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Border Studies: An Annotated List of Cultural and Academic Web Sources

María Dueñas Vinuesa
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Border Studies: An Annotated List of Cultural and Academic Web Sources

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Abstract

Two cultural, social and functional systems have merged along the U.S.-Mexico border to create a new particular lifestyle which is entirely unique. The borderlands is a space of dependence and disparity, of rebellion and exploitation, which has generated a dynamic fusion culture that reflects the struggle of its people in order to assert their identity. This article is dedicated to the introduction, organization and exploration of internet resources related to the U.S.-Mexico border zone, with particular attention to the sites that reflect the borderlands’ cultural and literary expressions, as well as to those which provide information about the emerging field of Border Studies as an academic discipline for study and research.
1. Introduction

The southwest U.S. border line has been traced and retraced through the centuries and under different circumstances so as to distinguish the United States from its southern neighbor. The most dramatic of those redesigns was the one generated by the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty (1848), signed supposedly “by a sincere desire to put an end to the calamities of the war (...) and to establish upon a solid basis relations of peace and friendship, which shall confer reciprocal benefits upon the citizens of both, and assure the concord, harmony, and mutual confidence wherein the two people should live, as good neighbors (...)”. The region expands along some 1,900 miles, from the twin cities of Matamoros/Brownsville in the Gulf of Mexico up to Tijuana/San Ysidro in Baja California, crossing four U.S. states: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The Rio Bravo, as it is called in the U.S. (Rio Grande in Mexico) constitutes more than a half of the total length of the border. However, there is a common agreement in considering the border as “far more than the strip of land contiguous to the international boundary” (Driscoll 1993).

As Olivia Cadaval (1993) states in her article “United States-Mexico Borderlands / Frontera”, ... the border (is) the planet’s
longest between a country characterized by economic practices and achievements sometimes known as “first-world” and a country whose economy is sometimes characterized as “third-world”. And as Gloria Anzaldua, a borderlander herself, expresses in a more intimate voice, “The U.S.-Mexican border is an open wound where the third world grates against the first and bleeds” (Anzaldua 1987).

The borderlanders’ is an emerging culture that has little to do with mainstream America. In their struggle for maintaining an identity in their own land but under an alien sovereignty, people along the border have merged influences, developing a particular cultural and social environment with distinctive styles, social organizations and local economies. Although cultural expressions vary among the different border towns and regions just as people do, borderlanders retain a common essence, sustaining distinctive Mexican legacies and traits.

The border is a space of dependence and disparity that expresses its people’s resistance by reinforcing its cultural identity. Borderlanders have mixed and blended the institutions, expressions, structures and languages of the two societies and generated something that is entirely original. The underlying collective Mexican identities -diverse along the border, as the original dwellers were diverse as well- have been rede-
fined by the irremediable penetration of the Anglo influence, originating a fusion culture. That fusion culture, although apparently local, is seen by some critics as a process of transculturation, as it involves relationships between two countries across a border, conferring therefore a bi-national dimension to the phenomenon.

The border provides its people with a particular context so as to develop special cases of national and cultural identity. As Cadaval (1993) points out, “The dominant discourse that assigns low social values to particular sectors of population is answered by a creative flood of expression of identity in music, graphic arts, poetry, and styles of clothing and self presentation”. The border is an *interzone* between countries, languages, cultures and sensibilities, and the history of its people is one of oppression and struggle. And, although sometimes these people have been accused of being surrendered and adapted to the Anglo influence, we still can find, as Valenzuela (1993) states, “important sociocultural resistance movements which articulate their goals with verbal symbols, visual images, and reinterpretations of regional history that assert a cultural identity formed in opposition to the United States”.

CONTENTS
The contradictions and conflicts, the assertion of a particular identity that is conveyed by means of that fusion culture are expressed through verbal channel and visual images, via popular culture in the form of music (corridos, música norteña...) and colorful and sometimes extravagant artistic representations often on outdoors murals, as well as in folk symbols and attitudes, and in a great amount of literary expression. As a result of the dynamic culture along the border, American literature is being enriched with a body of voices that rise from those writers living either on or close to the border. Most of them come from Mexican-American writers: chicanos, pochos... borderlanders in a word. The literature is about the border: about people who move back and forth from one side to the other, about the tremendous effort of those who strive to make sense of their dual identity, about those who struggle to survive within a bicultural community.

The study of the phenomena, conditions and productions of the people, society and culture along the border has generated an intellectual infrastructure that, under the generic name of ‘Border Studies’, has attracted the interest of representatives of various disciplines and perspectives. From its origins, as Driscoll (1993) indicates, “Border Studies (...) was rather loosely organized and oriented toward the pertinent research
interest of its participants”. Border Studies is in its widest sense a relatively young discipline: its origins as an academic field can be traced from the 1950s, when some theoretical work and ample intellectual and academic achievements were made, leading to the subsequent development of Border Studies as a contemporary, multidisciplinary field of study and research.

This annotated list of references provides a fairly comprehensive number of sources for the exploration on the Web of sites related to the borderland and Border Studies. Although some of the pages provide generic information about the zone and its people, an effort to offer sites relevant to the culture and literature fields have been made. The sites included are connected in different ways to Border Studies. For a practical use of the sources, I have divided them into seventeen sections or categories. Some of the sites have content in themselves, whereas others are pages that provide links to other related sites. For this reason, some of the sites included may be found through different resources. The organization of the resources has been established as follows:
Works cited


II. Web resources

1. General interest sites

**THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER RESOURCES PAGE.**

http://learning.berkeley.edu/Courses/AS102Sum97/resources.html

(accessed October 31, 2003). Contains site maps and information about people, culture and institutions in the different U.S. border states (California, Arizona, New Mexico & Texas).

**BORDER CROSSINGS: LA FRONTERA.**

http://www.uiowa.edu/~commstud/resources/bordercrossings/frontera.html

(accessed October 31, 2003). Contains a comprehensive list of links to sites and resources about culture and people at the Mexico-U.S. border.

**BORDERS/FRONTERAS.**

http://www.folklife.si.edu/vfest/frontera/start.htm

(accessed October 31, 2003). A bilingual site with resources on art, music, language and culture.

**BORDERING THE FUTURE.**

http://www.window.state.tx.us/border/border.html

(accessed October 31, 2003). A site sponsored by the State Gov-
ernment of Texas, containing texts on issues such as economy, public education and immigration among others.

ANDANZAS AL WEB LATINO.

http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/latino.html
(accessed October 31, 2003). Presents a number of sites including directories on culture, politics and economics.

THE AZTECA WEB PAGE.

http://www.mexica.net/

BORDER PACT NETWORK.

http://www.borderpact.org
(accessed October 31, 2003). Border higher education institutions fostering change in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

RESOURCE CENTER OF THE AMERICAS.

http://www.americas.org/
(accessed October 31, 2003). The Resource Center of the Americas provides information and develops programs that demonstrate the connections between the people of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States, highlighting the voices of the silenced and ignored.

HOUSTON INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE.

(accessed October 31, 2003). Contains information and articles
about history, traditions, educational experiences, cultural music and events.

THE TEJANOS.
http://216.55.31.228/tejanos/english/
(accessed October 31, 2003). Includes such topics as history, Mexican immigration, and Tex-Mex culture.

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. BORDER AND LATIN AMERICAN INFORMATION.
http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/
(accessed October 29, 2003).

CHICANO/LATINO WEST & BORDERLAND SITES.
http://www.wsu.edu/~amerstu/mw/chicano.html
(accessed October 29, 2003).

BORDER CULTURES COLLECTION PROJECT. THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS DIGITAL LIBRARY.
http://www.lib.utsystem.edu/about/border/

2. Border studies web sites

http://www.utep.edu/border
(accessed October 29, 2003). The Borderlands Encyclopedia. A digital educational resource on contemporary United States-Mexico border issues. Created and maintained by the University of Texas at El Paso. Contents are divided into six categories (culture & media, education & training, family life & population groups,
government & politics, health & environment, and economics & business) each one containing internet links to related web sites. Includes links to sights and sounds of the Borderlands and special contributions.


3. Articles on the web

Driscoll, Barbara A. “La Frontera and Its People: The Early Development of Border and Mexican American Studies”.

Leonard, Frances & Roberto Salmón. “Border Studies: Humanities Perspectives on People and Boundary Lines”.


Schneider, Julie. “The Internet as a Transboundary Information Resource”.

Talavera, Ramón. “The culture of Mexico in the border: Laredo, Tx”.

Valenzuela Arce, José Manuel. “Cultural Identities on the Mexico-United States Border”.
4. Research institutions

Center for Mexican-American Studies. The University of Texas, Austin.
A focus of Chicano scholarship and educational programs and a national leader in teaching, research, and publications.

Center for Southwest Research. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.
A resource center for the comparative and interdisciplinary study of New Mexico and the Southwest. The Center comprises both library collections (including archival materials, music and rare books) and the research efforts of affiliated programs.

Center for the Study of the Southwest. Southwest Texas State University.
The Center examines the Southwest as an arena for cultures in conflict and in harmony from prehistory to the present and encompasses among others such issues and themes as the clash and co-operation of diverse cultures.
EL COLEGIO DE LA FRONTERA NORTE. DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS CULTURALES.

The Department of Cultural Studies analyzes the U.S.-Mexico border culture which methodological y theoretical tools from a variety of disciplines.

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES RESEARCH UNIT. UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM, UK.

IBRU works to enhance the resources available for the peaceful resolution of problems associated with international boundaries. Includes information and related links about specific boundaries and territorial issues, organizations with boundary-related interests, reference material, and miscellanea.

INTERUNIVERSITY PROGRAM FOR LATINO RESEARCH.

A consortium-structure institution, in which resources and scholarship are shared, in an effort to better illuminate and solve the problems that affect all Latinos in the United States.

JULIAN SAMORA RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY.

The JSRI is committed to the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge to serve the needs of Latino communities in the Midwest.
Promotes cross-disciplinary research on Mexican American and other Latino communities in the U.S.


The HRC performs basic and applied research on a broad range of topics related to Hispanic population.

The HRC’s mission is to encourage, facilitate and support faculty as they pursue, contact and document research which will broaden and deepen the knowledge base on this Hispanics across disciplines, across divisions and across colleges.

The TBI provides with information, contacts, seminars, opportunities for study, research grants, internships, academic exchange partnerships, and service-learning opportunities.
5. Academic programs

BORDERLANDS STUDIES PROGRAM. Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas.

BORDER STUDIES PROGRAM at El Paso, Texas & Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, organized by Earlham College.

http://w3fp.arizona.edu/masrc/courses/curric1f.htm (accessed October 29, 2003).


6. Monographic courses and seminars


The Border Academy.
http://www.w3fp.arizona.edu/masrc/bdac/bdac.htm (accessed October 31, 2003).
An intense, two week summer program examining the political, economic and social issues shaping life on the U.S.-Mexican border. Presented annually by the University of Arizona Mexican American Studies and Research Center.

The Telecommunications Borderlands Seminar.
Department of Communication. University of Texas at El Paso.

7. Bibliography lists

7.1. Literature

Defining the Southwest: Selected Bibliography. By Tom Lynch, New Mexico State University.

Writing the Southwest: Selected Readings. The University of Arizona Library’s Collection.


7.2. General


7.3. Others


http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/hasrg/latinam/ambiente2.html

8. Links to writers


The Chicano Literature Index. San Antonio College, Texas.

Gloria Anzaldúa. Borderland’s writer.
9. Journals and Periodicals

9.1. Academic Journals

La Frontera

Newsletter of the Association for Borderlands Studies. Published semi-annually. La Frontera reports on ABS meetings, professional news, and other information of interest.

Texas Journal of Ideas, History and Culture.

An entirely downloadable journal.


An interdisciplinary, refereed journal of Chicano/a Studies, dedicated to scholarly research relevant to or informed by the Chicano/a experience. First published in 1970. Issued twice a year.

Perspectives in Mexican American Studies. The University of Arizona.


Mexican American Studies and Research Center Working Papers.

9.2. Other periodical publications

Frontera Norte Sur
Provides on-line news coverage of the US-Mexico border.

La Herencia
A magazine dedicated to the Hispanic Community of New Mexico and the Southwest.

10. Publishers, electronic bookstores, and related sites

Arte Público Press. University of Houston.

Borderlands Bookstore.

Café Latino.

Cinco Puntos Press.
Clear Light Books.

Expresso Mi Cultura.

Libros Latinos.


New Mexico Book Association.

Read Southwest.


Stanford University Press.

Texas Western Press. The University of Texas at El Paso.
The Border Book Festival. Las Cruces, NM.  

The University of Arizona Press.  

The University of Texas Press.  

Wings Press.  

11. Associations

Association for Borderlands Studies  
http://www.absborderlands.org/ (accessed October 31, 2003). Scholarly association for the comparative study of international boundaries and border regions. Contemporary issues include regional economic integration, the emergence of new post-Communist nation states, the proliferation of ethnic conflicts, and the need to institutionalize management of transboundary problems ranging from immigration to shared environmental problems to public health and economic development concerns.

Red Fronteras  
http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/6131/ (accessed October 31, 2003). A group of scholars, civil servants, advisors and students who, regardless of their academical background, job, position or
nationality, are linked by a common interest: borders in their widest expression and diversity.

12. Voices & testimonial documents

Film / Video Materials for Programs on Hispanics.


“The Life of a Maquiladora Worker”. By Maria Ibarra with David Bacon.

An extended interview with a woman in a Tijuana-based assembly plant confirms critics’ allegations -- low wages, bad working conditions, oppressive fear.


Ruben Salazar: Border Correspondent.

References to a selection of the best journalism of a famous border correspondent.


Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.


Voices From La Frontera: Conditions and Concerns.

13. Photographs and graphic exhibitions

The South Texas Border 1900-1920. Photographs form the Robert Runyon Collection. The General Libraries at the University of Texas at Austin.


Historical Borders Photographs. Institute of Oral History. The University of Texas at El Paso.

The Border Project.

A body of photographs and historical essays, documents the space where such contradictions take place. It is assembled in four sections: The Boundary, The City, The Factory, and The River, documenting the physical appearance of social, economic, political, and natural processes that are shaping the San Diego-Tijuana border region.
14. Maps

Maps of the Lower Rio Grande Region.

Maps of the United States and Texas, Burgess 1839. Hargrett Library Rare Map collection. The University of Georgia.

Maps of Texas and the countries adjacent. Emory 1844.

15. Art

Border Art workshop - Taller de Arte Fronterizo.


Vfest Borderlands. Traditional Arts.
Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, San Antonio, Texas.  
The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center (GCAC) was founded in 1980 as a nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization whose mission is to preserve, promote and develop the arts and culture of the Chicano/Latino/Native American peoples. Provides artistic development for Dance, Literature, Media Arts, Theater Arts, Visual Arts and Xicano Music.

El Paso-Ciudad Juarez Murals.  

Colors on Desert Walls. The Murals of El Paso.  

16. Museums and archives

Centennial Museum. Natural and Cultural History.  


California Ethnic And Multicultural Archives. University of California, Santa Barbara.  
Mexican Cultural Institute. Los Angeles, California.

The Mexican Museum. San Francisco, California.

Mexi-Arte Museum. Austin, Texas.

Arizona State Museum. Documentary Relations of the Southwest.

17. Music & films

Alphabetical Listing of Tejano Music.

Corridos de Texas.

Hacienda Records.

Los Super Seven.
Música de las Fronteras / Borderlands Music Virtual Festival.  

Tejano Music.  


The Borders Music Project Group.  

Cinemaluna.com  
A web site dedicated to promoting alternative and independent Chicano cinema.