



## The Lit Review Podcast

## English Transcript

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**Guest/Topic:** Trina Reynolds-Tyler on *Borderlands: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa

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*[Intro context: Monica and Page talk about Mariame Kaba's release of her first book, We Do This 'Til We Free Us, featuring cover artwork by Monica, more talk on getting alderpeople to vote no on Lori Lightfoot's anti-progressive budget, and the complexities of the book Borderlands.]*

**00:00 Page:**

Happy Sagittarius season everyone! Welcome back. I don't know about y'all, but I have had an emotional and just challenging last week -- weeks -- in the what feels like 700th week of the year that is 2020. But I hope all y'all that are listening have found some rest and some ease in your life this week. How are you doing? How's your week been, Monica?

**00:30 Monica:**

Oh man, my week's been a little rough. It's also just, yeah, really heartbreaking seeing all the people that are still traveling for the holidays, I - when the cases of COVID are worse than they've ever been. Oh, it's so -- it's really frustrating. And I feel like hope is like a frickin discipline these days. Like, really? So please friends, stay home if you're able to and wear a mask everywhere you go.

But yeah, I don't know. Speaking of hope. Our friend, our mentor, your favorite prison abolitionist and Twitter shit talker Mariame Kaba just officially announced her first book, releasing in February of 2021. The book is called *We Do This Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*, and it's being published by Haymarket Books. And folks can pre-order right now at Powell's online and Bluestockings in New York. I'm sure there's going to be other places that pop up soon, so go reserve your book after you listen to this episode. But yes!

01:33 **Page:**

It has a beautiful, beautiful cover. I've got to say, it just is stunning. You'll want to read it just because you saw the art on it. I don't know who did it.

01:41 **Monica:**

*[laughs]* I don't know either. Some artist named Monica Trinidad.

01:47 **Page:**

Congrats, though.

01:48 **Monica:**

Yeah, I feel like I keep seeing that art and I'm like, Oh man, whoever has -- because I printed postcards of these before and would sell them for a -- to fundraise for different efforts that Mariame picked. So yeah, whoever has those postcards now, that's truly going to be like that treasure that you put in your plastic and like, save it for the future generations to see and hold. But yeah, so tomorrow, we got that City Council vote on Lightfoot's anti-progressive budget, and it's not really looking too good. But folks are fighting super hard to get aldermen to vote no. And also like really making aldermen who are still voting yes, like publicly answer and be accountable, especially if they call themselves progressives, right?

02:28 **Page:**

Right. These progressive quote unquote aldermen; It's been really disappointing. I got to say, there's a lot -- Electoral politics and the government is not a place I often look to for hope or good things to happen. But there are some folks that I'm -- that are so-called progressive, so-called socialists who are still managing to make the bar, make me feel like I set the bar too high for even that. And so I think that there's a lot in this year, maybe especially in Chicago, but I suspect in many places around the world where we're seeing the failures and the limits of identity politics, and the electoral systems as a whole and electing our ideals and our politics through a system that is absolutely not meant to deliver any justice.

03:16 **Monica:**

That's so real. And I think that's why we decided to do this podcast in a way is that we knew in these moments of crisis things are going to like, be moving really fast and it's really hard to keep up with different things. And so we really wanted to create a space where folks could really be sure to ground themselves in one: the histories of people before us and the complexities and the realities of organizing in our communities today. That we all sort of hold these multiple truths. We're all learning together and really should be learning together.

03:50 **Page:**

Same. I've been feeling really grateful that we started this back up for a lot of reasons, and I think this week's conversation really demonstrates that. So we're talking to the amazing Trina Reynolds, who I've known for some time, and often whenever I get to hear Trina speak, I always, there's so many like great soundbites, and I think it's just someone that really makes a lot of dope connections. And I really love this conversation because I think -- it's about a book that I know I was introduced to in college. And it's one of those books where when you search for other people's thoughts about it online, it's a lot of dense jargon, academic texts that summarize it. And that's not very accessible. And so anyways, it's a very revered book. It's *Borderlands* by Gloria Anzaldúa, and Trina also read it in college. And so I think the conversation was cool because it's a book that is very revered and respected, and that has a lot of very valid critique because of who it erases from the borderlands, and that includes Black people, you know? Trina and I are both Black folk. And so it was interesting to talk about this book that has meant so much to so many folks and means so much and has a really important history, and also that we have a lot of difficulty in. And so to have a space to talk about what is important here and what's being said and how do we apply that, especially as people who are straight up erased from it, but we still find meaning and still find something that is helpful for us to navigate the world through the lens of a borderland.

05:32 **Monica:**

Yeah, this book was definitely really hard to talk about and I'm grateful that we were able to navigate it with Trina, who really guided us through what Anzaldúa was talking about. I even forgot while we were talking about it, that the book was actually one of the books banned in Arizona under the racist House bill 2281, which banned all Mexican-American studies in the Tucson school district. So there's that piece.

And then there's the piece around Anzaldúa's erasure of Blackness, like you were saying, and then this relationship to indigeneity that raises some red flags. But then it was just also this prolific book for queer Chicax folks who finally found solace in her words, and so there's a lot there. But again, that's why we do this. We believe in spaces to talk about the books and ideas that have influenced us, even the ones that we've really grown out of.

So, yeah, so let's get into it. We talked to Trina about the book *Borderlands: The New Mestiza* by *Gloria Anzaldúa*. It was published in 1987, a year after I was born. Trina Reynolds Tyler is a south side Chicago native and abolitionist investigating violence against women and girls at the hands of the state. She is the director of data at the Invisible Institute, which is a nonprofit known for investigating police misconduct. She is an auntie, a sister and an organizer. So tune in.

[INTRO STARTS]

[Sound of book pages turning, soft instrumental music]

**Monica:** You're listening to the Lit Review Podcast.

**Page:** We're your hosts, Page May and Monica Trinidad.

*[Musical hip hop beat playing in background from "Chicago" by David Ellis]*

**Mariame Kaba voiceover:** *"I think it's essential for people to learn together in order to be able to understand what we're up against."*

**Protesters Chanting:** *"CPD, shut it down! New Jim Crow, shut it down!" [chanting] "I said No Cop Academy, 95 mil for community!"*

**Page voiceover:** *"We must disrupt, we must disobey, we must agitate, we must escalate, we must break, we must create, we must abolish, we must transform -"*

**Young person voiceover:** *"I remember, she was shot by my house -"*

**Mariame voiceover:** *"In sharing our ideas, we're stronger."*

*[Music Lyrics] "Welcome to Chicago, this is home for most. This is the home of the wealthy, making cameos. This is the house of the heartless, the home of the cold. Man, my dog gets more acknowledgement than homeless folks. This is a house, a generation filled in Audy homes..."*

*[Music Fades]*

*[INTRO ENDS]*

07:48 **Page:**

Okay, welcome future LSC member of the 8th Ward. Trina. Hi, how are you? How are you doing?

07:58 **Trina:**

Hey, I'm doing really good. I feel especially good now that we've wrapped up that campaign. It was my first campaign in Chicago to ask people to vote for me, to do a thing, and it was actually the most hyper-local campaign in the city of Chicago. Many people argue that.

08:18 **Page:**

I would argue that as well. Yeah. Can you say more about who are you? What do you do and why?

08:23 **Trina:**

So I am a Black woman. I am from Chicago. I am the descendant of Black folks who came here through the Great Migration. I currently reside in my grandmother's home, so home is really, you

know, my family's really near and dear to me. I am the Director of Data at the Invisible Institute. It's a non-profit organization that primarily investigates police misconduct. But the mission is really we are equipping civilians with the resources and toolkits to hold public institutions accountable. I'm an organizer as well in a lot of different places. I feel like I've been with a lot of folks from like, BYP100 all the way to the Black Abolitionist Network. And I think I've popped into places along the way, always carrying with me abolitionist lens. This feminist lens, womanist lens. Uh yeah, that's me.

09:34 **Monica:**

So today we're talking about the book *Borderlands*, written by the late *Gloria Anzaldúa*, who identified as a Chicana, Tejana Lesbian. The book has been deemed super critical in the field of Chicana studies and has impacted so many people who have existed in this place of otherness with not only their racial and cultural identities, but also with gender and sexuality. So what led you to pick up this book and love it so much that you wanted to talk about it today,

10:02 **Trina:**

College! So I was a Hispanic studies major in college, which really meant that I learned about the colonizer and how colonization happened even outside of the, you know, outside of the United States of America, which is really what have been taught to me through my education. And so it was a really big moment for me to be exposed to various, just like, cultures and also begin to understand that Blackness was something that was outside, not only in the United States of America, but like all across the world and specifically in Latin America. And so I picked up the book because there is a professor, Professor Clara Lomas, who was my teacher for so many classes, and she really taught me about a lot of the Chicana history.

11:04 **Page:**

So in the intro of this, we began to acknowledge that this is a book that has critiques around how it talks about Blackness and indigeneity. And we definitely want to get into that, wanna hear your thoughts on it. But to start, can you give us a summary of what is this book about and what's the message that the author's trying to emphasize?

11:23 **Trina:**

So, the book is set into a couple of parts. There's like seven chapters of the book that are kind of talking about a little bit of the history of colonization, not only from like the Spaniards, but it also talks a lot of about how, like, one day Mexico became Texas and like, just like this other colonization. And she also grounds the book in her lived experience and also her ancestors, because those folks were, the folks who experienced that were also her ancestors. And so when she was coming up, you know, she is being raised in this place where, you know, you go to school and you can't speak Spanish or you're going to be disciplined for that and then you go home. And then there's this kind of confusion about whether or not you should be speaking

Spanish or English. So the entry point that we see into her family is like her mother and her grandmother, and how both of them in some way shape or form, lost their land. They initially had land, and then they lost that -- they were stolen. That land was stolen from them by way of whatever technicality. And then she begins to talk about how her childhood plays a role in that and how young people are playing soccer and they kick a ball across this invisible line. And I think ultimately her message is like, "why do we even have borders?" Because like there, there is so much that we-- that has come to this country and so much that has come out of this country. And one of the things that she says in this book is like, "I am like a turtle. I carry--" what is it, I really love it. "I am a turtle. Wherever I go, I carry home on my back." And it really makes me think about how, you know, how many people's history does not begin in this country and then how much of that came here? And then how many people were, you know, dragged here and massacred here? And how much have people stolen from those people who also came, you know, who were here? And then how does that create the kind of world that we live in today in the United States of America? And then how does that create the world that exists in Latin America? Because that - we have a parallel history in so many ways. And so, you know, she has this book. Not only is she talking about that, where she talked about the history and tying it into, you know, her family history. But then she's also talking about what it means to be a lesbian woman who is of this culture. And then lastly, she talks about, she talks a lot about women and about like sexual violence that happens that I feel like when people are talking about immigration, they don't always talk about like the experiences that women have.

14:13 **Monica:** Yeah, I want to talk a little bit more about the borderland theory. So I mean, first of all, Anzaldúa poetry and prose is like some of the most beautiful writing I've ever experienced. It's so beautiful. And when she talks about border culture, she's not just talking about this like physical geo--geopolitical border, right? She's also challenging this very dualistic thinking of identity, which she demonstrates in the book. Like literally, the book has like this interweaving of languages from like English to Castilian Spanish to like Tex-Mex Spanish and, and that's really this like act of defiance of like the white dominant culture that she believes is, like, so oppressive to us. So I want to just like, yeah, I want to dive more into that. What is she talking about when she says this, this border culture and this like liminal state of being, basically.

15:07 **Trina:** Yeah, well, so that was another thing that I really appreciated about the book that it was like, it was in all of these various languages. And then she also in the book there is like a list of like seven different languages. And then some of these are not even necessarily languages that I think are acknowledged by the state or by like academia. Or, you know, this is like, this is a language that, you know, because, you know, these are your people. This is where you're from. And this is like a part of your culture. And I think I'd like to start at this part where it's, you know, we're thinking of a young person who is going to school and then being told not to speak Spanish or being criminalized for speaking Spanish. And obviously being treated differently because of their culture, because of their race and their -- or their ethnicity. Then she goes and

then thinking about like the borderlands of your gender and how people receive that and how you can not -- you're not allowed to be outside of these three people, which is um, the nun -- I wrote it down because it was just -- which is the nun, the mother or the prostitute. Right? It's like, you are. You are these these are the type of women that you are OK? And if you are, if you don't fit into this, then right -- And then, and then to bring it into the, you know, thinking about your sexuality, like, it's like, Oh, I am, you know, it's like, you are not allowed to go beyond this. But then there's a way of thinking, right, there is something that she describes her rebellion by way of leaving the community and doing something different. Which I think is another kind of way of borderlands. I think when we think about geographic location and and where we're raised and what feels comfortable, especially for our family and for our parents, and what they expect of us based on some of these cultural norms? That was really huge to me. And they really gave me think -- it made me think about my mom and how, like, she's the only one of her siblings who left Memphis, Tennessee and moved to Chicago, the rest of her siblings stayed in Memphis.

There are some implications for doing one or the other. There are some consequences for those things. And then there's like the thinking, the conscious mind in the thinking and the acceptance of like the various cultural things, like the cultures and history that is a part of you, right, so she's like talking about being Chicana, which means like there is like indigenous Spaniard and then there's Mexican-Americans, and then Mestizos, were the -- that is like the the creation that comes out of like Indian people in Spanish people. Right? This is when colonization happens. And then she says, Chicanos are Mexican-Americans, they are the children of those mestizos. And she says, like Mestizaje is Indians and mestizas from central Mexico with as well as Native American Indians. And so there is this like spiritual piece that's coming along as well, because, you know, there is something like spiritual practices that are deeply connected to some of this indigenous culture. And then there's also this like Spaniard assimilation kind of thing happening where you have to be a certain way and you can't do this thing and you have to choose.

18:45 **Page:**

I mean, as you're speaking, it's -- Okay, so in this podcast, it's challenging to have some of the conversations that the books most want us to have because of who we are. And my understanding is that this is a book written by a Chicana person that speaks a lot to Chicana people, and Latinx people, of which I am not. And as you're speaking, I'm finding myself thinking about even your intro, how you talked about how your grandma came up for the Great Migration and how like -- how black people are people of diaspora and of people who have had to live in our turtle homes. I struggle with asking this because I think some of this is speaking to, I think the why I get so frustrated with the term "people of color", especially when it's not included with by like Black and Indigenous at the beginning, where I don't mean to flatten experiences or to insist that we experience the same things and that I think it's important for us to recognize, like the unique experiences that different folks have through capitalism and colonization, AND, and I feel like this is a really important conversation that's important for

understanding diaspora. And so I guess I'm wondering if you could talk about how as a Black person, what it was like to read this and what you saw it speak to that's relevant and related to Black diaspora. In what ways did you find things that were different?

**20:27 Trina:**

Initially reading this text, I felt like I was being exposed to a history and a culture that had never been that, that had really never been taught to me. But I did not see or imagine that Black people would be a part of this narrative. Now, as a more evolved version of myself and as someone who has attempted to dive into the history of Blackness across Latin America, I feel that Black people are made to be invisible in this book. And I specifically say this because she calls herself a dark skinned woman, and if she, Gloria Anzaldúa, is dark skinned, then what am I? and who am I? Who was my sister, who was my mother, who is my partner or are we significant enough to exist or to be mentioned in this narrative? Now, in the end of Chapter seven, or maybe, maybe like a little bit Chapter seven? Not that long. None of the chapters are very much so, like the bulk of the book is poetry, which is beautiful. She does say Afro Mestizaje, and I'm like, "OK, you say Afro? Where's that history? Where's that at?" Now me, I know that there are Black people who exist and who are part of the history of Mexico. And I know that not only did Mexico refuse to acknowledge Black people on the census, but tons of Latin American countries have participated in the same behavior. Right. So this is not, you know, we know now that in many stories, Black people are made to be invisible. And that's not only because they're not talked about, but also because of the way that people decide to talk about themselves.

**22:40 Monica:**

I can't help but to think of, you know, Jose Vasconcelos, who introduced -- He's like this, you know, old educator, philosopher, etc.. He introduced this idea of mestizaje, right as like sort of as an effort to mix both Spanish and indigenous blood to theoretically and supposedly get rid of racism, therefore racism. But this man also literally saw it as a way to remove Blackness from the Mexican social body. And this was in like 1925 and then not only occurred through like really violent methods, but was also obviously very anti-Black. So I'm glad you brought up that and I appreciate that you brought up the ways that, yes, Mexico has anti-Blackness, but so does literally every other country when we're talking about this, right? So I appreciate you bringing that in. And I mean, honestly, I feel really limited in my language and knowing how to talk through this and about this since I'm really glad that we're all here today trying to navigate this together because it has been really hard to find a lot of... conversations or writing on this topic and in navigating this complicated history. So can you talk a little bit more about what is Anzaldúa's definition of like "the new mestiza", right? That's the title of the book. And does it sort of challenge or reinforce or complicate these original notions of mestizaje?

**24:11 Trina:**

So on page one hundred of the book, this is not my favorite passage, by the way. On the page before, when I'm saying on Page 99, they talk about Jose Vasconcelos and this idea of the cosmic race. And I think what Gloria Anzaldúa is trying to do is reclaim the word, but give it new meaning. And also, she -- she is not only talking about a physical body, but she's talking about a consciousness. She's talking about a way of thinking, which is very different than what Jose Vasconcelos was saying when he was really like, that was like awesome eugenics stuff. There's some writing about that. But so she says on Page 100: "La Mestiza is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. Being tri-cultural, monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. Speaking of Patois, and in a state of perpetual transition, the mestiza faces the dilemma of the mixed breed. Which collectivity does the daughter of a Dark-skinned mother listen to?" That's what she's talking about. She's talking about these multiple embracing and accepting these multiple ways of being, these multiple histories and in giving it a name. Because right, there are so many people who live in this kind of other land where you know you are neither Mexican nor American, or I am neither African or American. But in fact, like I am both. And there's a way for me to honor that history, those like cultural parts of me that are really in my blood without being -- without having to diminish or disown the other part.

**26:24 Page:**

Yes, I'm geeking out and nerding out thinking about all these quotes and all these, these things that I have had on the backburner of my mind for way too long. But one in particular is I remember reading, I think it's Frank Wilkerson talking about -- he has this book called *Incognegro*, and it was really important for me with thinking about Blackness as like, what does it mean to live within a type of genocide, right? Which is like, I think its own -- as it does this idea of Borderlands, I guess, is what I'm trying to say, is -- I'm really excited at this idea of a reminder of how important it is to be in and think in exist within *Borderlands* and that they offer this special way of destroying the world. And when I say world, I mean, like this white supremacist world, right? And that the Frank Wilkerson quote I'm thinking of as he talks about how like Blackness will destroy the world. Meaning like tear down all these structures that define and seem to be create the laws of how everything exist and like, we want to destroy that. And how special and important these places within ourselves and how much you're talking about how it's the body, but it's also like within and like our identities and our genders and our words and our light and just all of those things. Yeah, I'm just feeling really connected and moved by that. The question that I have is, yeah, how has this affected your identity and your work?

**28:01 Trina:**

When I was growing up, I lived on 54th and Drexel. This block is the dividing line between Hyde Park and Washington Park. So I grew up on a block that really in so many ways was a borderland. And I tend to describe this often because later on in life, I think this is really important, and life has shown to me that this has been a really defining part of my life, because later on in life, I met a girl and she lived a block behind me and down the street. And her lived

experience is very different from my lived experience. And a lot of that had to do with the fact that I lived in this borderland area. And she was like in Hyde Park, you know? And that's not to say that she was a bad person like this is not to characterize her. But this is to say that by way of us, me living in the borderlands, I had this an experience that was very similar to what Gloria Anzaldúa explains in the book. Because I went to St. Thomas the Apostle on 55th and Woodlawn, and none of the young people that I grew up with went to St. Thomas the Apostle.

Now I do have some friends who came out of St. Thomas, who I maintain friendships with, and that school was actually predominately Black. But that's when you're -- I think we get to start talking about class, you know what I mean? And who can pay to go to send their kids to a private school and who can find those scholarships and who cannot? And who has, you know, who has the time, the capacity, all of that stuff, right? And so there became, there was like this -- these various moments in my life where I'm coming home from school in my little green uniform and I'm talking to people and I realize that we're learning different things and we shouldn't be learning different things. Or I start tutoring somebody because they need help in whatever subject. And I'm just confused because I'm recognizing some of these differences that are existing simply based on the school that we're going to and then, so that was me going to my neighborhood and realizing there, I was learning different things, being exposed to different things. But then to the people at my school, I was super hood. Like I was fighting, I was like, you know, people were dying on my block, you know, people -- I remember when I was in eighth grade, my sister's boyfriend, who she had been dating for years, I don't know four years or something like that, he left out of our house and he got shot right across the street from my house. And my sister went, You know, my sister went out there and she like, did the whole, you know, patting up, patting all over his body trying to see where he was hit, like she found out, you know, realize where he was shot. I'm not going to get too graphic about it, because, you know, it's a really, you know, it was a traumatizing moment. I'm sure not only for my sister, but like I was seeing some of that, that degree of trauma.

And I remember being in the church, we were practicing for the Nativity because every year they had a nativity scene. And my parents came to pick me up from school, and then I remember, you know, going to the hospital praying that he survived. He did. He just had a very long rehabilitation process. I remember coming to school the next day and telling the woman inside of the office my brother got shot yesterday and I was so sad as she was like, "Oh, like Franklin? And I was like, "No, Tina's boyfriend". And she was like, "Oh", you know, like. It was as you know, I could see the ways that my brother was treated, versus the way that my sister's boyfriend was treated. And I think that was deeply connected to, you know, their class and what schools they went to. And you know, how the rest of the world or how the status quo would define them and define how worthy of living they are.

And so when I read this book, I was really compelled to -- I was -- I felt like this is my experience right here. Like I'm at Colorado College and these white people, they think, they keep asking me, You're from the south side of Chicago? You grew up in Cabrini-Greens? And I'm like, No, and then I'm attempting to occupy this space where I am, you know, there are things about me that are stereotypically Black and that I 100% own. I'm over here using Black soap on my -- damn, what is Black soap? So like all of the -- *you're my first Black friend!* Like, "stop calling me sassy. You're making me feel like a big Black woman." Like, I'm just like, race, you know, like attempting to like, navigate this, this atmosphere where like I am, you know, I am like the Black girl from the south side of Chicago, but then also coming home and being called like "college girl", like, "hey college --" just just seeing those that kind of duality in the way I was treated and not only the way I was treated as a young person, but also the way I was treated and, you know, as a young adult.

And so that really helped to inform the way that I treat others and the way that I engage with my community because I refuse to be like one way or the other. I believe that I could be all of that and could nobody take that from me. And so I remember coming home from college one summer, I was hustling and I was selling loose squares and swishers in the Washington Park, and it used to be so fun out there, y'all. Like when I tell you, when I tell you community, I'm talking about everybody outside, we sitting on benches like people smoking and people drinking. And like, we having a good time. We just talking and I'm in. I'm over here. Like after I just sold a square to somebody talking and talking about, like raising the minimum wage and he's like, "Well, you know, I don't really want to raise it because like because I've worked so hard to get what I got when I'm making none of that." And right, so we're having these very nuanced conversations with people who are actually experiencing these things and we're all -- I'm on the ground with it and *Borderlands* helped me to really dive into that. You know what I'm saying? Like, I am, you know, I'm allowed to exist in both of these worlds. I do not have to criminalize or disown or distance myself from these people who I grew up with, these people who I love and who I carry on my back. You know what I'm saying, I'm carrying with me wherever I go. So that's how it was my organizing. Long story short.

35:36 **Monica:** I mean, the way you were talking about the experience of living on this border of Hyde Park and Washington Park and how different your lived experience was from someone who lived literally down the block, and just like how these borders are created by systemic racism and white supremacy and racial capitalism, and it also makes me think about how highways in Chicago have operated as like these borders that split communities throughout the city. And sometimes even the way I think about the U.S. and Mexico border and how like I, I think sometimes that it's always existed, right? In the same ways that a lot of us think that ICE has existed forever and it hasn't, they're very new things, right? Yeah. And it makes me think about how like, ten thousand, you know, Gloria Anzaldúa talks about how ten thousand people were literally annexed from Mexico, when in 1848, when it became Texas, right? And all of a

sudden you just have this border that just splits your community right in half and we see that in Chicago all the time. And so. I don't know, I'm rambling, but I just want to name how borders operate on this, on such micro and macro levels in our lives, whether we realize it or not, and how important it is to have these conversations and to understand the ways that things like racial capitalism and white supremacy and colonialism all just manifest in our lives every day. So I guess my next question is sort of around why should someone, especially an organizer in Chicago or anywhere, why should someone read this book?

**37:10 Trina:**

So I think organizers or even people in Chicago should read this book because I think what they'll come to see is a lot of parallels in their lives and in the lives of the folks that Gloria Anzaldúa describes this thing where, you know, land being stolen, right, because of falling back on taxes or whatever it may be to sharecroppers, right? Becoming sharecroppers and being perpetually, you know, in debt, you're not allowed to talk that way in school because that way of speaking is wrong and you need to speak in this other way to, you know, you need to escape from Chicago because that is how you become successful.

And a lot of people, and I'm speaking for the experience that I've had with people who are from Chicago or who talk about, you know, ways of being successful. And then the thought is, and once you do escape, never come back. Don't come back to this because if you come back, watch, you will end up getting shot on a corner. There's all these there, there's this kind of fear mongering and also this kind of narrative that is like spread within the community, which is like, I don't want to say like, you need to leave because this place is not where its at, necessarily because you obviously, Gloria Anzaldúa was the only person to leave her community. And she felt that that was some sort of, you know, a sort of rebellion because many people stayed.

But I think we can think about that in the, in the sense of our neighborhoods, when you're thinking about people rarely leaving their neighborhoods or thinking about people who are assimilating towards white supremacy, include including myself, right? I went to the University of Chicago and Colorado College, and are told to, you know, get a condo on the lake downtown and get up, you don't want to live in a Black community because it's actually not safe for you and is bad for your pockets like you don't want to invest in that community because of that.

And so I think what folks who read the book and organize will be able to see and kind of understand is just like the different ways that we relate to one another. Like culturally speaking, the different ways that we relate to one another, like on the things that we do in, like the very spiritual practices that we have and stuff like that. And also just like the ways that people tell us to fit into a box and knowing that we don't have to fit into that box. And I think ultimately, I hope that that leads to just more collaboration. I think there is a... we talk about this a lot, this opportunity to really, for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to come together and like unite

in some, you know, in some way and not really fight among each other, but instead, recognize who the true enemy is, which is corporate capitalism and racial capitalism, right? In all these ways that all of these ways that we're told to "other" each other and to not work with each other because I think, you know, there's a lot of opportunity for us to have joy and because like, we have a -- I wish that the book actually addressed the Black, you know, like there's kind of like Black history too, because I think people would then understand that we have, you know, that our history even has a lot more in common than we know.

41:02 **Page:**

I have appreciated all of this conversation so far, and I wanted to make space to hear if there's any other things you wanted to lift up about the ways that this book has influenced you.

41:12 **Trina:**

One thing I'd like to know is that they were lynching Chicanos, and that was something that I did not know. I was not aware of that. That was really just, you know, another thing that, you know, it was like Chicanos were rebelling against the bullshit. And then they began to lynch Chicanos and then use the police in order to suppress or destroy any form of social movement. And it makes me think about how -- this my last thing -- makes me think about how in Chicago, when you look at complaints made against the police, there are actually a lot of white Hispanic police officers who are also perpetrating harm.

Now, obviously, there are Black police officers, too, who are perpetrating harm when thinking about this history and thinking about how you can be white Hispanic and how a lot of people choose to be documented as such. Even even if they are Brown or Black, and it's really clear, but also to think about how policing -- I know, you know, we're in this moment, this big moment where everybody and they mama is either saying defund police or saying, you shouldn't say defund police because people don't -- That's not a -- It doesn't, It doesn't catch on. Even though everybody's saying defund police, or Donald Trump running ads where, like, you know, a woman is about to be robbed and like she's calling the police and nobody's there to come in and help her. Like, We're, you know, we're in this era. And it just really affirms what I think a lot of organizers have been saying, which is police have been used as an arm of the state in order to enact violence and in order to enforce these borderlands and is not only the police department that is doing this, but it's also ICE, and it's also teachers, and it's also agricultural business where you know, who came in and rob people of land and stripped the land of any and all type of resources.

So I guess that would be my last point because I don't think we had an opportunity to even think about the institution of policing in this conversation. And they briefly mentioned it in the book. But I think when thinking about *Borderlands* period, I think about how, like, how these borderlands are enforced and how people are policed and how policing is not just limited to the

ways of the state does it, but also about the ways that we allow ourselves to police others and the way that we allow ourselves to police ourselves. You know? That's my last piece.

**44:02 Monica:**

Thank you so much, Trina. I mean, all I could hear in my head right now is like Abolish Borders, Abolish ICE, Abolish Police, Abolish Everything, Abolish it all, period. So thank you so much for being with us to talk about this book. It's a complicated book. It also has a lot of important lived experience in this book that I think is something we can appreciate, while also addressing the people that are missing from this book. And I really appreciated the ways that you brought those people into this conversation. So thank you so much. And we want to close the episode out with a passage from the book that really resonated with you. So can you read something from the book for us?

**44:50 Trina:** *“Not me sold out my people, but they me. Because of the color of my skin. They betrayed me. The dark-skinned woman has been silenced, gagged, caged, bound to servitude with marriage, bludgeoned for 300 years, sterilized and castrated in the 20th century. For 300 years, she has been a slave, a force of cheap labor colonized by the Spaniard, the Anglo, by her own people. For 300 years, she was invisible. She was not heard many times. She wished to speak, to act, to protest, to challenge. The odds were heavily against her. She hid her feelings. She hid her truths. She concealed her fire. But she kept stoking the inner flame. She remained faceless and voiceless, but a light shone through her veil of silence. And though she was unable to spread her limbs, and though for her right now, the sun has sunk under the earth and there is no moon, she continues to tame the flame. The spirit of the fire spurs her to fight for her own skin and a piece of ground to stand on. A ground from which to view the world. A perspective. A home ground where she can plumb the rich ancestral roots into her own ample mestiza heart.”*

**46:35 Page:**

Thanks so much for listening to another episode of the Lit Review, a podcast where we interview people we love and respect about books to help grow our movement. We are your co-host, Monica Trinidad and Page May, two Chicago based abolitionist organizers. We'll be back next week with another episode next Sunday. Same time. Same place. Want to learn about a specific book? Email us your suggestions at [theLitReviewChicago@gmail.com](mailto:theLitReviewChicago@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook. And if you like this episode, give it a shout out on Twitter or Instagram. Our handle is @LitReviewChi. Financial support for the production of this podcast is thanks to our amazing Patreon subscribers. Learn more about becoming a Patron at [Patreon.com/TheLitReview](https://Patreon.com/TheLitReview). Keep reading!