Delve Deeper into "Maquilapolis"
A film by Vicky Funari and Sergio De La Torre

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Rebecca Federman of the New York Public Library in partnership with the American Library Association, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the upcoming P.O.V. documentary “Maquilapolis” that premieres on October 10th, 2006 at 10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings at www.pbs.org/pov/).

Just over the border in Mexico is an area peppered with maquiladoras: massive sweatshops often owned by the world’s largest multinational corporations. Carmen and Lourdes work at maquiladoras in Tijuana, where each day they confront labor violations, environmental devastation and urban chaos. In this lyrical documentary, the women reach beyond the daily struggle for survival to organize for change, taking on both the Mexican and U.S. governments and a major television manufacturer. A co-production of the Independent Television Service (ITVS).

ADULT NONFICTION


Castillo, Debra A. Border Women: Writing from La Frontera. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. Border Women views border theories from women living on the border itself, with writers such as Helena Maria Viramontes and Demetria Martinez.


Cruz-Torres, Maria Luz. Lives of Dust and Water: An Anthropology of Change and Resistance in Northwestern Mexico. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2004. Cruz-Torres examines the northwestern coast of Mexico, the growth of marine life and economic development, and the effects (socially and environmentally) it is having on the lives of its residents.


Kopinak, Kathryn. Desert Capitalism: Maquiladoras in North America’s Western Industrial Corridor. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1996. An examination of the new desert capitalism of maquiladoras in Mexico, and how these companies are not improving the lives of their workers, but rather making them much worse.


Martens, Margaret Hosmer, and Swasti Mitter. Women in Trade Unions: Organizing the Unorganized. Geneva: International Labour Office, 1994. Female workers, enticed by more flexible employment opportunities brought on by the technology industries, have not often mobilized to join unions. This book stresses the importance of collective action for female workers in developing nations.


Pena, Devon Gerardo. The Terror of the Machine: Technology, Work, Gender, and Ecology on the U.S.-Mexico Border. Austin, TX: Center for Mexican American Studies, 1997. The book discusses female workers struggles for democracy and justice in the increasing number of foreign-owned maquiladoras lining the Mexico-
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American border, and their resistance to patriarchal rule.


Randall, Laura, ed. Changing Structure of Mexico: Political, Social, and Economic Prospects. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006. Chapters include issues on the social and economic geography of Mexico, how NAFTA has affected the Mexican economy, and the changing roles of women within Mexican politics and education. From the Columbia University seminar series.


Sainz, Juan Perez. From the Finca to the Maquiladora: Labor and Capitalist Development in Central America. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000. The development of exports out of Central and South America, specifically bananas and coffee, and how the mass exportation has put these small businesses in the global market and how that effects the maquilas, workers and the environment.


Townsend, Janet Gabriel. Women and Power: Fighting Patriarchies and Poverty. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999. Townsend examines examples of women and how they deal with the power struggle, looking specifically at rural Mexican women and how their winning fights against patriarchal power are shedding new light on female empowerment.


ADULT FICTION


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fantastical life of Mexican women and the talents they possess.

Martinez, Manuel Luis. Crossing. Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press, 1998. Luis, a 16 year old from rural Mexico, makes the journey into the U.S. only to be caught. He finds himself on a train with other Mexicans on a journey that involves many other figurative crossings.


NON-FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Dash, Joan. We Shall Not Be Moved: The Women’s Factory Strike of 1909. New York: Scholastic, 1996. Nearly 30,000 poverty-stricken teenage girls started what was to become one of the largest women’s strikes in history, when they walked out on their jobs as garment workers for 13 weeks. Their legacy eventually became the Ladies Garment Workers Union.


FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS


Cruz, Maria Colleen. Border Crossing: A Novel. Houston, TX: Pinata Books, 2003. Ceci Alvarez, in an attempt to learn more about her father’s history and her own Mexican heritage, heads across the border to Mexico.


Paulsen, Gary. Sisters/Hermanas. New York: Harcourt, 1993. A bilingual book about two different girls with two very different lives. Although Rosa and Traci both live in Houston, Rosa must make money as a prostitute, while Traci lives a sheltered life with her wealthy parents. However they experience a kinship the day their lives cross.


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www.amazon.com

“Grassroots Rising.” A film by Robert C. Winn, 2005. (56 min.)
The film explores the origins of grassroots political activism in L.A.’s
Asian American population by looking at various workers’ stories
about injustice, and how grassroots activist groups are combating the
problem head-on. Winn also explores the activism of L.A.’s
Latino population.

“La Tragedia de Macario.” A film by Pablo Veliz, 2005. (71 min.)
The film looks at the harrowing journey of Mexican immigrants
attempting to cross the border into the United States. The film is
dedicated to those Mexican workers who suffocated in the back of a
truck in Victoria, TX on May 14, 2003.

www.amazon.com

“Mexico – Back-door to the Promised Land.” A film by
Stephan Hallman, 1999. (45 min.)
Roger Moore narrates this episode from the series Children
without Childhood that explores the hardships of migrant workers in
Mexico who dream of the promised land of America next door.

“On the Edge: The Femicide of Ciudad Juarez.” A film by Steev
Hise, 2006. (58 min.)
Over the last 12 years more than 400 young women have been murdered in
the Mexican border town of Ciudad Juarez, while the Mexican
government and the police have done little to investigate the brutal
killings. Family and community activists try to obtain justice in this
documentary.

www.amazon.com

“Salt of the Earth.” A film by Herbert J. Biberman, 1954. (94
min.)
Based on the Empire Zinc Mine in New Mexico, this film
explores the working conditions and wage disparities between Mexican-
American workers and the Anglo workers of nearby mines.

www.amazon.com

“Wal-Mart: The High Cost of
Low Price.” A film by Robert
Greenwald, 2005. (95 min.)
A documentary about people from
two different continents trying to
fight the giant that is Wal-Mart.

www.amazon.com

Workers on a personal quest to take
the giant down.

“Norma Rae.” A film by Martin
Ritt, 1979. (110 min.) Sally Field
plays a single mother working in a
textile factory who overcomes
dangers to unionize her factory.

www.amazon.com

WEB SITES

P.O.V.’s “Maquilapolis” Web site
www.pbs.org/pov/pov2006/ma
quilapolis
Includes an interview with the
filmmakers, resources, special features and more.

P.O.V.’s “Senorita Extraviada”
Web site
www.pbs.org/pov/pov2002/se
noritaextraviada
Official P.O.V. Web site for the film
“Senorita Extraviada.” Includes
resources for getting involved and
what life is like in the maquiladoras.

Under Two Flags: Mexican
Workers in Washington Fields
http://seattletimes.nwsource.c
om/mexico/
This four-part series chronicles the lives of Mexican farm workers in
Eastern Washington and explores the underground economy that
supports Washington’s agricultural industry.

Migration Policy Institute
www.migrationpolicy.org/
Web site devoted to the policies and
procedures of immigration and
workers throughout the world.

Line of Sight: Views of the
U.S./Mexico Border
http://sweeney.ucr.edu/exhibiti
ons/border/
Photo exhibition organized by the Sweeney Art Gallery, University of
California, Riverside, and by the University of California Institute for
Mexico. Web site includes images, introduction to the exhibit and
artists, and online resources related to Mexican/U.S border studies.

Border Studies: Texas-Mexico
Border
www.humanities-
interactive.org/borderstudies/b
order_studies_exhibit/exhibitin
dex.html
Includes changing border maps, an
essay on “Human Interaction in the
Texas-Mexico Borderlands”, and
teacher activities. From the Texas
Council for the Humanities.

San Diego/Tijuana Border Aerial
Photo Set
http://sweeney.ucr.edu/mw/bord
er/sdtab2.html
Ten aerial photographs from the
USGS/US Customs Service from
1979.

Tijuana and the Border
www.signonsandiego.com/new
s/mexico/tijuana/
Contains continuous coverage of the
issues affecting California and the
Tijuana border, including news
stories, immigration issues,
tourism, and weather. From
SignOnSanDiego.com, part of the
Union-Tribune.

U.S. Embassy in Mexico City
http://mexico.usembassy.gov/
xmexico/eborder_mechs.html
Maps, laws, and border migration
from the official Embassy website.

The New Frontier/ La Nueva
Frontera
www.time.com/time/covers/11
01010611/
A Time magazine special on the
borders of El Paso and Juarez,
immigration, economies, and
politics of these two border cities.

Toxic Candy
www.ocregister.com/investigati
ons/2004/lead/
An article about unsafe levels of
lead in candy – most of it made in
Mexico. Includes a guide to the
questionable candies and graphics
on the dangers in lead. From the
Orange County Register.

The Maquila Solidarity Network
www.maquilasolidarity.org/
News stories, action newsletters,
and factory disclosures are features in
this trilingual website for maquila
solidarity. Includes other resources,
links and an action toolkit.

Handbook of Texas Online
www.tsha.utexas.edu/handboo
k/online/articles/MM/dzm2.ht
ml
An online article describing
maquiladoras and their histories.
Includes a bibliography.

Maquiladora Health and Safety
Support Network
http://mhssn.igc.org/
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A volunteer network of occupational health and safety professionals providing information on workplace hazards in the 3,000 maquiladora plants along the U.S.-Mexico border. Includes links to an article at: http://mhssn.igc.org/brown_syn ergist.htm

A bilingual report from the Environmental Health Coalition discussing the ten years of NAFTA in the San Diego and Tijuana Border area.

A report from the North American Conference on Latin America discussing Mexican labor law reform and issues of immigration.

Comite Fronterizo de Obreras www.cfomaquiladoras.org/data principalabril05.htm
This Web site provides Maquiladora statistics on Comite Fronterizo de Obreras. Text in Spanish.