? It is not time assailing us, not some sudden onslaught of time, but a *specific kind of oppressing*: the dragging of time. Yet surely something that drags precisely holds back, keeps itself distant, and does not oppress. How can it oppress? This is why we speak of a specific kind of oppressing. We also came across it on our first approach. We already know this oppression. We found it in that very thing which is boring, that which bores us: *that which holds us in limbo*. Yet how is a holding in limbo supposed to be oppressive? When we are held in limbo we have, after all, some leeway to move; something opens before us; there is nothing there at all that could oppress us. Yet this is precisely what is at issue: in becoming bored we are held **in** limbo, and indeed by time as it drags. To where are we held, then? To where does time hold us, and what is it that we dwell upon? We find the answer to this question if we pay attention to *where* we wish to arrive through passing the time. For passing the time betrays to us where we want to get away from, and this is precisely that place to which time in its slowness holds us. In passing

the time we seek something to occupy us, something we can dwell upon. What happens when we do so? Does time pass more quickly whenever we have found such a thing? To what extent does it then pass more quickly? Do we observe the course of time in the occupation that we have found in order to pass the time? Do we ascertain that it is passing more quickly? No. What is characteristic is that we do not pay attention to time at all. Time goes more quickly because its dragging is no longer there. Its dragging has disappeared, because in a certain way we forget time altogether. It is now impossible for time to tarry [*verweilen*] for too long, because it cannot tarry at all. Where have we passed time away to when we have forgotten it? We do not as yet have an answer to this. Why can we not find an answer to this question? We have not said *which* time we are passing here. We are not simply passing time in general. We saw, furthermore, that within certain limits it remains irrelevant how great the stretch of time is. Yet it is after all a *particular* time which is at issue, namely this interval of time until the train departs. *Being held in limbo* does not happen over any course of time whatsoever, but over this particular interval of time that drags between our arrival and the departure of the train. It holds us, and in doing so holds us up. But *to where* does it hold us, and *alongside what* does it hold us up? After all, it does not bind us to itself. We are held by factual time and yet do not pay attention to it. Could we not be happy that it ‘holds us up’? After all, what we are looking for is precisely something with which to occupy ourselves.

Earlier we arrived at the insight that both *boredom—whiling* [*Weilen*], *enduring, dragging*—as well as our associated *passing the time*, have to do with *time*. Accordingly we have now intentionally pursued the phenomenon of passing the time in *that* direction which lets us see how we thereby attempt to subvert time, i.e., to eliminate time as it *drags* over an interval of time that oppresses us. The dragging of time proved to be that which holds us in limbo. Accordingly, becoming bored is a *being held in limbo by time as it drags over an interval of time*. We do not yet in any way see through what is really happening here, however, how time in general relates to us such that, as dragging, it can hold us in limbo in such a way; nor how time in general stands at our command, such that we can try to speed up or eliminate its dragging. For what is at issue is evidently not our mere assessment of time, which would be purely subjective.

The question now is whether, via an increasingly penetrating interpretation of being held in limbo by time as it drags, we can catch sight of the full essential import of this particular form of boredom. In so doing, and with regard to what we have said in general about time, we shall leave entirely open the extent to which we succeed in solving this real and strange enigma concerning time, its speed, and suchlike, and shall remain for now within this particular form of boredom: becoming bored by. . . . We shall try to

clarify *how* this dragging of time *holds us in limbo*, and how this becoming bored is thereby made possible.

d) Being left empty by the refusal of things, and an insight into its possible connection with being held in limbo by time as it drags.

Just as we will hardly dispute altogether that this being held in limbo belongs to becoming bored, we will certainly insist that being held in limbo does not alone constitute boredom. For in passing the time we simultaneously seek to occupy ourselves with something. Yet how do we go about this? Is it by forcing ourselves to go to work despite there being a pleasant snowfall on the hills? No, in passing the time we seek for something to occupy us; though certainly not as though we were busy at a cottage where someone is chopping wood and another is fetching the milk, and we, in order to help out, then go and draw some water. In the activity we have sought in passing the time we are not interested in what occupies us, nor even whether anything comes of it and we thereby help others. We are interested neither in the object nor in the result of the activity, but in *being occupied as such* and in this alone. We are seeking to be occupied in any way. Why? Merely so as not to fall into this *being left empty* that is emerging in boredom. Is it therefore *being left empty* that we wish to escape from, rather than being held in limbo? Is *being left empty* then what is essential in boredom? It is something other than being held in limbo, and yet like the latter belongs to becoming bored.

Yet what is this being left empty? *What* is left empty here? And in what sense? We seek to eliminate being left empty by being occupied with something. Such being occupied with something is a specific manner and way in which, for example, we *deal* with things. There are various possibilities here: We can let things sit there as they are or work on them, we can set them out ready or write with them. Being occupied gives our dealings with things a certain manifoldness, direction, fullness. But not only that: we are also *taken* [hingenommen] by things, if not altogether *lost* in them, and often even *captivated* [benommen] by them. Our activities and exploits *become immersed* [aufgehen] *in something*. When we get hold of something that occupies us, we scarcely have time for anything else. We are entirely tied up with it, and in such a way that even the very time that we use for it and waste on it is no longer there at all, and all that is at hand is whatever satisfies us. *Being left empty* and *being satisfied* are associated with our *dealings* with things. Being left empty is eliminated when things are at hand, at our disposal.

Yet let us recall the boring situation which we depicted as an example. Are there not things at hand here, for instance: the station, the timetable, the rural street, the trees and indeed the whole area, which we know very little about and where we can ascertain things for days on end? All the same we are bored,

i.e., we are left empty. Accordingly, this being left empty cannot mean that in boredom we are transformed in such a way that all things disappear entirely, as it were, so that nothing remains before us or around us. That is altogether impossible. Insofar as we indeed exist factually, insofar as we *are there*, we are transposed into the midst of other beings. These things that are, after all, are at hand for us at all times—in whatever scope and with whatever transparency. That nothing is at hand any more and all things slip away from us—how can this happen? Yet perhaps there are ways of our Dasein in which such a thing is possible. However this is not the case in boredom. It cannot be the case. For how can we become bored by *something*, i.e., be left empty by *something*, if nothing at all is at hand? What is boring, after all, must precisely be at hand in order to bore us, i.e., to leave us empty. In coming to be left empty, things are not carried away from us or annihilated. Indeed, is there anyone who could see to such a thing? Certainly not we ourselves, we who in boredom and out of pure boredom are precisely seeking to be occupied. Although the things are at hand, they leave us empty. We must even say that they leave us empty precisely because they are at hand.

And yet—are we bored because a railway station with timetables is present here, and a road running along in front of it with rows of trees on either side? Evidently not, for if that were the case we would necessarily constantly become bored everywhere, since we constantly encounter things everywhere. Thus it is not because these things are at hand in general, but because they are precisely at hand *in such and such a way* that they bore us. How so? What is it about them? After all, they do nothing at all to us, they *leave us completely in peace*. Certainly—and this is precisely the reason why they bore us.

Yet what else can these things do than to peacefully satisfy that which they themselves are? Nor do we demand anything else of them, neither in boredom nor otherwise. Can the trees outside that we enumerate in our boredom do anything other than stand alongside the street and grow toward the sky? *What* is it that suddenly *happens*, then, so that all these things bore us, so that a boredom befalls us *from out of them*? We cannot now say in turn that they bore us because they leave us empty. Rather the question is: *What does it mean to leave empty, to come to be left empty?* To leave empty does not at all mean: to be absent, not to be present at hand; rather things must be at hand in order to leave us empty. Does it mean being present at hand, then? But being present at hand does not leave us empty either. What is important is not what is at hand in general, but these specific things that are at hand. Which ones? Those things that belong to the environing world of the *boring situation* that we depicted. A boring thing is one which belongs to a boring situation. What an exemplary explanation! We said that things leave us in peace, and this leaving us in peace is a leaving us empty that proceeds from things. Thus, becoming bored is this being left in peace. Yet when we are left in peace by something,

do we then also automatically become bored by it? Is it not the other way around, that someone who does not leave us in peace at all and is constantly running after us ultimately becomes boring and grows wearisome for us? Things leave us in peace, do not disturb us. Yet they do not help us either, they do not take our comportment upon themselves. They *abandon us to ourselves*. It is because they have nothing to offer that they leave us empty. To leave empty means to be something at hand that *offers nothing*. Being left empty means to be offered nothing by what is at hand.

Yet what can the miserable and deserted railway station offer us, what more can it offer us than its function as this public building—to give us access to tickets and provide shelter and a place to wait? And this is precisely what it offers. Indeed, this is precisely what we demand of it also, since we are in the middle of a journey or trip. That is the sole legitimate use that we can make of it—the claim that it expects of us. How can we say that it offers nothing? How can it leave us empty, i.e., bore us here? Or does the station bore us precisely because it offers us what we expect of it, and yet in so doing fails to offer it, so that we take refuge in the street? What do we expect of the station? That it be a station in general? No—but rather that we can use it as a station, i.e., that at this station we can immediately enter the train and depart as quickly as possible. It is a proper station precisely whenever it does not force us to wait. The station at hand refuses itself to us as a station and leaves us empty because the train that belongs to it has not yet arrived, so that there is such a long time that drags on until the arrival of the train. Thus it does not yet offer us what it properly ought to. To do so, however, it must be precisely a railway station and as such be at hand, in order to allow us to wait. Why else does it have a waiting room?

And yet—it may be objected—the fact that the station does not offer this immediate possibility of our departing without a wait, the fact that it refuses itself to us in this way is not, after all, the fault of the poor station, but simply our fault for arriving too early, because we were mistaken about the timetable. This may be correct. Yet we are not asking about what causes or is responsible for boredom. We are asking what the essence of that which bores us as such, or the essence of becoming bored by something, consists in, quite irrespective of how such becoming bored may have been factually caused in each case. Though we may be to blame for arriving too early, and though the state railway may be responsible for the fact that there are so few trains running, this does not tell us anything about what it means to say that the station bores us. We are merely asking what it is about it as something boring which makes it bore us. We are not asking about the causes from which precisely this boredom has arisen.

We have now indeed received an answer to our question, and done so via a closer characterization of being left empty. What is at hand (the station) does

not offer that which we expect of it in the particular situation. The station accordingly does not fulfil our expectations of it. We say that it disappoints us. Becoming disappointed, however, does not mean becoming bored. This offering nothing that leaves us empty is not our being disappointed. Where we become disappointed we have nothing more to seek and we withdraw. But here we precisely stay; not only that, but we are *held in limbo*. And yet it is not only the station that now refuses itself, but first and foremost its *surroundings*, and together with these surroundings *as a whole* the station now manifests itself entirely as this station which refuses itself.

We do not yet see clearly what is really happening here when the boring station also brings its surroundings to the point of boring us. The result in any case is that leaving empty as refusal indeed presupposes something *at hand*, but what is at hand must precisely be something *particular* and something *expected* in a particular situation, so that we *can come to be left empty by something*, in the sense of *becoming bored by*. . . .

The station in itself is not boring. Yet what does this mean: in itself? Is there then nothing boring in itself? Or are there not indeed things which are boring in themselves, to which precisely stations belong? Is not every station boring, even though trains constantly arrive and depart and crowds of people throng? Perhaps it is not only all stations that are boring for us. Perhaps, even though trains constantly enter and leave, bringing people with them, there is still a peculiar sense of something more in these stations which anyone who passes tenement blocks in large cities has experienced. One could say that, while it may be like this for us, some peasant from the Black Forest will take enormous pleasure in it, and therefore boredom is a matter of taste. Whether we can reduce it to taste is another question. Certainly—here once more we are faced with something we cannot penetrate and which at first leads beyond our problem. Yet precisely in this interpretation of being left empty we inevitably discovered that being left empty in itself can never make boredom comprehensible. Yet unexpectedly this points us back to the first moment we mentioned. This can now initially be expressed concretely in the following way: the fact that the station leaves us empty, its refusal, is somehow connected with the fact that time drags. Ultimately the dragging, oppressive time that holds us in limbo is what permits the station not to offer what it ought to.

We have achieved what we were seeking: [1.] an elucidation of coming to be left empty by things; [2.] an insight into the possible connection of this second characteristic of boredom with the first, namely being held in limbo by time as it drags.

Over and above this, the only thing we can see is that there is some connection here. Perhaps it has also become clear that these two moments are not simply pieced together, but are structurally interwoven. What is more: it looks in our case as though even the first moment, being held in limbo, were the all-embracing

and primarily determinative one. For the time that drags and holds us in limbo does not yet let the station come into its own. The station cannot properly be what it is supposed to be for us as long as the moment of the train's arrival is not there. The dragging of time as it were refuses the station the possibility of offering us anything. It forces it to leave us empty. The station refuses *itself*, because time refuses *it* something. It excludes it, and yet cannot eliminate it, with the result that now, precisely in this not yet offering anything, this self-refusal, in the fact that it lets us wait—precisely in this way the station becomes more obtrusive, more boring in its leaving us empty.

How much time is capable of here! It has power over railway stations and can bring it about that stations bore us. On the other hand it becomes apparent that time of itself, the mere course of time, does not bore us. Rather becoming bored is this *essential being held in limbo in coming to be left empty*. Becoming bored is thus the fact that particular things, in what they offer us or do not offer us and in the way that they do so, are in each case *co-determined* by a *particular time*, in each case have *their* particular time. Things can leave us empty only along with that being held in limbo that proceeds from time. On the other hand, this time that drags can hold us in limbo only if things having the characterized possibility of refusal stand at the disposal of time, if they are bound to time. To put it crudely: what is at issue here in the possibility of boredom is an as yet obscure relation of the dragging along of time to the things that refuse themselves. But this means that what is at issue is the question of *what time itself is*, such that it can have this relation to things, and furthermore such that from out of such a relation something like boredom is possible as an *attunement* that attunes *us* through and through.

At the same time we saw from our concrete example that the station in itself does not bore us or leave us standing, but does so only insofar as the train is not yet there; that it is therefore lacking a particular connection with a particular point in time. To put it positively: In order for the station not to bore us in this particular form of boredom, it is necessary that we come across it in its *specific* time, which in a certain way is the ideal time of a railway station: namely before the train departs. If things evidently have *their* time in each specific case, and if we precisely come across things in *their* specific time, then perhaps boredom will fail to appear. Conversely: boredom is only possible at all because each thing, as we say, has *its* time. If each thing did not have *its* time, then there would be no boredom.

This thesis must now be clarified, not in the sense of a discussion of this proposition, but rather in a decisive and increasingly focussed continuation of our interpretation of these fundamental moments of becoming bored that are structurally interwoven in a peculiar way: being held in limbo and being left empty. Yet all this is to be taken neither as psychology, nor as an answer or solution.