

FLÂNERIE AND THE TRANSNATIONAL DETERRITORIALIZATION OF 9/11 IN TEJU COLE'S *OPEN CITY*

Beatrice Melodia Festa
Università di Verona / Università di Bari

ABSTRACT

Even though Teju Cole's debut novel, *Open City*, has often been analyzed within the spectrum of themes such as racialization and ethnicity, its relevance in the post-9/11 canon is worthy of attention. As such, this contribution seeks to examine the salience of September 11 and the role of the protagonist, as post-9/11 flâneur, considering how Cole's novel reframes the political and transnational consequences of 9/11 drawing from flânerie to offer a wider viewpoint on the national and interracial implications of the attacks. As the article aims to show, the narrative adopts flânerie as a strategy to ponder on the post-9/11 phenomenon memorializing the attacks in New York and consequently reterritorializing terrorism in Brussels to engage in an international perspective. Aligning with the contention that post-9/11 narratives have been concerned with revising the city as the origin of a discussion on the attacks, the essay aims to show how Cole leans toward a universalist view of the event so that the novel engages with the transcontinental impact of 9/11. This article's ultimate intent is to consider the flâneur as the thread that guides to a broader challenging discussion on the significance of 9/11 respatializing the consequences of the terrorist attacks beyond the United States.

Keywords: post-9/11 novel, flâneur, terrorism, memorialization, collective mourning.

Despite two decades went by, the significance of 9/11 as a cultural and national tragedy implies a global sense of trauma. Over time, however, more nuanced and socio-historical perspectives about 9/11 and its impact on America and the world have emerged. Even though literature and cinema have addressed the emotional and psychic consequences of the terrorist attacks, the gravity of that day was documented by the media whose coverage later evolved to inflict a devastating sense of loss deemed to become a historical legacy. Even after the immediate shock of 9/11 had decreased, concerns over terrorism remained at higher levels all over the world finding its fullest expression in the growing body of literature defined as the

“9/11 novel” or 9/11 fiction (Keeble 5).¹ In that sense, a crescent number of literary texts have represented the difficult and problematic aspects related to the tragedy.

Thus, one question emerges. If the enduring power of 9/11 as a global tragedy is clear, what does define a post-9/11 novel? The point has been raised by critics and scholars who, in the aftermath of what is known as “the post-9/11 moment,” faced the rousing examples of narratives illustrating the traumatic effects of the tragedy. Drawing in part from Arin Keeble’s seminal analysis, we can say that the corpus of novels classified as 9/11 fiction has cumulatively much to say about the implications and patterns of the wider and global response to 9/11 (5). That is to say that narratives considered part of the canon provide in-textual analyses of conflictedness, memorialization and traumatization, offering nuanced depictions of the cultural consequences of the attacks. In so doing, these novels internalize the effects of terrorism contextualizing the traumatic effects of the tragedy in post-9/11 scenarios. As Keeble further notes, “9/11 novels when examined as documents or artifacts, unravel conflictedness providing a reflection of the ways in which society (in particular American society) has negotiated this struggle over the last decade” (199).

If carefully read, the first literary success of Nigerian American writer Teju Cole, *Open City* (2011), can be labeled as a post-9/11 narrative or—as I aim to show— a novel that delves into the implications of September 11 from an interracial and borderless perspective. In *Open City*, Cole constructs a narrator who deals with the cumulative response to terrorism examining the transnational consequences of 9/11 through the practice of flânerie. Setting the novel in the landscape of post 9/11 literature, my aim is to show how Cole draws from the figure of the flâneur in New York to develop a universalist view of September 11, respatializing the question beyond America’s borders. My argument then runs in two directions; first outlining Cole’s ambitious revitalization of the flâneur as a cosmopolitan character, and ultimately showing how the narrative departs from flânerie to engage in a political and global consideration on the matter of 9/11 touching on themes such as anti-American ideology and Islamophobia.

I. RETERRITORIALIZING SEPTEMBER 11: THE CASE OF *OPEN CITY*

On the whole, *Open City*, centers on the figure of Julius, a psychiatrist of German Nigerian extraction,² who roams the streets of Manhattan as a voyeur of city life drifting through the United States and Europe as he struggles with concerns such as identity, history, memory, and ultimately race. The novel is set in the aftermath of 9/11 (autumn of 2006), and the narrator is an immigrant living in New York, born in Nigeria from a German mother and a Nigerian

¹ Scholarship on 9/11 fiction is extremely vast and diversified. Yet, for a preliminary discussion on 9/11 fiction, which for various reasons I cannot extend here, see Arin Keeble, *The 9/11 Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity: A Critical Study of an Evolving Canon* (2014).

² An autobiographical reference to Cole.

father. Given his presence in New York as an immigrant, a cosmopolitan and a foreigner, as he engages in compulsive walks through the city, the protagonist's itinerant experience becomes a cumulative investigation of complicated issues among which Black discrimination, slavery, the American past and ultimately the enduring post-9/11 malaise. As the plot unravels, the narrative remains caught in a set of diffused preoccupations that become one of the most enigmatic aspects of a seemingly simple plot. Throughout his nomadic journey, Julius undertakes a mental and physical flight across continents (from America to Europe and back), that culminates in a mental and psychological evasion that Cole illustrates through a smoothly elegant prose. In this scenario, the protagonist is alternatively imbued with the complex aspects of different areas of the cities he has visited, struggling to connect the stories of the people he encounters with his personal observation of the areas and its vicinities (Ameel 265). Breaking down linguistic and cultural barriers, the protagonist dialogues and observes a sheer variety of ethnicities by conversing with people who, like him, are citizens of the world.

While the cosmopolitan and transnational motifs are undoubtedly some of the central themes of the novel, an equally present but undoubtedly less obvious trope is related to 9/11 and the question of terrorism examined from a multi-ethnic perspective. With remarkable consistency, the novel provides a dualistic attitude on September 11 respectively illustrated in the first and second section of the book. Considering its date of publication and the context in which the novel is set, 9/11 occupies a relevant role within the plot. Nevertheless, the post-9/11 malaise in New York is first depicted as Julius walks and stops at the site of Ground Zero to recall the effects of the tragedy within the American context. In turn, halfway through the novel, the discussion of terrorism shifts the focus of narration from New York to Julius's encounter with Moroccan immigrants in Belgium and their conversation engages in Islamophobic sentiments that culminate in a provocative statement on anti-American radicalism.

By undertaking the examination of 9/11 as a prominent theme in *Open City*, the analysis of Julius as a flâneur proves its significance highlighting the novel's revival of the archetype to engage in a discussion on 9/11 that sets the question of terrorism outside the United States. To state the obvious, attention to terrorism in literature increased after the attacks at the World Trade Centre and, following Peter Herman, after September 11 terrorism has become a critical concept in literature that reshapes the way we read novels set in the post 9/11 landscape (2018).³

Susana Araujo suggests, "9/11 literature should not be read exclusively in relation to US culture but from a transnational perspective" (Araujo 1). Most of the works devoted to 9/11 have considered the event prominently through trauma theory focusing on it as an exclusively national American experience. Conversely, it can be argued that Cole addresses the tragedy through a transcontinental approach that considers the city a palimpsest of American remembrance and as the starting point to look at the event from a transoceanic perspective as the

³ For a preliminary discussion on terrorism and literature see Peter Herman's *Terrorism and Literature* (2018).

flâneur leaves New York re-examining the question in Brussels. In effect, Araujo further notes how it is well-known that “the terrorist attacks of 9/11 provided shocking images which the Western psyche had to come to terms with” (1). It indeed was a historical event whose meanings and repercussions were discussed and debated all over the world and that inevitably induced an outpouring of fiction associated with it (Araujo 10).

In face of this, Kristiaan Versluys remarked that, thanks also to the visual media that shaped a collective sense of mourning, novels with characters who are not American demonstrated how September 11 has been a global event (65). Yet, among post-9/11 narratives, novels have been concerned with revising and depicting the city as the site of collective grieving. In a combination between urbanism and the literary text, narratives have often portrayed New York as the place to initiate the discussion on terrorism and the site of remembrance in what has been mostly classified as the “New York novel.” As Araujo additionally clarifies, these texts navigate and re-think the “eventfulness” (Araujo 19) and the consequences of September 11 examining the attacks in light of historical, political, and social meanings, so that these novels reflect different trends and positions in relation to the urban memory of 9/11 (Araujo 24) from a multinational approach.⁴ Nevertheless, my classification of *Open City* as a post-9/11 novel holds the narrative within that canon of American literature that—instead of directly revolving around the event itself—retrieves the possibility of a wider approach.

II. JULIUS AS COSMOPOLITAN FLANEUR

Cole’s protagonist ventures alone into the streets of post-9/11 New York as a foreign character recalling the urban memory and the results of September 11. In this way, *Open City* invites the reader to (re)focus on the urban space to explore the tragedy expounding a collective response to the event. That said, the narratology of the novel suggests *Open City* does engage with the global impact of 9/11, for which Cole leans toward a universalist or particularistic view. Indeed, the novel’s criticism has recurrently considered the protagonist as a valid example of an early 21st century update of the figure of the flâneur (Vermeulen 2013; Hartwiger 2016; Faradji 2022).⁵ From the beginning, Cole’s protagonist frames his role as a contemporary flâneur,

I began to go on evening walks last fall ... These walks, a counterpoint to my busy days at the hospital, steadily lengthened, taking me farther and farther afield each time ... In this

⁴ Novels such as Moshin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Joseph O’Neill’s *Netherland* (2011) approached the tragedy beyond American boundaries illustrating the consequences of 9/11 beyond its traditional US orientation. For a broader discussion on the topic see Bohemer and Morton’s work *Terror and the Postcolonial* (2010).

⁵ Peter Vermeulen’s essay “Flights of Memory: Teju Cole’s *Open City* and the Limits of Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism” (2013) and Alexander Hartwiger’s analysis “The Postcolonial Flâneur: *Open City* and the Urban Palimpsest” (2016) provide a thorough investigation to contextualize the flâneur within the novel. A recent analysis can be found in Sara Faradji’s “A Walk to Forget: The Postcolonial Flâneur’s Negating Journey in Teju Cole’s *Open City*” (2022).

way, at the beginning of my final year of psychiatrist fellowship, New York City worked itself into my life at a walking pace. (Cole 3)

Over the centuries, interpretations of the “traditional” flâneur have taken increasingly different perspectives and scholarship has recurrently explored the ambiguity of this character. In his wide-ranging study, Keith Tester argues that “Definitions are at best difficult and at worst a contradiction of what the flâneur means. In himself, the flâneur is, in fact, a very obscure thing” (Tester 7).⁶ For some, this character is an emerging symbol of post-modernity; for others, the end of flânerie was marked by the erosion of collective experiences in public spaces, and other scholars consider flânerie as a private experience.

Charles Baudelaire poeticized the figure of the casual wanderer in his oeuvre, giving centrality to the character for its apt ability to establish an intimate relationship between the city and his psyche. Such view considers the reporter of street life as an artist, a nomad, who observes the urban landscape, merging with the crowd, looking at the metropolis from a detached position. Drawing from these general assumptions, Baudelaire poeticized the flâneur, seen as a spectator of city life witnessing the changes of the urban environment. With respect to this, in *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), Baudelaire maintained that “The flâneur is eventually looking for that quality which we call “modernity” (12). As such, the character soon became the reporter of the modern city.

However, to sketch a more exhaustive portrait of the flâneur it is also necessary to consider Walter Benjamin’s interpretation. Indeed, Benjamin’s consideration of the flâneur is inextricably bound to the development of the department store that turned the idle wanderer into the prototype of the consumer. Following this logic, Benjamin argued that the traditional wanderer was detached from the city he walked, so that his strolling lost its introspective quality and the flâneur ended up wandering, seeking a new identity reconstructed through the urban setting. More broadly, in the French tradition, the 19th-century flâneur walked through the Arcades of Paris perceiving the desolation of the city with a certain nostalgia. Overall, however, the flâneur acquires existential security from the spectacle of the teeming crowds, the visible public, or the metropolitan aspect of the city.

Despite its popularization and recurring literary presence, for its complexity this character remains generally elusive and quite ambiguous. In an attempt to sketch a general portrait of the American flâneur, Dana Brand contends that in any of its multiple interpretations, the flâneur becomes a model for the creative through his panoramic interest in the life of the metropolis (8).⁷ Urban observer par excellence, born within the harsh landscape of the modern

⁶ Among recent scholarship Tester’s analysis is considered as the most extensive on the Flâneur. Reiterating the origin of flânerie Tester offers a clear portrait of the Flâneur developing a debate that goes beyond Baudelaire and Benjamin shedding light on flânerie as a contemporary and extremely modern practice.

⁷ In a short essay, I cannot hope to deal with the whole discussion on flânerie for it is out of the scope of this analysis. For preliminary discussion on the flâneur see Tester (2015) and Brand (1992).

city, the flâneur embodies the desire for human freedom encompassed by the individual imprisoned by territorial, ideological and professional constraints. Transplanted by Parisian galleries in the suburbs and large metropolitan shopping centers, “The figure of the flâneur seems to bear witness to the sense of despair and fragmentation of modernity, exemplifying the desire to experience new relationships with places and their inhabitants⁸ (Nuvolati 2013, 3)⁹, a definition that can be easily applied to Cole’s protagonist.

To this end, if we associate the traditional traits of flânerie to the protagonist of *Open City*, Cole proposes a nonconforming version of the flâneur. Julius rambles through the streets of New York City as an atypical urban walker strolling through the urban landscape observing the metropolis with the perspective of an immigrant and a cosmopolitan yet engaging in more than mere observation. To this end, the second half of the book respatializes the flâneur in cities such as Brussel, where the protagonist is confronted with cosmopolitan characters and their views outside the United States. Yet, another interpretation which deserves mention for its classification of Cole’s protagonist as a flâneur, is that of Alexander Hartwiger. In his essay “The Postcolonial Flâneur: *Open City* and the Urban Palimpsest,” Hartwiger observes how another element that sets Cole’s flâneur apart from the traditional traits of the character, lies in its multicultural aspect. As said, Julius lives in New York as an immigrant from Nigeria travelling to Brussel combining a background which is both European, African and, to a certain extent, even American. However, as the trajectory of the novel testifies, “in the configuration of the postcolonial flâneur, postcolonial then comes to signify more than a historical moment, and is committed to interrogating the interrelated histories of violence, domination, inequality, and injustice” (Hartwiger 7). In an arguably evident way, throughout the novel Cole’s protagonist distances from the conventional traits of the flâneur. Such thinking implies that, as Cole’s flâneur takes readers along vivid walks through the post-9/11 city, the narrative moves away from the traditional parameters of flânerie.¹⁰

In her recent analysis, Sara Faradji explains that “Julius beguiles readers as he takes them on a journey through a familiar city on a renewed perspective. He particularly entices a global readership ... to develop a transnational relationship between the postcolonial writer and the global reader” (2–3). In so doing, Cole revisits the traditional themes of flânerie creating an urban walker who becomes a citizen of the world or rather, a “man of the crowd,” shaping a global impression charged with a cosmopolitan eye. Nevertheless, to classify Julius

⁸ Thanks to Baudelaire and Benjamin, the setting of the Flâneur is especially Paris. Although over time the act of strolling covered many other cities of the world, even today it can be said that the French capital is the most suitable place for this type of practice.

⁹ My translation as others by the same author unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁰ Here, I not mean to discuss the theme of racism which is one of the most evident of the novel, however, black discrimination is an ever-present concern that the novel addresses both in New York and in Europe. For instance, as Julius walks through Harlem he perceives the burden of discrimination and later he is severely injured by a group of teenagers.

as a multi-ethnic flâneur it is essential to consider that cosmopolitanism—a traditional theme of postcolonial literature—is often used as an effective narrative device to create empathy, acknowledging a shared sense of collectivism with readers. Indeed, Cole’s flâneur repeatedly shows compassion about racial violence, terrorism and historical tragedies (from 9/11 to the Holocaust).

In what is considered as one of the most seminal studies on the novel, Peter Vermeulen observes how Cole renovates the figure of the flâneur turning him into a fugueur. He claims that “Julius’s posture as a cosmopolitan flâneur is shadowed by the contours of more sinister and mostly forgotten nineteenth-century figure of restless mobility: the fugueur” (42), a dark counterpart of the flâneur. As the plot unfolds, Cole develops a “narrative fugue” (Sunden 1) that becomes one of the central concerns of the novel; Julius escapes from himself and from his past in Nigeria and moves across continents in search of his true self.¹¹ Through this process, the novel draws the reader into the flâneur’s psychological introspections provided by his itinerant rambles through the cities he visits, at the same time depicting the fugue of the protagonist who avoids his past dealing with unresolved emotional conflicts as he leaves New York to Brussels. Critics such as Philip Aghoghovwia echo this position additionally reading Cole’s flâneur as an elusive typology of interiority, considering the inner self as the principal modality by which the flâneur interacts with the cityscape (25). In this regard, Aghoghovwia asserts that

Julius provides the reader with peripatetic histories of New York. In the process, he creates an alternative image to the officialese through which the cosmopolitan city and the multi-layered lives of its citizen subjects, including Julius himself, are foregrounded. Julius’s activity of flânerie—of walking and thinking with the physical landscape of the city—is indexical of interiority in generative ways, especially because of the intersubjective consciousness that characterises this interior–exterior exchange (24).

If interiority enables Cole’s flâneur to narrate history and social consciousness, the function of wandering is to reflect on the palimpsest of the urban fabric of New York and, in the process of walking, to testify the historical and cultural changes that mark the current landscape of the city (27). In effect, from a rather broad angle, the journey of *Open City* can be interpreted as the choice of considering the flâneur¹² as the patient and attentive observer of the urban reality, which takes shape and transforms beneath his eyes inaugurating profound reflections of cultural, historical and social issues, across the urban grids. The protagonist explains,

¹¹ A theme I purposefully decide not to discuss here is the importance of the past and identity as key tropes of narration. In New York Julius is forced to recall his past in Nigeria, a past affected by the traumatic rape he committed and he is trying to negate through his walking experiences which have a therapeutic goal.

¹² However, it is important to make a difference between the Flâneur and the dandy. More than observing the dandy perhaps likes to be observed even through his snobbish attitude is rather controversial (Lanuzza 1999).

I wove my way through crowds of shops and workers, through road construction and the horns of taxicabs. Walking through busy parts of town meant I laid eyes on more people, hundreds more, thousands even ... (6)

In effect, these critical approaches have demonstrated how Cole flips the role of the flâneur from a 21st century perspective. Supporting this claim, Alexander Hartwiger has further observed how “Julius channels but also challenges the observant flâneur figure and in doing so inverts the point of view of the Parisian flâneur moving away from the totalizing colonial gaze to a more critical one that recognizes the complex flows of capital and people” (in Faradji 7–8). To a certain extent Cole “updates” the flâneur to the age of globalization, from New York City to Brussels, to elaborate a historical disquisition on the consequences of 9/11 as a universal event.

III. NEW YORK AS A SITE OF REMEMBRANCE

Edwin Turner observes that “*Open City* is not staged to be a 9/11 novel, nor does it dwell on that day. However, although 9/11 does not figure as prominent theme, Cole captures something of the post-9/11 zeitgeist, and at the same time situates it in historical context” (2012). For this reason, I am not examining the character’s post-9/11 trauma (Julius is an immigrant and he experiences New York as a foreigner who deals with a sense of personal trauma), but I am rather focusing on the flâneur’s ability to reconsider 9/11, first unravelled through the observation of New York’s urban landscape as the casual wanderer transcends America’s sense of grieving into a globally shared one.

To analyze this concern even further, at a critical moment in the narrative Julius begins an examination of the city’s despair toward 9/11 by his on-site observation of Ground Zero, “Just below the street level, I saw the sudden metallic green of a subway train hurtling by, exposed to the elements it crossed the work site, a livid vein drawn across the neck of 9/11” (Cole 57–58). When Julius remarks on the tragedy through his sheer scrutiny of the site, he further asserts that “Atrocity is nothing new, not to humans, not to animals” (Cole 58). Such a description suggests that through the flâneur’s self-reflexivity, Cole illustrates the concerns of America’s national despair related to a post-9/11 ideology identified by an immigrant who is able to internalize America’s sense of collective grief. In this way, the experience of the flâneur is both individual and collective as he manages to participate in America’s cumulative mourning. In her study of the city since 9/11, Hilary Thompson remarks that

If the attacks themselves appear designed to spread significance away from their particular place and time, one countermeasure that fiction with world citizenship in mind might take is to re-ground the event, to return to its epicentre. We see this, for example in Teju Cole’s *Open City* (2011), the peripatetic narrative of a Nigerian New Yorker who is inexplicably drawn to Ground Zero yet seems as given to psychological deflection as reflection. (174)

This statement reveals or perhaps confirms Cole's intention to address the tragedy as a "national allegory" (Thompson 174), suggesting that Julius's psychological rambles in New York might lead to the vulnerability of an exclusive national ethos. It is well-known that the attacks of September 11 brought a national sense of emotional preoccupation which from that day became America's most prominent concern and feelings such as fear and shock were widespread in the US.

Moreover, Edward Casey equally reminds us that the consideration of the World Trade Centre as a place of memory renders the site "a container of experiences that contribute so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. We might even say that memory is place-oriented or at least place-supported" (186–87). To read the novel in these terms also implies that Cole entails the mourning of September 11 through *flânerie* as a place-oriented experience leading to an interpretation of the post-9/11 sentiment. Benjamin Bird insightfully identifies the representation of grief in post-9/11 fiction asserting that "Post-9/11 texts frequently hint at the necessity for a process of mourning and self-examination" (561).

In the section of *Open City* set in New York Cole insists—recalling post-9/11 scenarios such as those of Foer and DeLillo—upon retrieving and examining national grief. As the protagonist admits looking at Ground Zero, "The site was a palimpsest, as was all the city, written, erased and rewritten" (59). In an interview, Teju Cole stated

I tried to focus on a particular aspect of this historical moment: the failure of mourning. This is something I haven't seen a great deal of in the writing around this disaster. And my view is that you write about disaster by writing around it. There's a reticence necessary when you consider the suffering of others. ("Palimpsest City")

This statement draws back to Derrida's observation on the symbolism of 9/11. For Jacques Derrida, "When you say September 11 you are inviting me to speak by recalling...The very impact of what is at least *felt*,¹³ in an apparently immediate way, to be an event that truly marks, that truly makes its mark a singular and, as they say here, unprecedented event" (85–86). As Derrida argues, the importance of what is "felt" is what gives meaning to the tragedy in a cumulative sense, so that the naming of 9/11 implies an immediate act of recollection and remembrance. If we align with Barry Schwartz for whom "Collective memory is a representation of the past embodied in commemorative symbolism and historical evidence" (471), we see how in *Open City* the *flâneur's* observation of Ground Zero as a place of recollection becomes a way to engage in the historical knowledge of 9/11 and inaugurates a discussion on terrorism and its effects in the United States.

In this sense, the novel provides the reader with an opportunity to access the tragedy through New York as a space of remembrance. Through his contemplative observation of the urban landscape Julius meditates on the consequences of the disaster from a national

¹³ Emphasis in the original.

perspective as he feels the void left by Ground Zero.¹⁴ In her appraisal of post-9/11 America, Judith Butler maintains that “What grief displays is the thrall in which our relations with others hold us, in ways we cannot always recount or explain” (23). “I nurtured stoicism in myself and a determination to handle grief in the right way” (228) says Cole’s flâneur. As Butler further notes, by referring to mourning specifically related to September 11 as one of the most tangible examples of fear and anxiety, we might also consider the experience of grieving as a condition of human vulnerability. However, as the body is the primary site of vulnerability in post-9/11 New York, Ground Zero embodies both national trauma and global vulnerability.¹⁵ Ingrid Gessner endorses this view when she explains that Ground Zero and the World Trade Centre hold a special status in the hierarchy of remembering as America’s tangible and collective expression of grief architecturally constructed to become a permanent site of memory (4).¹⁶

Aligning the ethics of this place with Benjamin’s vision of the flâneur rambling through the arcades of the city, we can consider Cole’s character as the post-9/11 flâneur who “is able to locate in the streets a ‘colportage of space,’ an unravelling distribution of social secrets paved over by time” (Zuber 270). As such, the construction of the character as an effective narrative thread offers an alternative way to (re)consider 9/11 by observing the city. David Zuber adds a response to this asserting that the narrative memorialization of 9/11 today typically deals with “before” and “after” scenarios at the site in New York City (270). To parse this in terms of the novel, the flâneur exposes the junction between the urban aesthetics of memorialization and collective grief. As the narrative poignantly discloses human vulnerability, 9/11 is elaborated through the philosophy of walking, an act that dictates the rhythm of narration creating an emotional trajectory in New York that leads also to the tragedy. In this

¹⁴ These observations chart a parallel between Cole’s post-9/11 memorialization and Freud’s psychoanalytic distinction between mourning and melancholia. In Freud’s definition, “Mourning is regularly ... the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one” (243) and as he further notes, whereas melancholia enables a work of self-reflexivity, mourning originates from an external inhibition. In this way, if melancholia is an impoverishment of the self, on the contrary mourning comes from external factors, events and situations. In addition to this, Freud explains how mourning can be classified as a temporal experience that allows the self to overcome grief to reach a state of normalcy (Freud 237).

¹⁵ For a thorough discussion on mourning and violence in post 9/11 America see Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2004. In her analysis, Butler considers the conditions of heightened vulnerability and aggression that followed from the attack on the US suggesting that violence, arising as a consequence of post-9/11 despair, should be minimized to promote a global spirit of interdependency.

¹⁶ As Gessner further points out, the construction of memorials relies significantly on issues such as nationalism and identity politics. For a fuller discussion memory’s dependence on nationalism and identity politics see Gessner, Ingrid. “The Aesthetics of Commemorating 9/11: Towards a Transnational Typology of Memorials.” *The Journal of Transnational American Studies* 6, no. 4 (2015): 1-4 and Said, Edward. “Invention, Memory, and Place.” *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 175–92.

sense, Cole's novel considers the act of walking as a process of remembrance and commitment located in the cradle of a solemn remembrance of 9/11.

Whereas the novel's criticism tends to conflate with Cole's illustration of a general sense of collective trauma (a term that in the novel entails different discussions), my reading of *Open City* suggests that Cole captures the post-9/11 spirit "seeking out the hidden history of the cityscape the flâneur walks" (Durrant 620). In one of the novel's opening passages, Julius explains the city's collective malaise as he states, "I felt that all of the human race were rushing, pushed by a counterinstinctive death-drive, into movable catacombs... all of us re-enacting unacknowledged traumas" (7). This passage motivates Julius's self-introspective incorporation of the post-9/11 spirit that comes only few chapters ahead when he claims

The empty space that was, I now saw and admitted, the obvious: the ruins of the World Trade Centre. The place had become a metonym of its disaster: I remembered a tourist who once asked me how he could get to 9/11: not the site of the events of 9/11 but to 9/11 itself, the date petrified into broken stones. I moved closer. It was walled in with wood and chain link, but otherwise nothing announced its significance. (52)

This reflection leads to the assumption that in its etymology, "commemoration" presupposes a communal process of remembrance. Underscoring this point, Edward Casey has emphasized that "We remember through such a memorialization, which defies reduction to the separatist categories of "matter" or "psyche" – indeed to "self" and "other," or even to "past" and "present" (184). Implicit within Cole's reinterpretation of 9/11 through memorialization from a flâneuristic perspective is the belief that, as Marita Sturken has shown, "The question of memorialization of September 11 has focused on what is known as 'Ground Zero' in New York City [...] making it clear that the New York site is the symbolic center of this tragic event" (375).¹⁷ As such, it might be easy to argue that in the narrative Cole re-constructs the need of remembrance and the memorialization of 9/11 approaching the catastrophe through the flâneur's recognition of national grief in the United States.

As far as 9/11 is concerned, Ground Zero has become the site of a public drama activating the collective feelings of loss and despair which, through the 9/11 memorial then turn into collective memory.¹⁸ Aligning with this, Igor Maver explains that, "Cole speaks about violence, trauma, war in a way, indirectly describing not the external events, but rather the consequences of suffering upon one's psyche, individual and collective memory" (4). Nonetheless, in his recent reading of the novel, Sam Durrant observes how by deploying Freud's elaboration of trauma through the distinction between mourning and melancholia, the protagonist

¹⁷ Additionally, Stuken observed that commemoration presupposes the involvement of feelings such as "reenactment" and "recollection."

¹⁸ For a study on memory and commemoration see Burke, Peter. "Co-memorations. Performing the past." *Performing the Past* edited by Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree and Jay Winter, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, pp. 105–18. Burke's study prominently focuses on the relationship between memory and performance as a strategy of remembrance.

of Cole's novel diagnoses the anxiety and mimics it identifying with the city's sense of nostalgia (622). It is significant then to say that memory, mourning and self-introspection, define the flâneur in his anguished approach to the post-9/11 scenario as he uncovers the spatial memory of the terrorist attacks as a postcolonial flâneur and outsider (see Mueller 2021). Following Zygmunt Bauman's assertion that "It is the modern world which is the original flâneur" (139) we might conclude that Cole's relocation of flânerie in post-9/11 fiction re-considers the act of walking as a process of self-reflexivity toward collective memory.

As Bauman reminds us, today it is hard to resist flânerie since the modern world cannot but become the site of nomadic expressions representing that collective sense of disorientation that is deeply entrenched in postmodern reality (158). As *Open City* demonstrates, roaming the city post-9/11 allows the flâneur to encapsulate the consequence of a post-9/11 ideology re-grounded by Cole through the idle wanderer. In that vein, the narrativization of a post-9/11 setting Cole proposes is closely aligned to De Certeau's view, for whom people engage in walking, an elementary way to experience the city, making use of spaces that cannot be seen (92).

IV. FROM NEW YORK TO BRUSSELS: ANTI-AMERICAN RADICALISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

If this is perhaps the most evident connection to flânerie as the premise to begin a discussion on the consequences of September 11, the presence of 9/11 in the novel as a significant event has multiple facets. Another complicated and perniciously influential reference to terrorism occurs in the second section of the novel. Although the second part of *Open City* switches the context from America to Europe, the flâneur never loses his attitude as he roams the city and encounters people of different ethnicities and cultures observing the urban landscape and witnessing compelling discussions. In his quest for his heritage in Brussels, Julius meets two Moroccan immigrants who share an anti-American view on terrorism. As he travels to Europe in search of his estranged grandmother, Julius's activity as a flâneur persists as he walks observing the streets of Brussels. The narrator reports,

During my visit, the mild winter weather and the old stones lay a melancholy siege on the city. It was, in some ways, like a city in waiting, or one under glass, with somber trams and buses. There were many people, many more than I had seen in other European cities, who gave me the impression of having just arrived from a sun-suffused elsewhere. (97–98)

Clearly, the second section of *Open City* provides the reader with an opportunity to re-consider the consequences of September 11 through the flâneur beyond New York as the site of US national remembrance. As the scene switches to Brussels, Cole offers insights into the experience of dislocation pointing at a sentiment of anti-American radicalism from an Islamophobic perspective. At a critical moment in the narrative, Julius encounters Farouq and Khalil, two Moroccan refugees who escaped from the oppressive monarchy in their native country. These characters open up a provocative dialogue on terrorism and Islamophobia that

constitutes, as several critics have suggested, “one of the centerpieces of the novel” (Mahajan in Ameel 273). What emerges from Farouq’s thought-provoking assertions, as a consequence of September 11, is an anti-American sentiment on the matter of terrorism. One of his most outrageous and horrifying statements from an Islamic perspective lies in the contention that “For us [Muslims], America is a version of Al-Qaeda” (121). To this, in his flâneur-like attitude, Julius weighs a response that lacks a clear political engagement. After Farouq’s disquieting claim, he observes that “That statement was so general as to be without meaning. It had no power as he said it without conviction. I did not need to contest it, and Khalil added nothing to it. ‘America is a version of Al-Qaeda’” (122).¹⁹

This moment resonates with others in the fifty-page section on Brussels when the flâneur’s wanderings lead him to witness “how radical Islamic movements come to existence in the context of a Western metropolis” (Ameel 266). Yet even more meaningful perhaps than the radicalism of this scene is the revelation of Khalil and Farouq’s pro-Islamic sentiments, as they firmly embrace extremism and an implicit anti-American ideology, support the well-known Sunni jihadists Hamas and Hezbollah since as they declare “It is resistance, simple” (120). In what follows, Khalil claims that “True, it was a terrible day the Twin Towers. What they did was very bad. But I understand why they did it” (120). In *The Post 9/11 City in Novels*, Karolina Golimowska argues that *Open City* explains and imagines how “radical and Islamic movements come to existence in the context of a Western metropolis” (30). As known, the hijackers organized their operations in Europe and subsequently, the rise of global jihadist movements beyond the United States has increased.

Although Farouq and Khalil distance themselves from the practice of terrorism, they prove to have stereotypical anti-American considerations on September 11. As a traditional flâneur, Julius distances himself from their views observing and remaining somehow neutral to the question of terrorism. “I was meant to be an outraged American, though what I felt was more sorrow and less anger. Anger and the semiserious use of a word like *extremist*, was easier to handle than sorrow. This is how Americans think Arabs think, I said to them both” (120), he states.²⁰ Julius refuses to engage in political discourse limiting to transfer the feeling of the consequences of the horrific event of 9/11 and its aftermath, in and outside the United States.

Constructing a transnational flâneur decentered from the American landscape, Cole engages in a multicultural responsive reaction to 9/11 developing what Richard Gray terms “verbal impotence” (2), that is to say, an inability to take a position on the consequences of terrorism limiting instead to observation and introspective response. Departing from flânerie as the narrative trope to observe Ground Zero as the site to begin a discussion on 9/11 that is initiated on America’s soil and touches on themes such as mourning and national trauma, as the novel

¹⁹ “Contemporary commentators have pointed to the link between the radicalizing of the characters Farouq and Khalil in the novel, and the attackers of the November 2015 attacks in Paris and the March 2016 attacks in Brussels” (Ameel 265).

²⁰ Emphasis in the original.

moves to Europe, the question becomes even more political. Confronting cosmopolitan characters observing the urban landscape as a traditional flâneur, the protagonist serves as a textual device for mapping out a debate on America's role through the lens of a pro-Islamic sentiment.

Another salient passage occurs after Khalil says he had disillusionments about America, as the country rejected his scholarly thesis as a consequence to 9/11 and as a prejudice against Islamic and Arabic people. Farouq states "My thesis committee had met on September 20, 2001, and to them with everything happening in the headlines, here was this Moroccan writing about difference and revelation. That was the year I lost all my illusions about Europe" (128). In a previous passage, Farouq maintains that "Many Americans assume that Europe Muslims are covered from head to toe if they are women, or that they wear a full beard if they are men, and that they are only interested in protesting perceived insults to Islam" (119). As such, aligning September 11 with an anti-racist American prejudice, Farouq once again expresses his hate for the West as his conversation with Julius reveals the burden of Muslims and Arabic people toward the US. Undoubtedly, as a consequence to the terrorist attacks, the United States saw a stark increase in discrimination, violence, and hatred toward Muslims and Middle Eastern individuals. Debra Merskin notes that, by the time Bush pronounced the State of Union address in 2002—in which he considered Islam as "the axis of evil" [with reference to terrorism]—"the enemy was fully constructed, infused by more than twenty years of media and popular culture images equating Muslims with Arabs as terrorists" (Menskin 171). The prejudice against Islam as a consequence of 9/11 is effectively captured in this passage, as Farouq expresses his resentment toward America.

Surprisingly, relatively little attention has been paid to what Cole might have meant with this provocative discussion on Islamophobia and terrorism from an anti-American perspective. However, I believe the flâneur is the motif Cole uses to initiate an extremely complex debate on the issue of terrorism, initially by observing Ground Zero as a *lieu de memoire* from an American perspective, repositioning radicalism and terrorism beyond the United States from a European Islamic viewpoint. Providing a conceptual framework to read the novel through the lens of terrorism, Erica Edwards advises that *Open City*²¹ is a novel that explores the war on terror and respatializes terrorism from New York City—a visible site of national memory—to Brussels as the place to discuss radicalism through Islamophobia and an anti-American political view. In so doing, critics have noticed how Cole's narrative constructs the new post 9/11 Black novel as a literary text (Edwards 664).

To the extent that we read the novel in these terms, we see how *Open City* addresses post-9/11 aesthetics and its consequences through a significant spatial dislocation of the flâneur to elaborate a national and international discussion on terrorism. In that sense, post-9/11

²¹ Of importance in this discussion is also the title "Open City," a belligerent term used to indicate the declaration of a settlement that has abandoned its defensive efforts, perhaps a reference to New York after the tragedy of September 11.

New York—where the flâneur embarks on his journey—becomes the site to develop an intricate set of political and emotional responses to the tragedy. Yet, along with this discussion comes a consideration of the plight of transnationalism and terrorism in the post-9/11 narrative. Scholars among whom Richard Gray explain that what is generally missing in novels of 9/11 and its aftermath is a strategy of deterritorialization (141). That is to say, postcolonial narratives on 9/11

Bear witness to the encounter of southwest Asians with America, in which the strategy very often, is to read the US through American wars waged on foreign soil as well as to show the reader what is to be American by exploring American spaces and places from extrinsic vantage points and thus have an advantageous approach for the aftermath of September 11. (Gray 141)

If this is indeed the case of postcolonial texts such as *Open City*, on the other hand, Albala Razan observes that “Anglo-American narratives, preoccupied with the private sphere, the national and the local, as they are, may seem hindered even irrelatively disabled in articulating a radical literary form in relation to the post 9/11 experience” (5–6). Additionally, in her contextualization of the cosmopolitan novel, Rebecca Walkowitz explains that

Contemporary [post 9/11] writers have used the salient features of modernist narrative to develop a critical cosmopolitanism. This has meant thinking beyond the nation but also comparing, distinguishing and judging among different versions of transnational thought, testing moral and political norms; including the norm of critical thinking and valuing informal as well as transient models of community. (2)

Setting the discussion of September 11, from the memorialization on the site to a multiracial perspective of the event, Cole widens the foreign experience of terrorism, drawn from the eyes of the flâneur in New York, and then peripherally extending the discourse through the character’s journey to Europe to shed light on the transoceanic perspective of the East. As such, rather than merely focusing on the psychological consequences of 9/11 within the United States, *Open City* chooses flânerie as the vehicle to inscribe the international effects of September 11 also through the lens of Islamism and extremism highlighting the polarization between the East and the West, as the narrative wavers between America and beyond.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This reading of *Open City* has foregrounded how flânerie becomes a strategic narrative device to set the question of 9/11 and terrorism beyond the United States and how the flâneur, as idle wander, citizen of the world, is the thread that connects two opposing views on September 11; American and Islamic. Despoina Feleki critically examined how the novel holds a special place in the canon of post 9/11 literature and it “can be also read as an attempt to reconcile the trauma not only caused by the terrorist attack on 9/11 but also by a guilty American past,

characterized by imperial policies and stories of invasion” (259).²² As seen, by using the flâneur Cole ponders the resonances of 9/11 and on a more complicated and political imperialistic perspective on the implications of terrorism from Ground Zero as the site of collective grievance, to Brussels as the place to elaborate extremist views on America and Islam. For this reason, it needs to be recalled an observation Teju Cole made on September 11 in an interview for *The Hemingway Society*, he stated,

I feel very fortunate to have written *Open City* and to have been so well rewarded for it. The book began like this: late in 2006, I was finally ready to put down some words about 9/11, not as an explanation or study of what five years in the city after that event had felt like, but as an effective response. (Catan Hemingway Society n.p.)²³

This statement clearly indicates Cole’s intention to propose an effective response to September 11 and in this sense, *Open City* becomes an interesting web of transnational cosmopolitan experiments “also providing opportunities for a transatlantic and transnational engagement with US politics” (Feleki 260).

Drawing from Benjamin for whom the flâneur dwells between “Days of celebration and days of mourning” (68) we see how for Cole’s post-9/11 flâneur the salience of terrorism emerges as a pivotal concern that interplays with an external social experience produced by his walks in post 9/11 New York and it is further disentangled by his itinerant rambles in Brussels, a cosmopolitan city whose inhabitants have clear anti-American radical views on the US and on the consequences of September 11.

As the novel proves, we can easily relate the twofold process of flânerie to the narrative choice of approaching a multidirectional reflection on 9/11. From the act of walking, words and thoughts flounder to create national, spatial and collective reflections on 9/11 and its global political and European resonances. In such an interpretative approach, Cole’s flâneur “engages in post-traumatic state of 9/11 that helps him fight against emotional numbness” (Feleki 266); a concept that Cathy Caruth—as mentioned by Feleki—defines as the need to move from trauma to a narrative, global and collective memory (quoted in Feleki 266). As I have suggested throughout, the novel is rooted on the practice of flânerie as the illustration of a large-scale post-9/11 despair in New York and the protagonist sets his role as a typical post-modern flâneur for whom Ground Zero becomes the discursive framework to process the post-9/11 zeitgeist and its global consequences.

As a novelist who wants to stage the dialectics of September 11 elaborated through the practice of flânerie, Teju Cole sees the flâneur’s wanders as a process of self-reflexivity as well as the origin of a globally shared reflection on the effects of terrorism. As such, the post-9/11

²² In their long dialogue with Julius, Farouq and Khalil often refer to the question of imperialism and oppression from an imperialistic perspective as well as the control of Europe on colonized territories. It is no coincidence then, that Edward Said is often mentioned.

²³ Emphasis mine.

flâneur, the postcolonial superhero, a little naive child-artist (Nuvolati 23), reflects the interest in a more itinerant and collective discussion of the attacks. To recall Art Spiegelman, Julius as flâneur perceives “the shadows of no towers” pondering on the multinational reverberations of 9/11 showing its consequences from the perspective of a foreigner who, even though not directly touched by the tragedy, enrolls in its collective repercussion through his flâneurial activities.

WORKS CITED

- Aghoghovwia, Philip. “Interiority as Narrative Agency in Teju Cole’s *Open City*.” *English Academy Review*, vol. 37 no. 2, 2020, pp. 20–33.
- Ameel, Lieven. “*Open City*: Reading Signs of Uncertain Times in New York and Brussels.” *Eetos*, vol. 19, 2017, pp. 290–308.
- Araujo, Susana. *Transatlantic Fictions of 9/11 and the War on Terror. Images of Insecurity, Narratives of Captivity*. Bloomsbury, 2015.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. “Desert Spectacular.” *The Flâneur*, edited by Keith Tester, Routledge, 2015, pp. 138–58.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Harvard University Press, 1999.
- . *The Writer of Modern Life. Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Bird, Benjamin. “History, Emotion and the body in post-9/11 fiction.” *Literature Compass*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2007, pp. 561–75.
- Bohmer, Ellenke and Stephen Morton. *Terror and the Postcolonial*. Wiley Blackwell, 2010.
- Brand, Dana. *The Spectator and the City in 19th Century American Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Burke, Peter. “Co-memorations. Performing the past.” *Performing the Past*, edited by Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree and Jay Winter, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, pp. 105–18.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2004.
- Casey, Edward. “Remembering: A Phenomenological Study.” *The Collective Memory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey K. Olick et al. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Cole, Teju. *Open City*. Faber & Faber, 2011.
- . Teju Cole, “Palimpsest City,” *3am magazine*, interview with Max Liu, August 16, 2011, <http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/palimpsest-city> Last accessed February 16 2022.

- De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, 1984.
- Derrida, Jacques. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Routledge, 2010.
- Durrant, Sam. "Open/Closed Cities: Cosmopolitan Melancholia and the Disavowal of Refugee Life." *Refugee Imaginaries: Research Across the Humanities*, edited by Emma Cox, Edinburgh University Press, 2020.
- Edwards, Erika. "The New Black Novel and the Long War on Terror." *American Literary History* vol. 29 no.4, 2017, pp. 664–81.
- Faradji, Sara. "A Walk to Forget: The Post-Colonial Flâneur's Negating Journey in Teju Cole's *Open City*." *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* vol. 53.3, 2022, pp. 1–26.
- Feleki, Despoina. "Space Narrative and Media in Teju Cole's *Open City*." *Ex-centric Narratives Journal of Anglophone Literature, Culture and Media*, vol. 3, 2019, pp. 258–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XIV*, edited by James Strachey, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953 pp. 243–58.
- Gessner, Ingrid. "The Aesthetics of Commemorating 9/11: Towards a Transnational Typology of Memorials." *The Journal of Transnational American Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2015, pp. 1–43.
- Golimowska, Karolina. *The Post 9/11 City in Novels: Literary Remappings of New York and London*. McFarland, 2016.
- Gray, Richard. "Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis." *American Literary History*, vol. 21, no.1, 2009, pp. 128–48.
- Hartwiger, Alexander. "The Postcolonial Flâneur: *Open City* and the Urban Palimpsest." *Postcolonial Text*, vol. 11, 2016, pp. 1–17.
- Herman, Peter. *Terrorism and Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Keeble, Arin. *The 9/11 Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity: A Critical Study of an Evolving Canon*. McFarland, 2014.
- Lanuzza, Stefano. *Vita da dandy*. Stampa Alternativa, 1999.
- Nuvolati, Gianpaolo. *L'interpretazione dei luoghi. Flânerie come esperienza di vita*. Firenze University Press, 2013.
- Maver, Igor. "Teju Cole's Nigeria and the Open Cities of New York and Brussels." *Acta Neophilologica*, vol. 46, 2013, pp. 3–11.
- Merskin, Debra. "The construction of Arabs as enemies: Post-September 11 discourse of George W. Bush." *Mass Communication & Society*, vol. 7, no.2, 2004, pp. 157–75.
- Mueller, Monika. "Walking in New York City and Lagos: Spatial Memory in Teju Cole's Novels." *Atlantic Studies*, vol. 18, no.3, 2021, pp. 316–30.
- Razal, Albala. *Towards an Ethics of Post-9/11 Fiction: A Reading of Ian McEwan's Saturday, Don DeLillo's Falling Man, and Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Royal College of London, 2014.
- Schwartz, Berry. "Collective Memory and History." *Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 38, no.3, 1997, pp. 69–96.
- Said, Edward W. "Invention, Memory, and Place." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2000, pp. 175–92.

- Sturken, Marita. "Memorializing Absence" *Understanding September 11*, edited by C. Calhoun, P. Price, & A. Timmer, The New Press, 2002 pp. 374–84.
- . *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*. Duke University Press, 2007.
- Tester, Keith. *The Flâneur*. Routledge, 2015.
- Thompson, Hilary. "Before After." *The City Since 9/11. Literature, Film, Television* edited by Keith Wilhite, Fairleigh University Press, 2016 pp. 171–89. Kindle Edition.
- Turner, Edwin. "Teju Cole's *Open City* Is a Strange, Marvelous Novel That Captures the Post-9/11 Zeitgeist." *Biblioklept*, February 22 2012. <https://biblioklept.org/2012/02/21/teju-coles-open-city-is-a-strange-marvelous-novel-that-captures-the-post-911-zeitgeist/> Last accessed, February 15 2022.
- Vermeulen, Peter. "Flights of Memory: Teju Cole's *Open City* and the Limits of Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism." *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol.37, no.1, 2013, pp. 40–57.
- Versluys, Kristiaan. *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*. Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Walkowitz, Rebecca. *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation*. Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Wayne, Catan. "Interview with Teju Cole, 2012, PEN/Hemingway Award for *Open City*." *HR Blog*, The Hemingway Foundation and Society, September 27 2017. <https://www.hemingwaysociety.org/interview-teju-cole-2012-penhemingway-award-winner>. Accessed 11 July 2022.
- Zuber, Devin. "Flânerie at Ground Zero: Aesthetic Counter-memories in Lower Manhattan." *American Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2006, pp. 269–99.