

# Reprise Editor's Note

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A powerful and theoretically astute analysis of the complexity and vulnerability of exilic consciousness in the context of the queer Cuban American community, Lázaro Lima's "*Locas al Rescate: The Transnational Hauntings of Queer Cubanidad*" (originally published in *Cuba Transnational*) offers a significant contribution both to transnational American Studies and to gender studies. In telling the insider story of the alternative identity formation, practices, and forms of "rescue" initiated by the affective activism of the Cuban American society in drag in 1990s Miami/South Beach, Lima resuscitates the liberatory gestures of a subculture defined by its pursuit of its own acceptance, value, and freedom. With their aesthetic and political life on a raft, the gay micro-communities inside Cuban America asserted their own islandic space, Lima observes, performing "takeovers" in and of parks and bars and beaches—creating a post-Habermasian sphere of public activism focused on private parts, saving themselves from AIDS, from the disaffection and disaffiliation of the right-wing Cuban immigrant community, and from the failure of their own yearning to belong, to be wanted, to be embodied as the figure of their compelling *Cubanidad*. Against the hegemony of the invented collective politics of the sacrificing immigrants whose recognition of the queer side of being (of a being constituted by identity loss) is yet to come, Lima suggests a spectral return—a personal and transnational reckoning of those whose lives the dream of freedom drowned.

Pia Wiegink's timely examination of the transforming transnational spaces of protest in a globalizing and technologically mediated public sphere in "Performance and Politics in the Public Sphere" offers a well-researched review of contemporary theory surrounding ideas of the political (Chantal Mouffe), the public sphere (Jürgen Habermas), the transnational public sphere (Nancy Fraser), and the reterritorialized transnational public sphere (Markus Schroer) as the basis for her analysis of how the performance of political action in public—virtual or physical—is transformed by the capacity of the local to be played on a global stage, thus turning the citizen-actor into a cosmopolitan, transnational force. Tracing examples from the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization meetings in 1999 by the Global Justice Movement to the work of the Electronic Disturbance Theater, from the civil

rights movement to the subject matter of her larger study, “The Church of Life After Shopping,” “Billionaires for Bush,” and “The Yes Men,” Wiegink provides an important analysis of the “alternative aesthetics” of the counterpublics’ formation, dissent, and action in and against hegemony. This selection is taken from her monograph, *Protest EnACTed: Activist Performance in the Contemporary United States*, a strong, cultural studies–focused contribution to transnational American Studies.

Nicole Waller’s study of Henry James’s *The Aspern Papers* examines how conventional literary studies’ approaches (those that depend on biography and character analysis) may tether James’s work to a set of values that reinscribe the hierarchies that his narrative specifically sets adrift. Reviewing various newer paradigms in American Studies—the border, immigrant studies, the Black Atlantic, Native American encounters—Waller relies on a subset of transnational studies, Atlantic studies, to utilize the metaphors of circulation and exchange, of fluidity and drift, of space and dislocation, to argue for a reading of James’s *The Aspern Papers* as a dislocated response to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s work *The House of the Seven Gables*. Reading *The Aspern Papers* closely against Hawthorne’s work, and comparing the European perspectives in both James’s and Hawthorne’s works, Waller suggests that in *The Aspern Papers* James affords a reading of the transnational experience as a generative gesture, where a Venetian “garden in the middle of the sea” may serve as an abode more fruitful (despite losses) and more productive than the fires to which Hawthorne condemns Italian villages in *The Marble Faun*. Waller’s interest in the fluid spaces between the works of James and Hawthorne is echoed by both transnational American Studies and the essay itself in the unnamed narrator’s instructions to the gondolier: “Go anywhere. . . .”

Silvia Schultersmandl’s essay “The Politics of Transnational Memory in Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*,” from her book *Transnational Matrilineage: Mother–Daughter Conflicts in Asian American Literature*, sees Tan’s representation of memory as either a function of loss (and limited recovery) or of distance (whether temporal or physical). For Schultersmandl, the text suggests that familial or national relationships built on generational and immigrant memory cannot really create conditions of solidarity or identification and are thus doomed to failure—either that, or what is “memory” must be transformed by “experience” and then be understood, what Schultersmandl calls “belated memory.” Schultersmandl offers an account of the failure of the narrative to provide for a bond between the generations of women—immigrant mothers and American-born daughters. This conceptual problem is represented by the novel’s end, where the overriding implication of the narrative is that in order to reconcile and occupy the identity of a Chinese American one must somehow be both Chinese and American, an experience of being that Schultersmandl questions. Additionally, in not representing modern China or modern Chinese women, Schultersmandl argues, the novel gives up an opportunity to create a “transnational solidarity” among women in favor of a national identity that supersedes the individual, who in Tan’s text becomes a mere stand-in for traditionally held ideological and national stereotypes.

Social and political protest in the transnational public sphere; the quintessential private sphere—the home—set adrift in American writing; and the problem of remembering and inheriting cultural identity are timely topics to be reprised in the context of today’s Occupy Wall Street movement (gone global), the collapse of the mortgage system, and the ever-present debate about whether ethnic identity can be conceived and represented apart from the body and its abode. These essays are reprised for their contributions to these important discussions as they apply to and inform transnational American Studies.