UNSETTLING

Towards a Chinese/Cuban Cultural Critique

SEAN METZGER

ABSTRACT

This article elaborates a Chinese/Cuban cultural critique that operates through the notion of *unsettling* in light of recent work in Asian American studies and Chinese diaspora studies. Examining three case studies—Carlos Felipe's play *The Chinaman* (*El Chino*), Rigoberto López's documentary *The Longest Journey* (*El Viaje Más Largo*), and Michael Mann's feature film *Miami Vice*—the author suggests that these examples of expressive culture function as memory projects, which construct Chinese/Cuban figures and reconfigure attachments to place through often immaterial, but not insignificant, investments. Chinese/Cuban cultural critique finally provokes a series of productive questions for the study of human migration.

Key Words ◇ Asian American ◇ Chinese ◇ Cuba ◇ cultural studies ◇ migration

Scholars have increasingly explored the past and current lives of Chinese Cuban people, particularly as they constitute and complicate ideas of the Cuban nation and as they register variance within a larger matrix often referred to as the Chinese diaspora.[1] The two English-language monographs (López-Calvo, 2008; Yun, 2008) of expressive culture along these lines have probed the potential and limits of representation within and beyond the Cuban state. Although quite different in scope and aims, the ideas of what 'Chinese Cuban' might mean in these books converge in assertions of hybridity and mestizaje, cultural process that both authors, despite their different projects, tie to histories of labor and migration in Cuba. In this article, I shift the emphasis from comparative racialization and the potential agency of Chinese Cubans emerging from the material conditions described by the varieties of

Cultural Dynamics
© The Author(s) 2009. Reprints and permissions:
http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
21(3): 317–338. [DOI: 10.1177/0921374008350293] http://cdy.sagepub.com

historical and literary scholarship I have mentioned. While I recognize value in recovery projects that articulate a Chinese Cuban presence, particularly in the wake of the decline of Havana's *barrio chino*, I investigate instead how specific examples of theater and film visualize and embody fantasies about cultural loss and circulation. These fantasies serve as the *psychic* conditions through which what I will call 'Chinese/Cuban' becomes meaningful.

By invoking the label Chinese/Cuban, I wish to deemphasize a correlation between 'real' people of Chinese descent in Cuba and their mimetic representations on stage and on screen. Given the fragmented records of the lived experiences of Chinese Cubans, Chinese/Cuban denotes fantasies, the specific contents of which may well be diverse but which nevertheless share an operative logic.[2] Chinese/Cuban specifically indicates an imaginative construction that highlights the instability of its constituent terms.[3] Therefore, my starting point is not, as might be expected, actual people of the Chinese diaspora in Cuba but rather the fantasies that might render a term like 'Chinese Cuban' meaningful in the first place. Highlighting imagination and representation, Chinese/Cuban foregrounds the invention and use of cultural memory across the Pacific and the Atlantic. Chinese/Cuban cultural critique, then, is a critical idiom that tracks the fantasies produced through artistic production that might reference but are certainly not determined by exemplary moments of crisis and renewal in Cuban history of the last century.

I specifically elaborate Chinese/Cuban cultural critique in this article to supplement and/or revise scholarship in two sometimes overlapping domains where Chinese/Cuban representations and ideas about migration have received sustained attention: Chinese diaspora studies and Asian American studies.[4] 'Chinese diaspora studies' here refers to a body of scholarship often critical of its organizing lexis.[5] Nevertheless, the currency of diaspora as a key term of the last two decades has meant that other work on the movements of people and cultural objects stands in relation to this much theorized and, perhaps, overzealously deployed concept. Although exilic status of an imposed nature along with a certain longing for homeland has historically demarcated diaspora from other forms of human migration, this gauge seems often irrelevant to current studies in the rapidly expanding field.[6] The recent establishment of the *Journal of Chinese Overseas* in 2005 and *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* in 2007 attests not only to the increasing interest in diaspora among Chinese area scholars but also to an increasing elasticity of its definition.[7] Academic models such as Tu Wei-ming's 'living tree' that would literalize diaspora as a spreading of seeds producing subjects with implicit organic links to a Chinese cultural homeland have shifted to recognize the multiple spaces that activate Chineseness and the various other elements that make China and Chineseness matter.[8] Chinese diaspora now connotes both abstract and material spatial networks that refer both to

particular places and the flows of capital and culture that move through, among, and beyond them.[9] Such critical work examines the discursive registers (e.g. Ang, 2001; Chow, 1993, 1998; Chun, 1996; Hayot et al., 2008; Khoo, 2007) and the economic factors (Dirlik, 1996; Ong, 1999; Ong and Nonini, 1996) through which claims of Chineseness become significant and encourage a more nuanced approach to the assertion of often overlapping terms such as Chinese diaspora or transnational, *huaqiao*, etc.[10] Chinese Cuban has readily been assimilated into this larger diasporic frame, and this critical positioning has enabled useful comparative work, particularly in regard to Afro-Asian connections.[11] Yet some of the same authors who currently employ diaspora also express suspicion over the various elisions that invocation of the word might generate, such as failing to account for the regulatory powers of the nation state that limit movement between and among such places (e.g. Hu-DeHart, 2005a, b).

In a related turn, Asian American studies has largely shifted its emphasis from the national to the diasporic. This reconfiguration has tended to broaden the east–west axis of the field's geographic contours, but it has also further fostered revisionist approaches that might constitute a new form of transnational Asian American studies.[12] Most relevant for the Cuban case is an emerging hemispheric approach, first and continually suggested in the writings of Evelyn Hu-DeHart (e.g. 1982, 1991, 2002) and then promoted by several others, albeit with distinct and occasionally contradictory emphases (e.g. Chuh, 2006; Lee, 2005; Look Lai, 1999; Siu, 2005).[13] For example, although Walton Look Lai attributes 'a kind of Hemispheric social identity' to immigrant Asian communities, he offers this incipient idea as a way of thinking rather than a way of being, an intellectual construct as opposed to an experienced reality (1999: p. xvi). In contrast, Kandice Chuh (2006: 622) has demonstrated how both the fiction and non-fiction of Karen Tei Yamashita marshal 'a circum-oceanic spatial logic characterized by cyclicality and infinite connectivity' that Chuh provisionally names hemispheric. Richard Fung's video work in which he explores Chinese/Trinidadian/Canadian relations would seem to demonstrate a kind of hemispheric sensibility reflected in and produced through self-reflexive filmmaking. Such a variety of mediated experiences, to adapt the formulation of Erika Lee to a slightly different context, 'not only connects the experiences of Asians throughout the Americas together; it also links the Americas to the global world' by casting Asians in relation to epistemological frameworks that exceed the traditional boundaries of Pacific Rim discourse (Lee, 2005: 237).

Chinese/Cuban cultural critique configures in relation to the potentially messy imbrication of diasporic and hemispheric studies. While the hemispheric affords advantages—rethinking an east–west orientation and evading the reproductive connotations of diaspora as well as the specific associations

with exile and nostalgia—it calibrates around specific geographic co-ordinates and potentially fails to account for movements of people from places within greater China to quite different locations, including Australia, England, France, Japan, and South Africa. Diasporic discourse much more easily tracks such movements, of course, albeit with the caveats already noted. Motivated by each of these fields in different ways, I sketch here the concept of 'unsettling', the operative logic that animates Chinese/Cuban cultural critique, with which I seek to resignify Asian American studies by orienting it around an island space that has heretofore been largely cast off from the main preoccupations of the field.

I examine 'unsettling' in relation to three unlike examples of Chinese/Cuban representation over a wide historical period to develop an analytic useful for thinking about fantasy's role in the articulation of spatial relations—political, economic, cultural, etc. My first example is the Hollywood blockbuster *Miami Vice* (Michael Mann, 2006). Beginning with Michael Mann's cinematic adaptation of his television series (1984–9), I stress the role of fantasy in Chinese/Cuban cultural critique. While the production clearly references Cuba, as I will demonstrate, it is not produced by Cuban cultural industries. Nevertheless, the world's largest dream factory visualizes its Chinese/Cuban subject in ways that foster a rethinking of critical discourses like diaspora. The next two examples sit more comfortably within a Cuban national context: Carlos Felipe's 1947 play *The Chinaman* (*El Chino*) and Rigoberto López's 1993 film *The Longest Journey* (*El Viaje Más Largo*); they serve as quite different Chinese/Cuban dramatizations, but they also share in the project of unsettling.

According to the *OED*, 'unsettling' denotes four things: first, an undoing from a fixed position, an unfixing, unfastening, or loosening; second, a forcing out of a settled condition—that is, depriving of fixity or quiet; third, becoming unsettled; and fourth, clearing of settlers.[14] While I mean to invoke this range of significations, I am most interested in unsettling in the sense of negating affective fixation (settling) on an object. Although I appreciate the resonance unsettling might suggest with actual processes of emigration from a relatively bounded community located in particular place, I wish to activate the term more as a way of describing a psychic phenomenon that might occur in the wake of such migrations. For me, unsettling names primarily the loss of a stable, bounded community as a point of identification; it is the unmooring of a stable spatial referent. Of course, actual migration patterns might condition such a response, but I emphasize the imaginative investments that characterize relations to space. While this term may share something with the notion of displacement, I eschew the latter because of its particular valence within a psychoanalytic lexicon and because displacement seems to

describe physical relocation as much as anything else. As the operative logic of Chinese/Cuban cultural critique, unsettling primarily concerns fantasy.

However, this formulation does not mean that unsettling is completely detached from actual events. Each of the following case studies appeared around a moment of uncertainty in Cuba. In November 2004, Hu Jintao China's president and secretary-general of its Communist Party paid a well-publicized visit to the island and worked to cement economic and diplomatic relations between the two countries at a time when reports of Fidel Castro's apparently declining health unleashed a flurry of speculation about what the succession of governmental power might mean for Cuba. In the late 1940s, the second presidency of Ramón Grau San Martín involved charges of corruption and raised concern for the future. Finally, *The Longest Journey*, produced in the wake of the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, emerged concurrently with questions about Cuba's financial stability after the erosion of Soviet support for Cuban enterprises. Although I do not offer allegorical readings, these historical events help shape the background of Cuba's material conditions through and against which each cultural product came into being. In this article, I occasionally reference these historical factors, because they serve as reference points that help elucidate the specific uses of Chinese/Cuban in each example.

In *Miami Vice*, actor Gong Li plays Isabella, a self-described 'businesswoman' (perhaps, more accurately, a drug lord) of Chinese descent, who identifies her childhood home and site of leisure as Havana. The film uses a helicopter shot to track Isabella's rather sudden departure from Florida with local Miami detective/illegal narcotics trafficker incognito Sonny Crockett (Colin Farrell) for a brief tryst on the isle. Accessed by a chic and sporty boat, Cuba is perhaps the culmination of an island of dreams in this film.[15] However, the ostentatious display of condominiums, clothes, and cars *throughout* the diegesis positions drugs as the product driving the flows of transnational capital from South America through the Caribbean to New York and Geneva and beyond.[16] Isabella moves through these locales as a cosmopolite, whose privileged mobility contests the purported power of both municipal and nation-state regulatory systems evoked in the genre of the action-adventure crime drama. The cinematic editing facilitates Isabella's appearance in an array of locales in a manner analogous in the structure of the film to the sudden appearance and disappearance of loads of narcotics. This hallucinogenic world in which people and products appear as if by magic is a hallmark of the silver screen. But, in the case of *Miami Vice*, circulation is thematic. The commodities that travel in the diegetic world—not only the drugs, but also the luxury goods (foregrounded through product placement)—as well as in the extradiegetic world inhabited by the star—whose body the audience recognizes as both a fictional character and an actor whose

image has circulated on screen and print media around the world—equate the Chinese figure with a certain mobility as both capitalist and commodity. In this article, I am interested in sketching out the potential meanings of such a model of itinerant Chinese capital by constructing a partial genealogy of the representation of Chinese capital/ists in Cuba. My inquiry stems, in part, from the attachment to the place of Havana voiced by Gong Li's character as well as her obvious physical detachment from Cuba.

For Isabella, Cuba constitutes home in a psychic realm much more than a physical one. She spends most of her time elsewhere; she informs Crockett that she does not work in Havana. Instead, it is a site where she drinks, dances, and fornicates. The activities of home and the activities of tourism are thus, to some degree, conflated. Home registers only as Isabella's affective attachment to a space that she has constructed as a place of belonging. The physical structure of her house notwithstanding, memory and fantasy define its seeming emptiness. For example, she marks the rather stark mise-en-scène as hers by bringing framed photographs of her mother to show Sonny. Also an apparent traveler, her mother worked as a diplomat, but Isabella reveals little else about her family. Despite the fractured past the narrative presents, the Chinese/Cuban subject in this cinematic world holds a fortunate financial position that produces a cosmopolitan freedom to move through cultures and time zones. While this sort of freedom has been much critiqued in relation to the immobility of often racialized laborers (in this vein, I would point to the women and men who occupy the film's actual shooting locations from Barranquilla to Ciudad del Este to Miami), my analysis does not dwell on these conditions of production, although I recognize the potential value of such a study. Instead, I focus on the affective dimensions of unsettling.

Isabella's unsettling mobility evokes multiple senses of the word. Her nomadic lifestyle contests the notion of her having staked her home in a particular place. More specifically, her work as a 21st-century *bandido* enables her freedom to roam through space. In this case, although she pursues the traveling life of that older construction, the ways in which Isabella profits from unseen labor is more complicated than some wandering thief because she participates as a key administrator in what one character calls a 'vertically integrated' criminal empire. But I am not only arguing that crime facilitates cosmopolitan privilege in the case of Isabella. In the logic of the aptly named *Miami Vice*, what is even more disturbing is that the representatives of law are also constitutive of the criminal regime. From an early expository scene informing the viewer of a 'leak' in the multifaceted federal police structure (DEA, FBI, etc.) to the second-to-last scene showing the image of Isabella mournfully departing Florida on a boat arranged by Officer Crockett, criminality and law enforcement intermingle to such a degree that the distinction

between the two erodes. In the end, Isabella's unsettling life is not only enabled, but, finally, directed by the very police forces that purportedly work to curtail the movement of elusive criminals such as her.

This specific visualization of the Chinese/Cuban capitalist posits a world in which freedom as articulated through the ability to consume luxury goods and to travel across national spaces depends on a conflation of the legal and the criminal.[17] In *Miami Vice*, the US nation state is a regime that works in the biopolitical management of life across national borders; it kills both people clearly marked as US nationals (the white trailer park gang) and those who are not (José Yero, the drug empire's middle manager, and all his men, during the final shootout). Indeed, the film calls specific attention to the murderous machinery marshaled by US law enforcement. For example, in the rescue mission to save kidnapped colleague Trudy Joplin at the trailer park, her colleague Detective Gina Calabrese describes in precise detail how she will use her rifle to shoot a bullet through a man's head. Later, in the climactic battle, the team's captain locates enemy snipers through infrared binoculars and orders the gunmen's subsequent executions. The camera takes the ostensible perspective of that infrared scope suturing the spectator into the technologies of the drug wars. Moments afterward, the film cuts between other signifiers of nation-state law enforcement—officers in matching bulletproof jackets, a helicopter with spotlight, etc.—and the reaction shot of the distressed Isabella, apparently realizing that her romantic interest, supposed drug trafficker Crockett, could not bring such resources to bear. The legal apparatus, then, has also facilitated his maintaining a false identity. However, as I previously mentioned, this same man, finally outed as a vice squad agent, grants Isabella her life by arranging her escape.

The final departure of Isabella marks her willful vanishing by the US nation state. I invoke this term as an alternative to 'disappearing', which I understand as used to indicate the imprisonment or assassination of figures resistant to totalitarian regimes. Vanishing here marks a temporary erasure of the Chinese/Cuban figure, who will undoubtedly return in the guise of some other entrepreneur but whose condition of possibility is now linked to, and under potential (and, therefore, continual) threat by, the USA. *Miami Vice* ultimately implies that the Chinese/Cuban finds expression not through the signification of an ethnic enclave within the territorial boundary of the Cuban nation state, but rather through the transnational relations among several countries, including Cuba, China, and the USA.

These relations perhaps comprise the material conditions of unsettling. As economic and political structures shift both within national borders and across regions, so the migration patterns of people often follow. However, my argument here is that, despite the motivating factors of such movements, extant traces may yield only the most fragmentary of narratives that might

historicize the connections of people to places. In the absence of formal documentation, I find unsettling useful as a notion to describe and link memory projects, that is, imaginative speculations about material conditions that seek to fill the gaps in fragmentary historical knowledge of an ostensible locus of community. Such projects are not always nostalgic in the sense of longing for a real or imagined home. Rather, they might also invent spatial relations that counter home as a fixed site of, for example, ancestral belonging. Reconfiguring spatial relationships in this manner produces an unsettling of place, or rather, an awareness that the very particularity of place requires continued psychic investments to sustain it; these investments do not override the concretized conditions of belonging created through passports and state borders, but they do add nuance to how such physical manifestations of place come to matter for individuals.

In the case of Isabella, Cuba as home is the site where she transacts pleasure rather than work. In the film, Chinese/Cuban comes to designate entrepreneurial savvy in tandem with an exoticized profligacy. The Chinese/Cuban memory project here instantiates an unsettling of other, more recognizable associations of Chinese Cubans and histories of their labor. In *Miami Vice*, the more traditional narratives of coolies and shopkeepers are dramatically abstracted, and the trace of such toil, if any remains, resides in the business acumen expressed through Isabella's illegal activities. This unsettling fantasy of capitalist corruption is productive because it raises questions difficult to resolve or even ascertain from extant records. For example, what role do women play in Chinese Cuban labor? How have certain forms of work been legitimated, while others criminalized? What forms of transnational affiliation beyond those now familiar to us impacted upon the development of Chinese Cuban communities?

My remaining examples, each in a different genre and from a different historical period, attempt to elaborate articulations of unsettling in hopes of mapping the contours of a larger analytic that I call Chinese/Cuban cultural critique. I have purposefully chosen works that have been translated into English in order to generate a new archive for scholars of Asian American studies. I have also juxtaposed quite dissimilar texts. Having begun with an example from recent Hollywood cinema, I move in the remainder of this article to a modernist play and a documentary film to illustrate how different forms of cultural production participate in similar ideological regimes. My next case study, Felipe's *The Chinaman*, moves from an unsettling construction of freedom through manipulations of capital found in *Miami Vice* to a different kind of solipsistic focus.[18]

Carlos Felipe's dramatic production spans the 1930s through the early 1960s, a time in his native Cuba that witnessed tumultuous political change. Felipe's perspective of the period seems to have been informed by his

employment at the Customs Department of the Port of Havana, where he worked for thirty years. The quotidian activities around the harbor shape Felipe's mise-en-scène not only in the play, but also in much of his dramatic corpus. *The Chinaman* specifically involves a staged reconstruction of events at and in the vicinity of a dock-side inn that also serves as a brothel.

The protagonist of Felipe's *The Chinaman*, a woman named Palma, finds herself unable to leave Havana because she is clinging to the memory of a Mexican sailor named José with whom she had a one-night stand. Twenty years later, she reconstructs her romantic rendezvous with a cast she has paid either to replay their roles in the evening's events or to take the parts of other participants, who are no longer available. When the play within the play starts, a man named José—who may or may not be *the* José—enters the scene. The new arrival quickly gets into character, and an improvisation begins that enacts a fantasy of what may have occurred. Luis, the 'Chinaman' of the drama's title, is the character around whom plot and memory pivot. As the supposed eyewitness of Palma and José's date, he serves to establish the veracity of Palma's claims. Although he often repeats some variation of 'I've been trying for hours to remember and I can't . . . I told you! I don't remember. I never met José the Mexican', Palma continues to insist that he is the key to the night's events (Felipe, 2000: 119). Even after she dismisses José, she asks Luis to reconstruct the night with her one more time at the play's conclusion.

Although the setting suggests Jean Genet's *The Balcony*, Felipe's work precedes that of the notoriously naughty French playwright by a decade; however, the milieu of European dramatic production that would eventually shape Genet's writing also informs Felipe's. The decades in which Felipe wrote saw the importation of a number of European dramatic models into Cuba (Banham et al., 1994: 160–5). Cuban cultural conversions of European structures are, of course, commonplace for a country that suffered centuries of colonization. Therefore, it is not surprising that attempts to spur experimental European-influenced dramatic production existed throughout the first half of the 20th century. But the theater did not enjoy the strong sponsorship that Castro would eventually bestow on it during the early years of his government. Prior to the Revolution in 1959—after which Castro ushered in a new era of state-supported theater—Cuban playwrights wrote for groups who often had neither year-round schedules nor permanent spaces. Nevertheless these organizations, including the Academy of Dramatic Arts (ADAD, founded in 1941[19]) and the Patrons of Theater[20] (founded in 1942) produced several of Felipe's works. They were part of a trend in Havana that introduced Cuban audiences to European modernist theatre. Felipe owed the first staging of *El Chino* to an ADAD competition that he won in 1947.

The Cuban government in the 1940s was full of both promise and corruption. On the one hand, constitutional reforms and the relative economic prosperity precipitated by the Second World War offered an alternative to the Machado dictatorship of the early 1930s. During that period, Cuban foreign trade fell to a tenth of its previous levels. Commerce that depended on the USA was hampered by the Great Depression, and US tariffs halved the Cuban share of the American sugar market. Financial woes led to increasing unrest. A terrorist group called the ABC led attacks against Machado's administration as Cuba became a political battlefield. In August 1933, Machado fled Cuba for the Bahamas, leaving the USA to install a new leader who lasted for only a few weeks. In September, Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar took control of the government at gunpoint; he would act as strongman through the Second World War. The war brought an increased demand for sugar and modest prosperity to Cuban cities. A new Constitution in 1940 'gradually improved the economic and social position of the middle-class and the urban working sectors' (Del Aguila, 1994: 28). Batista even yielded power to his old opponent Dr Ramon Grau in 1944's legitimate elections. Unfortunately, Grau's greatest legacy of his four-year presidency was the theft of $40 million from the national coffers. His actions were indicative of the corruption that existed throughout the government.

This charged environment provides the historical context for *The Chinaman*, although Felipe never directly alludes to contemporary events. However, Palma does share a name with Cuba's first elected president Tomás Estrada Palma. I will return to this point later. For now, I want to point out that Palma has an ambivalent relationship to the structures of government and capital signified in the play. Although she laments the loss of her idealized mate, she has begun a relationship as 'mistress of a distinguished diplomat' named Sergio (Felipe, 2000: 91). In fact, the drama opens with a scene depicting Sergio trying to convince Palma to accompany him to Argentina just after she has returned from a shopping spree. The introduction of Palma as a consumer links her to the Chinese man.

Because Luis factors so much into the memories reconstructed in the play, I historicize this Chinese/Cuban figure, Palma's appointed guardian of her story, to elaborate their connection in terms of their relationship to commodities. Various racialized groups became part of a Caribbean crucible that generated a tremendously diverse society by the early 20th century. Historian Robert Levine writes that '[t]he atmosphere of post-World War I Cuba was unique: blacks and mulattos, immigrants from Jamaica and Haiti, Chinese, and Jews served a dual elite of Creoles and the largest foreign expatriate business community in the Americas' (1993: 16). By the late 1930s, he continues, 'some 300,000 Chinese landed on the island . . . far more than any other immigrant group except the Spanish' (1993: 17). The presence of the

Chinese character in this play connotes an uneven history of being victimized by as well as exploiting capitalist enterprise. As the owner of a brothel-like inn, Luis is situated on both sides of this equation simultaneously—that is, he is reduced to working with more transient and marginalized groups in the social system while using these people for his own capital gain.

Luis profits by renting out empty space that his clients fill with their desires; Palma fills her emptiness by consuming fantasies. Whether she is buying a dress or a room or a group of actors, she purchases things in order to fill an apparent void within herself. It is, therefore, ironic that she chooses Luis to safeguard her story as Luis only offers empty spaces—whether physical rooms or lapses in memory—that Palma wants to fill.

Palma has assembled a cast to reenact the night of her first and only meeting with José. She has invited, in addition to *el chino*, a director named Robert, a 'famous' actor called Santizo, Renata the Silent One (who is apparently homeless), and three other women, who are very familiar with both sailors and the streets: Alameda, Caridad, and Nena the Blonde. The assembled characters—including Sergio, Palma, and her maid Juana—provide a cross-section of Cuban city-life and illustrate through their exchanges a realist perspective on Havana's communities. The theater they create, in addition to its more sociological function, also offers a metatheatrical commentary on the role of art and its utility in sustaining and destroying illusions and in providing catharsis for those in pain.

Through her obsession with her lost love object that really seems to be an obsession about a void in herself, Palma becomes a classic case study of what Freud called 'the melancholiac'. In his essay 'Mourning and Melancholia', Freud writes that melancholia is a pathological variation of mourning 'related to an unconscious loss of a love-object' (1991: 166). Whereas 'mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as fatherland, liberty, an ideal, and so on', melancholia involves an unconscious process by which the patient might be 'aware of the loss giving rise to the melancholia, that is . . . he knows whom he has lost but not *what* it is he has lost in them' (1991: 164; original emphasis). This situation is exactly Palma's dilemma, for she has named José as her lost love object but fails to pinpoint what *exactly* she is missing since his disappearance. Consider Palma's statements like, 'You know I can't leave Havana. I just can't' (Felipe, 2000: 93). Palma knows that it is José who keeps her rooted to the city as well as something else that she cannot completely articulate. As the play continues, she repeatedly expresses these inchoate feelings. For example, later in Act I, Palma laments, 'My 'happiness' was so brief that I can't isolate one single feature of it. But the thought of it brings the most tender feelings out of me' (p. 97). When Sergio finally suggests that Palma can move to Argentina after she finishes her staged

reconstruction, Palma retorts, 'You're wrong. I won't go with you no matter what. If I fail, if the Chinaman can't remember, if I can't get the results I want immediately . . . I'll keep on looking' (p. 105).

And continue to look she does. Even when a José presents himself to her at the end of Act I, Palma finds the reality of the man insufficient to alleviate her suffering. As Sergio notes, the objective of her theatrical project 'was to locate a certain man using the Chinaman's recollections'. With José's appearance, 'there is no need to make him [Luis] remember' (p. 125). Palma does not accept this idea. She finally tells José 'It's useless . . . You had me in your arms a while ago . . . didn't you notice?' I'm dead for love . . . You've arrived too late' (p. 177).

After José's departure, the remainder of the play suggests that Palma has a compulsion to repeat the loss of her supposed beloved over and over again as if she were in the endless cycle of a Ionesco play. The dialogue at the end of Act III reproduces the mise-en-scène at the beginning of the play, with Palma waiting for Luis and developing a migraine. However, the order of events has shifted a bit. Whereas the beginning of the play opens with Sergio and Palma's dialogue and the eventual calling of Juana the maid to attend to Palma's migraine, the end of the play brings the Chinese man immediately into this scene. Felipe replaces the potential promise and attendant stress of waiting with a complete entry into the fantasy world of Palma's delusions.

Early in the drama, the text provides a hint for interpreting Palma's disorder. When Sergio indicates that she should see a specialist, Palma fires back that he has previously denigrated science and is particularly 'sick and tired of finding Freud everywhere' (p. 94). The aural dismissal of Freud has the ironic effect of placing Freud and his work in the mind of the spectator. But Freud, as we know, was primarily interested in individual psychic development. I argue that *The Chinaman* is about more than the individual psychology of its protagonist.

In Act III, Palma is chastized: 'If a doctor can't do anything for you, what could a Chinaman do . . . ?' (p. 94). Recent works on Asian American performance by scholars such as Anne Cheng, David Eng, and Karen Shimakawa have used psychoanalysis as a means of grappling with issues of Asian American artistic representation and racial formation (Cheng, 2001; Eng and Kazanjian, 2003; Shimakawa, 2002). Both Anne Cheng and David Eng offer useful extensions of Freudian melancholia, connecting the individual psychic processes described by Freud to, in the words of Cheng, 'an American ideological dilemma and its constitutional practices' (2001: 11). Processes of racial melancholia other the Asian American body in relation to ideal American (white, heterosexual, US male) citizenship.[21] Looking at the Cuban piece I have been describing, however, provides a complicating comparative

turn to this work in Asian American studies. In the case of Felipe's drama, the melancholiac is clearly Palma, a situation that raises the question what does the Chinese man do in this scene? How is his position different in this Cuban context and what does that tell us about the USA?

I wrote that Luis offers emptiness as the commodity that Palma most desires and that Palma echoes a name of Cuba's first president. On the one hand, the invocation of President Estrada through a romantic dreamer like Palma suggests the promise of Cuban autonomy. Although Estrada could never achieve such status for Cuba, given obstacles like the Platt Amendment, his presence placed the idea in the foreseeable future: autonomous government after years of colonial rule. However, that promise, like the hopes of Palma, remained unfulfilled at the time of Felipe's writing. Indeed, the government seemed to cycle through a series of crooks. So, when Luis admonishes Palma, 'You're spending your money for nothing', he might also be speaking of the taxes paid by citizens into the increasingly deep pockets of Grau and his cronies.

At the same time, the Chinese man's presence is significant for the racial dimensions it adds to the play. Luis enables Palma to sustain both her belief in the reality of Jose and eventually her delusion or illusion. The fact that he offers vacant space that the protagonist fills is a typical Orientalist gesture. The history of the Chinese in Cuba, however, cautions against such a dismissive reading. Chinese labor on the sugar plantations helped propel the Cuban economy during the 19th century in ways similar to that of the Chinese labor that facilitated the construction of American railroads. The major difference is, of course, that in the USA the Transcontinental Railroad pushed the USA through the Industrial Revolution and hastened the end of the frontier. Cuba's dependence on sugar without diversification increased its dependence on other nations for basic sustenance. This situation places Chinese immigrants in an ambivalent position in the formation of the Cuban nation as they become part of both its growth and its lack of economic self-sufficiency. Such a position is perhaps occupied by Luis.

In the play, Luis is expected to remember the night of Palma's meeting because it coincides with the suicide of a violinist in his inn. The violinist repeatedly returned to ask the Chinese man whether or not he had seen the woman the fiddler loved. His pining produced no results and, on the night Palma and José supposedly met, the violinist commits suicide. Luis helps Palma choose a different path. She chooses a life of illusion, a melancholic repetition assisted by Luis. In their self-absorption with Palma's fantasy, the pair of capitalist figures fails to have any relationship to the shifting political landscape of Cuba. In other words, melancholia produces an affective relationship to space that is unsettling in its singular focus on the fulfillment of individual emotional desires without any sort of political engagement. The play becomes a commentary on such solipsism.

More specifically, *The Chinaman* displays Luis as the instrument of the female protagonist. His history remains opaque, and he registers as meaningful only in Palma's imagination. Such a fantasy of a Chinese character, as I have noted, evokes Orientalist stereotypes. But it also provides a platform for interrogating migration narratives. Aside from the rather obvious inquiry that the play raises but never engages of how the framing of particular histories occlude Chinese/Cuban representational possibilities, *The Chinaman* as an unsettling memory project opens up provocative discourses about both labor and sexuality largely eclipsed in historical accounts to this point. How do Chinese Cubans participate in the informal economies on the island? The theatrical production also begs the question of how studies of Chinese Cuban people might address sexuality beyond the emphasis, common to diasporic discourse, on reproductive family units. What kind of history would account for unofficial romantic liaisons not recorded in marriage registries and the like, be they heterosexual or homosexual? How would such a focus destabilize notions of Chinese Cuban cultural circulation in Cuba and the Caribbean more generally?

If economic and emotional investments respectively characterize the prior two examples on at least a general level, *The Longest Journey* would seem to take a more historical tack.[22] Both a kind of 'performative documentary' (Nichols, 1994) and 'domestic ethnography' (Renov, 2004), *The Longest Journey* inquires directly into the Chinese/Cuban, a category into which the masculine voice-over (the filmmaker) eventually locates his father. In the former mode, I view Lopez's short work as performative in that it 'addresses the fundamental question of social subjectivity, of those linkages between self and other that are affective as fully as they are conceptual' (Nichols, 1994: 104). In the latter mode, which is more explicitly concerned with 'authorial desire', I see the film as positing 'a reciprocity between subject and object, a play of mutual determination, a condition of cosubstantiality. The desire (figurable as dread or longing) of the domestic ethnographer is for the Other self' (Renov, 2004: 219). The film renders both these modes in relation to the places of concern to me in this article, specifically China, Cuba, and Havana's *barrio chino*.

The Longest Journey opens with the clash of a gong on the soundtrack and an intertitle on screen 'The longest journey begins with the first step. Chinese proverb' ('El viaje más largo se iricia con el primer paso. Proverbio chino'). The camera tilts down from darkness to the corner of a brightly decorated table upon which sits a dark ovoid object. A hand reaches into the frame and picks up the object, which turns out to be a pair of stones for casting lots. A high angle shot reveals an altar where a male figure picks up joss sticks and reads a pamphlet, but the writing is not discernible. Jump cuts juxtapose this take with a man seated half in darkness, a set of candles and a fu dog in

black stone with a candle behind; smoke rises from below the statuette. The bang of a gong punctuates each cut until a Cantonese monologue occurs on the soundtrack. The film cuts from the black stone figurine to a rear view of the man at the table, which from this angle now appears as part of a larger altar. No translation of the Cantonese appears in the subtitles.

In the opening shots, the viewer witnesses a ritual space, exoticized with incense smoke and shadowy figures. The tone of this sequence is both somber and mysterious. The lack of subtitles, once the soundtrack includes spoken language, marks through absence Chinese as untranslatable. This theme persists to varying degrees through the remainder of the film.[23] But the Orientalist mise-en-scène and soundtrack do not code as feminine, as is typical of Hollywood cinema.[24] The perspective is masculine, from the voice-over to the bodies that inhabit the frame; the world projected through the camera is occupied by men. As the opening credits begin, this world of men comes into view in increasingly fetishistic fashion.

The film cuts from the image of the singular figure at the altar and his apparently read monologue to a series of stills of various men. The mood shifts thanks to a lively piano with orchestral accompaniment on the soundtrack. The camera focuses on each person individually, revealing the images in pieces through tilts, zooms, and pans. Superimposed on the stills are the opening credits. This series of stills—black and white photographs of mostly elderly chaps—features people racially marked (in terms of facial phenotype) as Asian. These images become part of a ritual invocation; they provide a potential context for the actions starting the narrative.

If ritual is a performance of conventional elements designed to suture a subject into a larger historical frame, then this film would seem to announce itself as a performative mediation of individual and community from the outset. But the central question to which the title gestures also raises spatial demarcations as central to what might otherwise be more of a temporal investigation. What are the nodal points of the journey? In what might be an answer to this provocation, the film next cuts to a scene of a large sailing vessel at sea. Various shots of the boat are sutured together with the following masculine voiceover: 'This story began in the 12th Moon of the 47th year of Emperor Tocón's reign: on Jan. 2, 1847 when more than 300 poor laborers embarked on the frigate Oquendi at the port of Amon, in Canton.'[25] The voiceover informs the viewer that these men were sojourners with eight-year contracts to work in Cuba and that 142 days after their departure, 206 survivors entered the port of Havana. In situating its ritual through this specific story, the film becomes a technology of unsettling for the ostensible Chinese/Cuban narrator and subject.

The next sequence displays a torch moving through a catacomb-like space. The flame recalls the visuals of the many candles in the opening. The formal

element here suggests that the ritual has transported the viewer elsewhere. This space, however, is never exactly defined. The voice-over describes it as a 'barracón' (which the subtitles translate euphemistically as 'temporary living quarters'). The film stages these particular transitional spaces through dramatic reconstructions. The camera wanders through a space filled with rats and soiled limbs (particularly feet) and faces. In this explicit re-vision of the material conditions of Chinese laborers who journeyed to Cuba, the film, like many of the other cultural productions I have discussed, relies on gaps in the visual field—in this case, bodies viewed always partially in medium and close-up shots—to supplement a fragmented narrative.

Indeed, much of the film offers footage without much context. The images include several men, who stand outside and bow (the Cantonese remains without subtitles), a graveyard, an interview in Spanish with one Kwan Kimfu, and several shots of religious iconography. These last images occur in tandem with the voice-over explanation of the syncretic religious traditions apparently practiced by the remaining Chinese Cuban population. However, the voice-over seems to connect all of these diverse elements through a sense of nostalgia, although that nostalgia takes different forms throughout the piece. For example, Kwan Kimfu opines, 'All Chinese are homesick.' Certainly the verbal recounting of various Chinese myths in the narrative would further suggest that the mourned object is China.

However, later images of busy streets are juxtaposed against the comparative emptiness of Havana's Chinatown. Several interviews and a shot of a monument to Chinese revolutionaries repeatedly express the Cuban nationalism of the interview subjects and return to an immigrant assimilation paradigm in which the film documents Chinese contributions to Cuban life. At one point, the voice-over intones, 'Middle-class Chinese from California arrived in Havana and opened up small businesses'; this segment features both stills and the documentary's own footage of men involved in quotidian activities—eating food, getting haircuts, shopping for and selling goods. As the opening of this documentary short might portend, the film is finally quite ambivalent about how it constructs Chinese/Cuban. The filmmaker's explanation of his relationship to his father doubles this cultural ambivalence; he states succinctly in the context of his discussing the wooing of his mulatto mother that 'My father, Lan Yan, was a great mystery to me.' The final voice-over states, 'They are a part of us, yet their essence remains a mystery hidden behind a tenuous but impassable barrier of sandalwood smoke and Chinese reserve protecting their identity.' A Chinese soundtrack concludes this reverie, which yields to José Urfé's musical theme that began the film. The final image of the film is a pair of masculine legs accompanied by a cane walking away from the camera. The image of calves and thighs offers a final fetishistic view of travel.

I have characterized the formal elements of the film as performative, ethnographic, and nostalgic. While these modalities might seem contradictory, I have endeavored to show that this film works precisely through incongruity. In other words, the ritual with which the film begins finally fails to suture its subject into a normative (linear and intelligible) historical trajectory. Instead Chinese/Cuban emerges as a pastiche of elements, a fractal composition that exceeds its national points of reference. Rather than embrace this complication, the voice-over narrator finally disavows it as beyond the capacity of his and Cuban understanding. The Chinese are finally other to the Cuban to the extent that the descendant of a Chinese Cuban claims 'parts' that never resolve into a whole. This disavowal, I would argue, unsettles the signifier of Chinese Cuban. In the emptiness of the *barrio chino*, the narrator finds that he finally has no privileged access to what this term might mean. Despite the articulation of diasporic movement in which the narrator has located himself, he ultimately produces not Chinese Cuban subjects, so much as scattered fragments that he finally declares somewhat unintelligible.[26]

The oblique histories of Isabella's mother, Luis of *The Chinaman*, and the narrator's father in *The Longest Journey* offer recourse to imagine Chinese/Cuban as a term whose connection to geography is always highly mediated. Each of these cultural productions functions slightly differently as memory projects, but their various investments in the fantastic recreation of the Chinese/Cuban as signifier link them as unsettling. I have noted that entrepreneurial savvy in conjunction with an exoticized profligacy marks Chinese/Cuban in relation to the commodified world of *Miami Vice*. The figure of Chinese/Cuban in the film ultimately enjoys her freedom to move as cosmopolite because of the dialectical relationship between the criminal and legal. Both Luis of *The Chinaman* and the narrator of *The Longest Journey* quite self-consciously engage in processes of remembering. For Luis, the melancholic relation motivating the action in the play leads to a circular structure in which endless repetition negates the possibility of a politics. In *The Longest Journey*, the potentially politicized Chinese/Cuban narrative is disavowed; its capacity for fractal signification is submerged in favor of visualizing a particular Cuban's Orientalist perspective on fetishized remnants of difference that would constitute a personal familial history.

The significations of Chinese/Cuban that I have outlined through the memory projects in each example raise questions often elided in the emerging constellation of scholarship on Chinese Cubans and within the more established fields of Asian American and Chinese diaspora studies. The Chinese/Cuban cultural critique I propose provides a means to rethink the investments in and parameters of fantasy production, tied to memories of places. Such reconstructions necessitate thinking through the imaginative investments in places at least as much as their material conditions. For the

imagination may exceed the boundaries of a place. Chinese/Cuban cultural critique potentially unsettles current understandings of migration because human movement often has less to do with a specific site than an abstracted spatial system, where the co-ordinates do not easily register on any map, but where the investments that render space meaningful come into relief.

NOTES

1. For scholarship in English, see the sustained oeuvre of Evelyn Hu-DeHart on Asians in the Americas as well as the more recent work of Kathleen López (2004, 2006, 2008). Unlike these historians, however, I examine neither the experiences nor even the existence of actual people in this essay and turn instead to the fantasies constructed through different cultural products.
2. This operative logic is 'unsettling', a term I elaborate in the following pages.
3. In this regard, I follow the work of David Palumbo-Liu (1999) insofar as he has elaborated in a different context the term 'Asian/American' in order to emphasize the 'indecidability' between exclusion and inclusion within a national frame.
4. The distinction here loosely follows that drawn between area studies and ethnic studies as described by Chuh and Shimakawa (2001), although I align Chinese diaspora more closely with area studies because of the tradition of scholarship on overseas Chinese that precedes the institutional formation of US ethnic studies.
5. See Ong (1999) and Skeldon (2003).
6. See Safran (1991) and Stratton (1997).
7. In the older journal, the editors Ng and Tan (2005: p. v) note that diaspora will be used within some individual articles, although the editors are aware of the 'politics of labels' and seek internal consistency within each piece they publish. In the newer journal, the editors declare their focus is not so much on the theorization of diaspora but on an exploration of its 'ramifications within a particular geographic area'.
8. See Tu's special issue of *Daedalus* 'The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today'.
9. My argument here is in part indebted to Ma (2003).
10. These categories are obviously not mutually exclusive.
11. See Hu-DeHart and López (2008); Pann (1994).
12. A good example of the range of work enabled by the conjunction of diasporic and Asian American studies is Anderson and Lee (2005).
13. All of these writers indicate a certain provisional status in regard to thinking through the hemispheric. Siu's is most clearly connected to diaspora studies, since the hemispheric discussion appears in her conclusion as a speculation on areas of further research that would, as the rest of the book on diasporic citizenship does, destabilize the assumed coherency of area studies. Siu groups this potential research into four areas: politics of national integration; diaspora–homeland ties; America imperialism and hegemony (Monroe Doctrine); difference within and between diasporas.

14. All of these definitions are taken from the *OED*; they have been modified to the appropriate tense (from 'to unsettle' to 'unsettling').
15. The boat in this scene is an MTI (Marine Technology, Inc) 39' powerboat. With a top speed of over 100 miles per hour, prices for such boats (online) begin at $400,000 with an average of $500,000–$600,000.
16. For a representational history of American drug traffic, see Marez (2004).
17. Certainly it is worth noting that the notion of freedom as the consumption of luxury goods coincides with views articulated by a former US president.
18. While I recognize the negative connotations of 'Chinaman' in English, I have decided to keep this translation rather than use 'Chinese man' as an equivalent for *el chino*.
19. The Academia de Artes Dramáticas later became known as the Academia Municipal de Artes Dramáticas.
20. Patronata del Teatro
21. These are similar to the processes of national abjection described by Shimakawa (2002).
22. Rigoberto López's filmmaking spans the 1980s through today. Perhaps best known in the USA for his 2003 feature *Scent of Oak* (*Roble de Olor*), López has directed over thirty works, of which several are shorts, like this documentary.
23. For an analytical overview of the subtitle as a technology, see Egoyan and Balfour (2004).
24. I draw here on Bernstein and Studlar (1997).
25. I am not sure what this name references. The seventh emperor of the Qing dynasty, the daoguang emperor, ruled 1820–1850. Perhaps Tocón is a Spanish approximation of the Chinese name.
26. While this sort of notion of diaspora suggests Edwards's (2003) discussion of 'décalage', I find it more useful to think of the ways in which the film confounds diaspora through the paradigm of unsettling I have been discussing.

REFERENCES

Anderson, W. W. and R. G. Lee (eds) (2005) *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians in the Americas*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Ang, I. (2001) *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West*. London and New York: Routledge.

Banham, M., E. Hill and G. Woodyard (1994) *The Cambridge Guide to African and Caribbean Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bernstein, M. and G. Studlar (eds) (1997) *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Cheng, A. A. (2001) *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chow, R. (1998) 'Introduction: On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem', *boundary 2* 25(3): 1–24.

Chow, R. (1993) *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Chuh, K. (2006) 'Of Hemispheres and Other Spheres: Navigating Karen Tei Yamashita's Literary World', *American Literary History* 18(3): 618–37.

Chuh, K. and K. Shimakawa (eds) (2001) 'Introduction: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora', *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora*, pp. 1–21. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Chun, A. (1996) 'Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity', *boundary 2* 23(2): 111–38.

Cooke, N. and L. Tana (2007) 'Editor's Introduction', *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 1: http://csds.anu.edu.au/volume_1_2007/welcome_e.pdf (consulted July 2009).

Del Aguila, J. M. (1994) *Cuba: Dilemmas of a Revolution*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Dirlik, A. (1996) 'Introduction', *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Edwards, B. H. (2003) *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Egoyan, A. and I. Balfour (2004) *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film.* Cambridge, MA: MIT and Alphabet City Media.

Eng, D. and D. Kazanjian (eds) (2003) *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Felipe, C. (2000) *The Chinaman*, in Luis F. Gonzalez-Cruz and Ann Waggoner Aken (eds and tr.) *The Chinaman: Three Masterpieces of Cuban Drama*. Los Angeles, CA: Green Integer Press.

Freud, S. (1991) 'Mourning and Melancholia', *General Psychological Theory* , pp. 164–79. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hayot, E., H. Saussy and S. G. Yao (eds) (2008) *Sinographies: Writing China*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Hu-DeHart, E. (1982) 'Racism and Anti-Chinese Persecution in Sonora, Mexico 1876–1932', *Amerasia Journal* 9(2): 1–28.

Hu-DeHart, E. (1991) 'From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies: The Study of the Chinese Diaspora in Latin America', in S. Hune, H.-c. Kim, S. S. Fugita, and A. Ling. (eds) *Asian American Comparative and Global Perspectives*, pp. 5–16. Pullman: Washington State University Press.

Hu-DeHart, E. (2002) 'Huagong and Huashang: The Chinese as Laborers and Merchants in Latin America and the Caribbean', *Amerasia Journal* 28(2): 64–91.

Hu-DeHart, E. (2005a) 'Afterword: Brief Meditation on Diaspora Studies', *Modern Drama* 48(2): 428–39.

Hu-DeHart, E. (2005b) 'Concluding Commentary: On Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism in Asian American History', *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8(3): 309–12.

Hu-DeHart, E. and K. Lopez (2008) 'Asian Diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Historical Overview', *Afro-Hispanic Review* 27(1): 9–21.

Khoo, O. (2007) *The Chinese Exotic: Modern Diasporic Femininity*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Lee, E. (2005) 'Orientalisms in the Americas: A Hemispheric Approach to Asian American History', *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8(3): 235–56.

Levine, R. L. (1993) *Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish Experience in Cuba*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

Look Lai, W. (n.d.) 'Chinese Migration to Latin America and the Caribbean: A Historical Overview', cited in R. Rustomji-Kerns, 'Preface', in R. Rustomji-Kerns, R. Srikanth and L. Mendoza Strobel (eds) *Encounters: People of Asian Descent in the Americas*, pp. xv–xvii. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

López, K. (2008) 'Afro-Asian Alliances: Marriage, Godparentage, and Social Status in Late-Nineteenth-Century Cuba', *Afro-Hispanic Review* 27(1): 59–72.

López, K. (2006) 'The Chinese in Cuban History', in W. Look Lai (ed.) *Essays on the Chinese Diaspora in the Caribbean*, pp. 105–29. St Augustine, Trinidad: Printcom (Caribbean) Ltd.

López, K. (2004) '"One Brings Another": The Formation of Early-Twentieth-Century Chinese Migrant Communities in Cuba', in A. Wilson (ed.) *The Chinese in the Caribbean,* pp. 93–127. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers.

López-Calvo, I. (2008) *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture*. Gainseville, FL: University of Florida Press.

Ma, L. J. C. (2003) 'Space, Place, and Transnationalism in the Chinese Diaspora', in L. J. C. Ma and C. Cartier (eds) *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity*, pp. 1–49. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Marez, C. (2004) *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ng, C.-K. and C.-B. Tan (2005) 'Editor's Note', *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 1(1): pp. v–vi.

Nichols, B. (1994) *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

Ong, A. (1999) *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ong, A. and D. M. Nonini (eds) (1996) *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Palumbo-Liu, D. (1999) *Asian/America*: *Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Pann, L. (1994) *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese Diaspora*. New York and Tokyo: Kodansha America.

Renov, M. (2004) *The Subject of Documentary*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Safran, W. (1991) 'Diasporas in Modern Society', *Diaspora* 1(1): 88–99.

Shimakawa, K. (2002) *National Abjection: The Asian American Body on Stage*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Siu, L. (2005) *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Skeldon, R. (2003) 'The Chinese Diaspora or the Migration of Chinese Peoples?', in L. J. C. Ma and C. Cartier (eds) *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity*, pp. 51–66. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Stratton, J. (1997) '(Dis)placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora', *Diaspora* 6(3): 301–29.

Tu, W. (1991) 'Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center', *Daedalus* 120(2): 1–32.
Yun, L. (2008) *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

SEAN METZGER is an Assistant Professor of English and Theater Studies at Duke University, where he is also affiliated with the Asian/Pacific Studies Institute. He has co-edited two volumes: with Olivia Khoo, *Futures of Chinese Cinema: Technologies and Temporalities in Chinese Screen Cultures* (Intellect, 2009) and with Gina Masequesmay, *Embodying Asian/American Sexualities* (Lexington, 2009). He is currently completing his first monograph, *Looks Chinese: Fashioning Asian/ American Spectatorship*. *Address*: Dept of English, Box 90015, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708, USA. [email: smetzger@dukeedu]