

How Beautiful is the street!

Walter Bendix Schönflies Benjamin (15 July 1892 – 26 September 1940) was a German-Jewish intellectual, who functioned variously as a literary critic, philosopher, sociologist, translator, radio broadcaster and essayist.

Use the Feuilleton to guide you from the statue of Christopher Columbus to the Jardines de Walter Benjamin, where you will see some sculptures by the artist JD Holden (1965, Switzerland), made as a temporary memorial on the eve of Benjamin's death in Port Bou, Spain.

In 1839 it was considered elegant to take a tortoise out walking. This gives us an idea of the tempo of Flanerie in the arcades. [M3,8]

You are passing through a great city that has grown old in civilisation and your eyes are drawn upward, for in the public squares stand motionless figures, repeating to you the solemn legends of Glory, most heedless of men, the most unhappy or the vilest, a beggar or a banker; War, Science and Martyrdom. Some are pointing to the sky to which they aspired, others to the earth, from which they sprang. They brandish, or they contemplate, what was the passion of their life: a tool, a sword, a book, a torch. Even if you are the most heedless of men, this bronze phantom takes possession of you for a few minutes, and commands you, in the name of the past, to think of things which are not of the earth. Such is the divine role of sculpture. [J34,3]

Fees for feuilletons went as high as two francs per line. Authors would often write as much dialogue as possible so as to benefit from the blank spaces in the lines. [U9,3]

An intoxication comes over the man who walks long and aimlessly through the streets. [M1,3]

The best way, while dreaming, to catch the afternoon in the net of the evening is to make plans. The flaneur is planning. [M3a,2]

The Press brings into play an overabundance of information, which can be all the more provocative the more it is exempt from any use. [M16a,1]

On the feuilleton: It was a matter of injecting experience - as it were, intravenously - with the poison of sensation; that is to say, highlighting within the ordinary experience the character of immediate experience. To this end, the experience of the big-city dweller presented itself. The feuilletonist turns this to account. He renders the city strange to its inhabitants. [m3,a2]

The student "never stops learning"; the gambler "never has enough"; for the flaneur, "there is always something more to see." [m5,1]

"Man as civilised being, as intellectual nomad, is again wholly microcosmic, wholly homeless, as free intellectually as hunter and herdsman were free sensually." [m5,6]

Rest assured that when Victor Hugo saw a beggar on the road, he saw him for what he is, for what he really is in reality: the ancient mendicant, the ancient friar that forbade ownership of property, subsisting mostly on alms, on the ancient road. [C5,1]

As long as there is still one beggar around, there will still be myth. [K6,4]