

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Oddities around the street that caught my eye

Maurice Amiel · Wednesday, June 12th, 2019

Oddity

It is something out of the ordinary, yet “possible” given a fertile imagination.

It could be an object or a place, or a behavior pattern that catches one’s eye, and begs explanation referring to one’s mental image of what is “ordinary” vs. “odd.”

Is she talking to herself or to him?

The feature image, showing the landscaped pedestrian access to a building entrance, presents an odd attempt at socializing between strangers. Given the attempt is made beyond the conventional distance for that behavior in a public place, it raises the question: *is she talking to herself or to him?*

Observation: the benches are not movable fixing the distance between the strangers and the overdressed standing lady is talking loudly. The seated fellow looks at her wondering how he should react with respect to that odd clothing and strange verbalization, across an unusual distance for meaningful social contact to be engaged and sustained.

The question remains unanswered and the perceived oddity remains so.

What is the man in the middle of the street doing?



Flag man at work

In the street, empty of traffic, but for the convoy of dump trucks lugging material for its repaving, the man in bright yellow gear directs allowed local traffic and detours forbidden through traffic with an orange flag he holds behind his back with his right arm ... *a flag-man on the job to answer the question.*

Observation: much like the photographer in Antonioni’s BLOW UP, but less dramatically, enlarging the photo allowed me to detect an amusing detail providing that sense of oddity: the man’s left arm seems to be holding up a NO PARKING orange sign that is actually located behind him.

Is the woman really sweeping the street?



Street sweeping

I knew from previous observations that my crescent shaped street had the spatial and social character of a small neighborhood, *but I never thought that it would extend to the degree of sweeping sidewalk and street edge fronting buildings.*

Observation: the lady concierge holds a clear plastic bag and uses a yellow dust gatherer to clean what I thought was paper debris left by parked cars occupants, taking civic cleanliness to a high yet odd degree of consciousness.

In fact, as I observed a similar behavior pattern by the concierge of a building across the street gathering plant debris, I realized that the woman was most likely doing the same i.e. cleaning up plant material after trimming the hedge delimiting the front yard of her building along the sidewalk ... a normal civically responsible behavior, quite pertinent to keep the neighborhood clean !

End words.

My mental image of ordinariness vs. oddity was referenced in all three cases ... with an unanswered question about what the standing up lady was really doing in the feature image ... ***was my curiosity, perhaps in all cases, the odd behavior?***

Credit all photographs to Maurice Amiel

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