

Isabel ARGÜELLES ROZADA

isabel.arguelles.tesis@gmail.com

University of Oviedo



Idle strolls:

The role of boredom in Western urban narratives

The flâneur is a prototypical character in various narratives set in urban spaces. Canonically defined as an idle wanderer of the great city that emerged following the population growth and infrastructural development of the nineteenth century, he has frequently been portrayed as a melancholic, genius artist—specifically through the notions of ennui and spleen, sometimes used interchangeably due to the powerful influence of Walter Benjamin's philosophical study (1927; 1936; 1938) on this urban figure. However, considerably less attention has been given to his relationship with boredom, despite the fact that this condition is experienced by the vast majority of these characters. This study will analyze the role of boredom in various narratives of flânerie, aiming to establish a typology of the different effects that boredom generates in the relationship between the wanderer and the city. While several examples of each typology will be mentioned, the focus will be on three specific varieties: the "mythologizing" boredom, as exemplified in *Nadja* by André Breton (1928); the "erotic-sexual" boredom, illustrated by *Nevsky Prospect* by Nikolai Gogol; and the "perverse" boredom, as seen in *Le Joueur généreux* by Charles Baudelaire (1868). Additionally, cases where these different varieties appear within a single narrative, such as Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* (2011), will also be considered. Finally, this study will provide a critical analysis of how these male protagonists perceive, experience, and manage boredom, with particular attention to the cultural imaginaries they reinforce and reproduce.