From drifting to floating -An introduction to the Practice of flanerie

"The space winks at the flâneur: What do you think may have gone on here?" (Benjamin 1999: 418 f.)

We will have a playful look at text fragments of the chapter "M [The Flâneur]" by Walter Benjamin. Thereby we will talk about the over 100-year-old practice and how it could be possible to bring it into today's urban spaces from a feminist and postcolonial perspective. Afterwards, we will try out what happens when we drift from Floating university to the streets and back by ourselves. Finally, we discuss reflections, topics and urgent questions. The workshop will be held in English, or if there are only German speakers in German.

By Mirjana Mitrovic



The final Symposium of Learnscapes
Floating University Berlin
22 September 2022

Association & Collage

zeitlos free(dom) with no roots langsam peace gendered careless in the moment unattached easy-going anonymität

"It is wonderf at in Paris it mally wan nec hro countryside sions, for balls and concerts, although, since its doors are open in summer too, it Karl Gutzkow ozig, fe aus Pari 2), vol. 1, p. The hardly deserves the name of winter garden." When the sphere of planning cre-Paris D. ares such entanglements of closed room and airy nature, then it serves in this way that perhaps on as we would imagine them to do in one of those "mechanical pictures" which in the nineteenth century (and of course earlier, too) enjoyed great popularity, properly sacred ground of flanerie. In this passage, at any rate, it would be in the foreground a shepherd playing on a pipe, by his side two presented as such for the first time since Baudelaire (whose work does not yet children sway n time to the music, further back a pair of hunters in pursuit of portray the areades, though they were so numerous in his day). " lion, and " d a train crossing over a trestle bridge. var. y LE M So the flaneur goes for a walk in his room: "When Johannes sometimes asked for es auton Paris, 1928), vol. 1, p. 330. [M2,4] permission to go out, it was usually denied him. But on occasion his father reet as domestic rior. ige du Pont-Neuf (between the proposed, as a substitute, that they walk up and down the room hand in hand, aud a ie Ri s resemble closets," Nouveaux This seemed at first a poor substitute, but in fact . . . something quite novel Paris Obs tions sur les mœurs et usages des Parisiens au awaited him. The proposal was accepted, and it was left entirely to Johannes to With cad Tease ffic on the decide where they should go. Off they went, then, right out the front entrance, ets, it was only the macadamization dway out to a neighboring estate or to the seashore, or simply through the streets, ade me end to have a conversation on the someon to trace all physical and moral phenomena back to the law of universal under the influence of the revolutionizing natural laws of many gurgent are sparsed and sparsed of a café without shouting in the other person's ear. his father managed everything. floor of his room, his father told ns; passing wagons made a din arise a current of natural philosophy which saw in the med proof of just such a mechanism of social life and of event spinler, Der Saint-Simonismus (Zürich, 1926), p. 29. the comfits in the pastry shop The flancus and the masses: here bandelsure's we met with an eloquent example of the surface was a sign and sign and the masses of anything were at work repairing. Saint-Honore, we met with an eloquent example of the surface was a sign and the masses the farm were and the masses of any sign of Kierkegaard, cited in Eduard comets in pattle formation, awaiting the signal for departure to through space?" Le Livre des cent-et-un, vol. 10, p. 57. Compare tion of the city into an astral world with Grandville's Un Autre Mo the passerby's dream? The national character of the Italians may also with every cobblestone, every shop sign, every step, and every gatefull of temples, enclosed squares, national sturnes, to be able to enter open Gustave Claudin is supposed to have said: "On the day when a filet ceases to be a e courtyards the entry filet and becomes a 'chateaubriand,' when a mutton stew is called an 'Irish stew,' was the drawing room. or when the waiter cries out, 'Moniteur, clock!' to indicate that this newspaper was e arcade as the furnis requested by the customer sitting under the clock-on that day, Paris will have [M3a,4] been truly dethroned!" Jules Claretie, La Vie à Paris 1896 (Paris, 1897), p. 100. [M3:9] he end, to seek "There—on the Avenue des Champs-Elysées—it has stood since 1845: the her as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, Jardin d'Hiver, a colossal greenhouse with a great many rooms for social occatheir only agreement is the tacit one-that each keep to his own side of the

So geht der Flaneur im Zimmer spazieren:

Wenn wir sagen, ein Gesicht sei dem andern ähnlich, so heißt das, gewisse Züge dieses zweiten Gesichts erscheinen uns in dem ersten. ohne daß das erste aufhört zu sein, was es war. Die Möglichkeiten derart in Erscheinung zu treten sind aber keinem Kriterium unterworfen und daher unbegrenzt. Die Kategorie der Ähnlichkeit, d(ie) für das wache Bewußtsein nur eine sehr eingeschränkte Bedeutung hat, bekommt in der Welt des Haschisch eine uneingeschränkte. In ihr ist nämlich alles: Gesicht, hat alles den Grad von leibhafter Präsenz, der es erlaubt, in ihm wie in einem Gesicht nach erscheinenden Zügen zu fahnden. Selbst ein Satz bekommt unter diesen Umständen ein Gesicht (ganz zu schweigen vom einzelnen Wort) und dieses Gesicht sieht dem des ihm entgegengesetzten Satzes ähnlich. Dadurch weist jede Wahrheit evident auf ihr Gegenteil hin und aus diesem Sachverhalt erklärt sich der Zweifel. Die Wahrheit wird ein Lebendiges, sie lebt nur in dem Rhythmus, in dem Satz und Gegensatz sich verschieben um sich zu denken.

[M 1 a, 1]

»Wenn Johannes zuweilen um die Erlaubnis ausgehen zu dürfen bat, wurde es ihm meistens abgeschlagen; hingegen schlug ihm der Vater als Ersatz zuweilen vor, an seiner Hand auf dem Fußboder auf und ab zu spazieren. Beim ersten Hinsehen war dies ein r Ersatz, und n. Der Vorschlag doch ... etwas ganz anderes war darin verb and jiharlas wurde angenommen, und es wurde Johanbestimmen, wo sie hingehen wollten. Lan er mgen oder Einfahrt, zu einem naheliegenden Lustschl us zur Strande, oder auf und ab in den Straßen, wie annes es wollte; denn der Vater vermochte alles. Wäh auf dem d sie Fußboden auf und ab gingen, erzählte der Var lles, v sie saher en-an en vorb sie grüßten die Vorübergehenden, Wagen lät und übertönten des Vaters Stimme; die Fri chenfra e der waren einladender denn je ...«

maal mi Denn so wie die flanerie Paris durchaus in ein Interieur zu wandeln vermag, eine

Wohnung, deren Gemächer die Quartiers sind und in der sie nicht wieder deutlich durch Schwellen geschieden sind als eigentliche Zimmer, so kann auch wiederum die Stadt vor dem Spaziergänger schwellenlos wie eine Landschaft in der Runde sich auftun. [M 3, 2]

Im Asphalt,

über den er hingeht, wecken seine Schritte eine erstaunliche Resonanz. Das Gaslicht, das auf die Fliesen herunterstrahlt, wirft ein zweideutiges Licht auf diesen doppelten Boden.



[The Flaneur]

A landscape haunts, intense as opium.

-Mallarmé ("Autrefois, en marge d'un Baudelaire," in Disagnitions)

To read what was never written.

And I travel in order to get to know my geography.

-A madman, in Marcel Réja, L'Art chez les fois (Paris, 1907), p. 131

All that can be found anywhere can be found in Paris.

-Victor Hugo, Les Misérables, in Hugo, Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1881), novels, vol. 7, p. 30, from the chapter "Ecce Paris, Ecce

> The "colportage phenomenon of space" is the flaneur's basic experience. Inasmuch as this phenomenon also-from another angle-shows itself in the midnineteenth-century interior, it may not be amiss to suppose that the heyday of flanerie occur in this same period. Thanks to this phenomenon, everything potentially taking place in this one single room is perceived simultaneously.

It was a pleasure to take the air in this immense oouton, where one could hear, like a magic chant, the sounds of the orchestra, and where one could see passing, like happy shadows, in the three surrounding flower-lined galleries, both the fun-loving girls who came to dance and the more serious girls

Parisians make the street an interior.

We kno of fla landsca enctrate the

The ide of the fl duri attitude of the e Second E

The idleness of the flancur is a demonstration against the division of labor.

In 1839 it was considered elegant to relitortoise out walking. This gives us an tempo of Haner 1 the an

The intoxicated interpeneuration of street and rece such as comes abo the Paris of the nineteenth ne experienc flaneur-has prophetic this interpeticu become sober realir

> Dialect flâncrie sundry true su seu viewed by all and and, on the coveral man who is an. Presuma "The N undis f the C ectic that oped in

The flaneur is the o. occult science of industrial auctuations. He is a spy for the capitalists, on assign-

[M2,8]



Paris la ville qui

makes the flever

rast to be The idle

meander-

flåneur.

[M13a,3]

teria

nd of Baudelaire's essay on Marceline Desbordes-Valmore emerges the who strolls through the garden landscape of her poetry: perspectives of the past and future open before him, "But these skies are emperature of the climate too warm. iere pure, areas veile , who r 3 (Marpas Charles b. omantique his COT is no longer Valmore").19 7 ow of cities; he becom

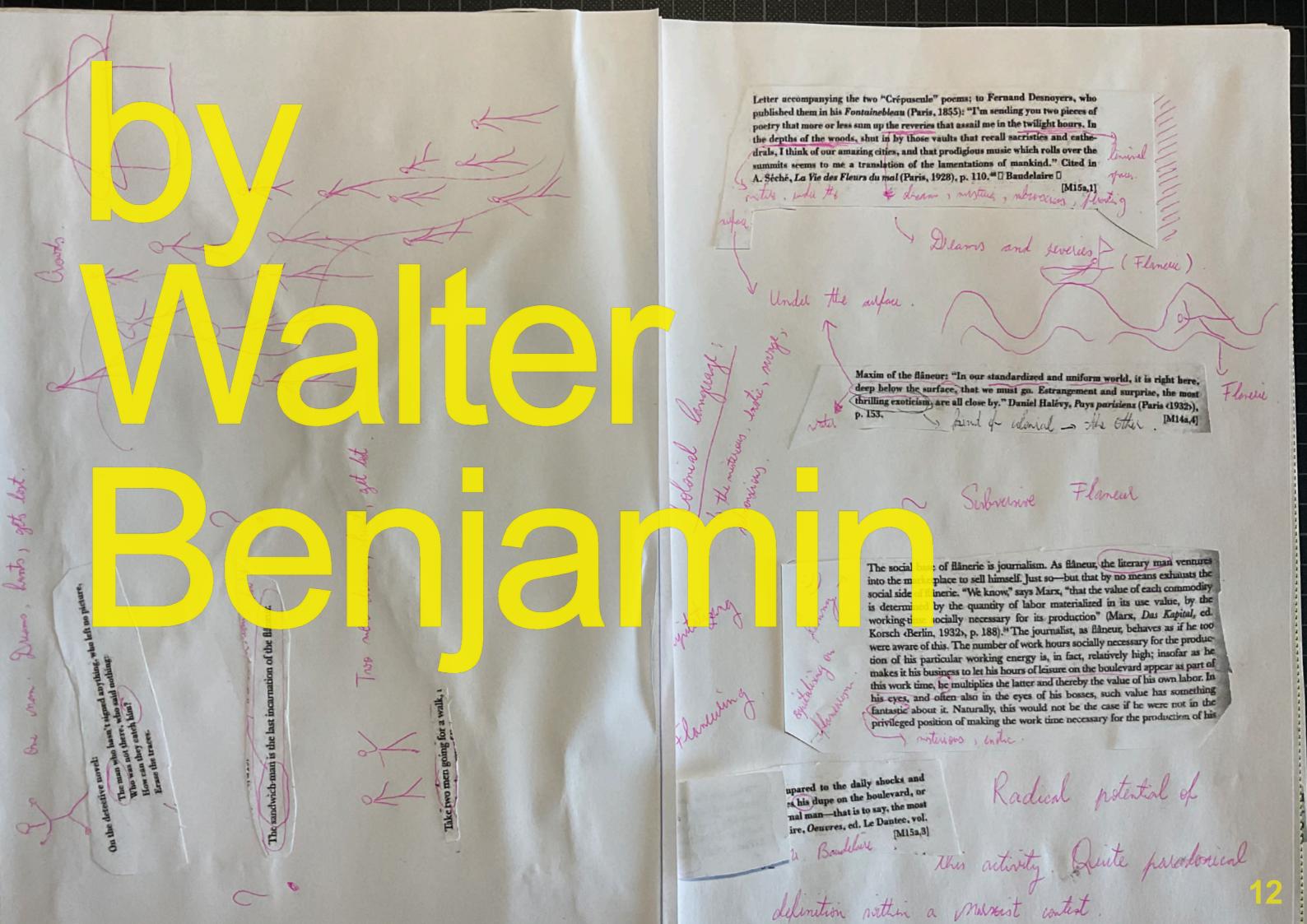
> s: "In May o zerland and trica 6 he ran ove. . He could not get on. He attributed this especially to his and Son at Lausant is loss of it, 'the absence of streets and numbers of love of London seem disposed to stagnate without crowds about them. figures. . . . M G. K. Chesterton, Dickens, translated from the English by Laurent and Martin-[M11a,1] Dupont (Paris, 1927), p. 125.11

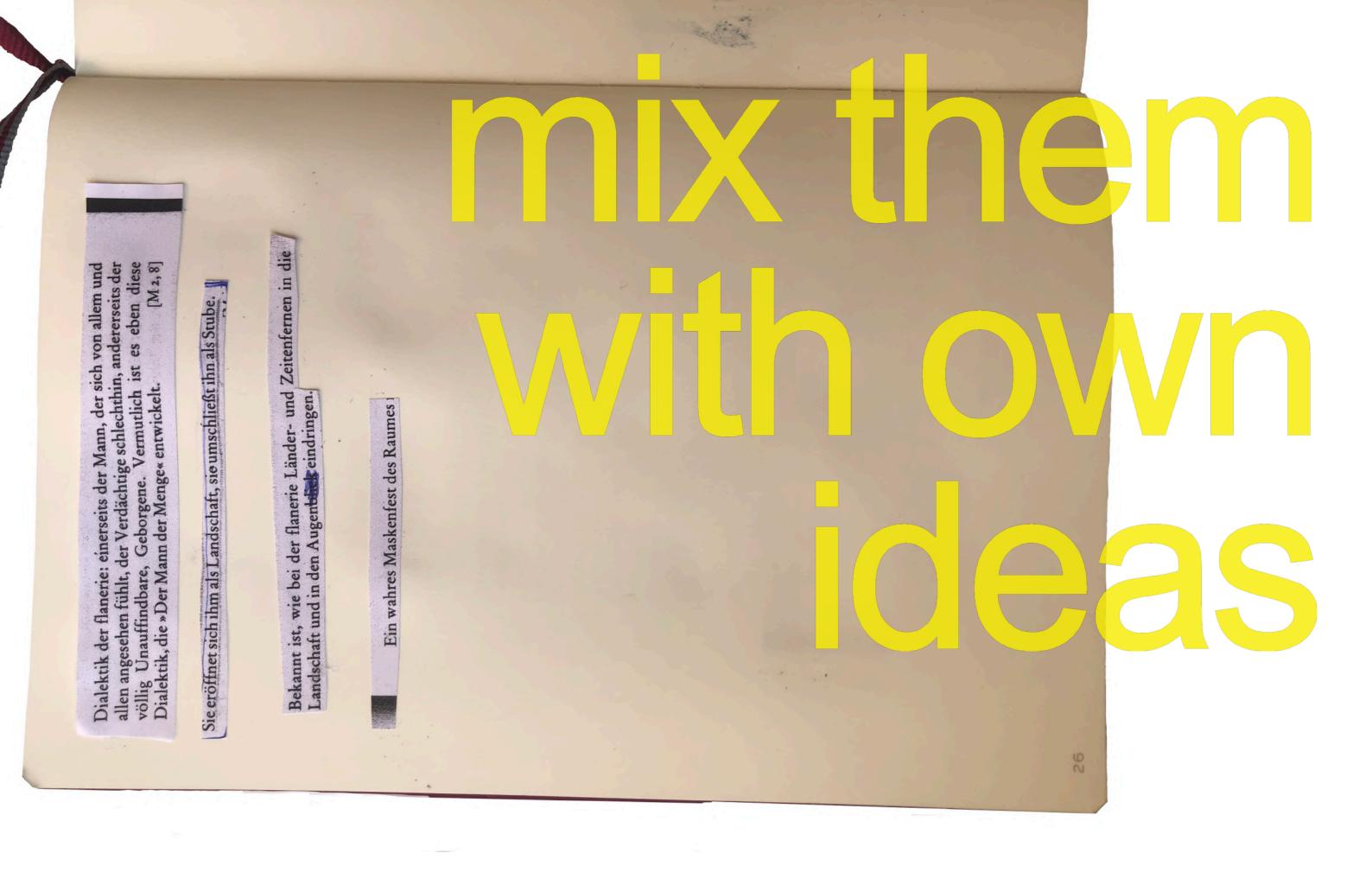
Kracauer writes that "the boulevardiers . . . eschewed nature . . . Nature was as Plutonic, as volcanic, as the people." S. Kracauer, Jacques Offenbach (Amsterdam. 1937), p. 107.34

> "For the perfect flaneur. . . . it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow. . . . To be away from home, yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the center of the world, yet to remain hidden from the world-such are a few of the slightest pleasures of those independent, passionate, impartial [!!] natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. The spectator is a prince who everywhere rejoices in his incognito. . . . The lover of universal life enters into the crowd as though it were an immense reservoir of electric energy. We might also liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness, which, with each one of its movements, represents the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life." Baudelaire, L'Art romantique (Paris), pp. 64-65 ("Le Peintre de la vie moderne"),42 [M14a,1]

"Do you recall a tableau . . . , created by the most powerful pen of our day, which is entitled 'The Man of the Crowd'? From behind the window of a cafe, a convalescent, contemplating the crowd with delight, mingles in thought with all the thoughts pulsating around him. Having just escaped from the shadow of death, he joyfully breathes in all the germs and emanations of life; having been on the point of forgetting everything, he now remembers and ardently wishes to remember everything. Finally, he rushes into the crowd in search of an unknown person whose face, glimpsed momentarily, fascinated him. Curiosity has become a fatal, irresistible passion." Baudelaire, L'Art romantique (Paris), p. 61 ("Le Peintre de la vie moderne").46

Flavent drawing from others (productive)





Walk Walk

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Thank you to all participants
Anouk, Fanny, Diana, Linda, Benjamin, Joy, Jan
& the floating university



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