

Allison E. Fagan. *From the Edge: Chicana/o Border Literature and the Politics of Print.*
New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016. 212 pp. \$26.95, paper, ISBN
978-0-8135-8379-2.



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Published on H-LatAm (February, 2017)

Commissioned by Andrae Marak (Governors State University)

Allison E. Fagan's *From the Edge: Chicana/o Border Literature and the Politics of Print* argues that the materiality of books plays an important role in how we make meaning. Attending to such features of texts as typography, editorial changes, and marginalia thus promises to illuminate the significance of those texts more broadly than a reading of the form or content alone. It also attunes us to what Fagan refers to as the "social lives of texts," or the ways that textual meaning is generated not only by authorial intention or craft but also by the interplay of editors, publishers, readers, and critics. Fagan builds on the work of such literary theorists as Gerard Genette and Jerome McGann, thinkers whose insights into textual materiality have rarely been imported into Chicana/o literary studies. Fagan's book thus not only delivers welcome new insights into the particular texts it takes up; it also broadens the entire field of Chicana/o literary studies by pushing scholars to consider a new interpretive framework.

In the introduction to the book, Fagan argues that a borderlands paradigm provides the best way of understanding the texts her book analyzes. She provides an excellent overview of borderlands theory, focusing on the anxiety that some Chicana/o scholars feel about the way that the "border" has lost its historical reference and passed over into merely metaphorical usage. Keeping these criticisms in mind, Fagan carefully outlines a rationale for using the borderlands as a metaphor to describe the liminal space of what Genette refers to as "paratextual" material. Marginalia, footnotes, typography—these are neither wholly intrinsic or wholly extrinsic to what we think of as a literary text. As Fagan puts it, "paratexts and bibliographic codes function as the border space between the text and the social and political world it inhabits, but they also record and render visible the politics of publishing border literature" (p. 11). Attending to the materiality of texts and insisting on the materiality of the border are thus affiliated projects.

Fagan also reveals the book's organizational structure in the introduction. The chapters unfold according to the logic of book historian Robert Darnton's famous "communications circuit," with the first chapter focusing on authors, the second and third chapters on publishers, the fourth on editors and archivists, and the fifth on readers. This might have given the book an iterative quality, but *From the Edge* maintains a strong through-line, taking readers from the comfortable ground of authorial intention through the various machinations of book publishing and editing to comparatively less comfortable terrain of reader response. The various vantage points from which Fagan conducts her analysis provide persuasive evidence for her claim that literary meaning emerges from social relations, rather than autonomously from individual texts.

Readers interested in Fagan's analysis of particular literary works will not be disappointed. Each chapter provides worthwhile insights into a range of canonical and lesser-known Chicana/o texts. Chapter 1 analyzes changes made to the texts of Rolando Hinojosa's *Estampas del valle* (1973) and Ana Castillo's *Sapogonia* (1990) in different editions. These significant textual changes frustrate readerly desire for a stable text to interpret and also highlight the complex choices both authors have had to make in navigating the publishing landscape. Chapter 2 examines the presence of Spanish-English glossaries in Jovita González and Margaret Eimer's *Caballero* (1996) and Ernesto Galarza's *Barrio Boy* (1971). Fagan convincingly argues that glossaries are not simply transparent documents, but instead demonstrate the fraught language politics Chicana/o authors constantly confront. Chapter 3 investigates typography in Nash Candelaria's novel *Memories of the Alhambra* (1977) and Richard Yañez's short story "Desert Vista" (2003). Considering such features as the use of diacritics and boldface, Fagan shows how the material features of the text correspond not only to authorial intention but also to the financial limitations and politics of publishers.

Chapter 4 looks at the critical conversations provoked by two "recovered" Chicana novels: Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don* (1885) and Margarita Cota-Cárdenas's *Puppet* (1985). The republication of these works in 1992 and 2000, respectively, demonstrates how editors and archivists attempt to control the horizons of interpretation of literary texts. Finally, chapter 5 ambitiously examines marginalia found in fifteen different copies of Sandra Cisneros's novel *The House on Mango Street* (1984). Fagan reads the marginalia for clues about the pedagogical framing through which readers encounter the novel, arguing that such framing never sufficiently contains either subversive or reactionary interpretations.

Fagan's approach to textual materiality is unique, and scholars of Chicana/o literature will find much here to admire and engage. *From the Edge* has obvious affinities with Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez's focus on reader-response theory in *Life in Search of Readers: Reading (in) Chicano/a Literature* (2003) and with the focus on institutionality as a lens for reading literary history in José F. Aranda's *When We Arrive: A New Literary History of Mexican America* (2003) and my own *Ends of Assimilation: The Formation of Chicano Literature* (2015). Although Fagan focuses mostly on twentieth- and twenty-first-century texts (Ruiz de Burton notwithstanding), her attention to materiality and textual circulation also resonates with the work of such nineteenth-century studies as Raúl Coronado's *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture* (2013), Marissa K. López's *Chicano Nations: The Hemispheric Origins of Mexican American Literature* (2011), and Kirsten Silva Gruesz's *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (2001). All of which is to say that Fagan's book is a welcome entry into an ongoing conversation about how fields such as Chicana/o and Latina/o literature are historically constituted, and how texts become emblematic of political

or representational orthodoxies within those fields.

Although *From the Edge* makes obvious contributions to the field, however, it is not without weaknesses. Despite the introduction's careful elaboration of the borderlands paradigm, I am not persuaded that the border plays a necessary role in the book's analysis. Of the nine literary works that the book analyzes, only a few are actually set in the United States-Mexico borderlands, though others depict various kinds of border crossings. In other words, it is unlikely that this particular constellation of texts would be identified as representative "border literature" by other scholars. More importantly, though, the significance of borders and borderlands tends to disappear behind Fagan's analyses of textual materiality, so much so that I began to wonder why it was present in the first place. I suspect that the book would be equally as strong if it had restricted its focus to Chicana/o textual materiality.

In a related vein, it would be interesting to see Fagan build on her insights in *From the Edge* to other genres and media of textual materiality. Although the book sets out to analyze Chicana/o literature, it restricts itself to a fairly narrow range of narrative prose works. How would Fagan's insights into typography help us understand the experiments of Chicano movement-era poets like Alurista or contemporary poets such as J. Michael Martinez? And how should we go about understanding the social lives of dramatic texts such as Teatro Campesino's "actos"? The political wrangling over authorship and editorial framing for dramatic texts is certainly as compelling as the history Fagan outlines in relationship to *The Squatter and the Don*. These questions about genre point to a larger question about media. Fagan's analysis centers almost totally on books, but it is not clear to me that books are the best place for examining the social lives of texts. At least, they are not the only place. Chicana/o literary history is filled with textual production in newspa-

pers, mimeographed pamphlets, literary magazines, and other media. Parts of Rolando Hinojosa's *Estampas del valle*, for example, were published in the Quinto Sol magazine *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought* before they appeared in book form. What role does print culture play in the story Fagan tells about that text's instability?

The individual readings of texts in the body of the book are strong, but the chapter examining marginalia in *The House on Mango Street* suffers from some questionable assumptions. Fagan asks what it is about Mango Street "that encourages readers to speak in and from the margins" (p. 133), implying that readers are more likely to annotate this book than other books. But the chapter makes no comparison about the frequency or volume of annotations as evidence for this assertion, so the reading of the book's white space seems unmotivated. The methodology of the chapter is also questionable. Fagan purchased fifteen used copies of the book from Amazon and examined the marginalia in these copies. The chapter then speculates about the likely pedagogical framing of the text, and asserts the desire on the part of readers to "recolonize" its pages (p. 134). The speculation about the pedagogical framing makes that assertion impossible to evaluate, however. Unless we know precisely how the book was encountered by these readers, we cannot really know the motivations behind their annotations. Indeed, the fact that these copies were resold cheaply on Amazon suggests that these readers ultimately regarded the book as a disposable commodity. One might imagine a different version of this investigation that examined the marginalia in copies of the book from a particular classroom. Such a study would allow the researcher to give a full account of the pedagogical framing employed and how students responded to it. Recognizing that Fagan is attempting here something quite original, I see this not simply as a weakness, but rather as an opportunity for further research.

The contributions that *From the Edge* makes to Chicana/o literary studies are apparent and abundant. Fagan has successfully advanced a new and important paradigm of reading Chicana/o textual materiality, and I look forward to seeing how scholars engage that paradigm, as well as her analyses of specific texts. It should influence how we regard the social lives of Chicana/o texts, not least by asking us to pay more attention to our own political, professional, and personal investments in literary interpretation and reinterpretation.

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Citation: John Alba Cutler. Review of Fagan, Allison E. *From the Edge: Chicana/o Border Literature and the Politics of Print*. H-LatAm, H-Net Reviews. February, 2017.

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