

00:03 - 00:09

Well, I really enjoyed listening to what you said, and I know I need to wait until

00:09 - 00:16

the dialogue, but I really enjoyed what you had to say about...

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[sound of turning the pages] this notion of a mutually agreed border.

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My experience with borders and borderland studies is a little different.

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I am originally from Texas,

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and I work and live and work in Texas, the United States. And it's on the Texas -Mexico border.

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And that's a very contentious place to live right now.

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It has been for some time, not just right now.

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Um...so my notion of borders really authentic.

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we have physical borders that could be real and demarcated.

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Moving maps, though, so maps move. Lines of demarcation move.

00:56 - 01:01

So real and then also imagined. That this is something that we conceptualized.

01:01 - 01:06

Um...and that growing up in a borderlands region, and

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I'm specifically going to talk about the South, um...

01:12 - 01:17

like Texas, California, border states in the United States.

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So my notion of borders and borderland studies primarily comes from that that position

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I also do research in the criminal justice system.

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So those are really strong borders, right? You can't leave the confines of a prison, for instance.

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There are walls. There are wires.

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There are things that are a border that say keep out or go in, right?

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So I can definitely see there's a physical closing or a physical opening

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and if we think about borders.

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But there's also a way that we conceptualize this notion of

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border and then borderlands, this identity that

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one might have where you're part, your inside outside identity,

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where you might feel part of one and part of the other.

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Um, so I grew up in a town called San Antonio, Texas. It's in south Texas.

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And until recently, that would be a safe place to travel to and settle

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if you were from Mexico, because no longer would border patrol come there.

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And things are shifting and right very rapidly in the United States.

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And Texas, and primarily my career, I've worked in a number of states,

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but primarily in Texas and in California, which are border states.

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And my experience, I've worked on the Texas -Mexico border.

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So I worked where I would have to cross checkpoints inside the United States

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to go to my work or to come back.

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So I worked in Ubalde, Texas, which is a one hour from the border.

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But I also taught right in Eagle Pass that's on the border. I taught in Del Rio that's on the border.

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And then I'm also taught in Crystal City, which is the birthplace of the Revolts Rosa movement.

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And that is the civil rights movement in the United States

03:00 - 03:05

that there were high school walkouts in the 1970s, it's such a very big deal.

03:05 - 03:09

So my understanding of this notion of borders,

03:09 - 03:13

what I heard growing up in San Antonio is, "I didn't cross the border, the border crossed me."

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So United States, in relation to borders, is quite troubling,

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because they didn't recognize the sovereignty of the people that were

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in the Americas when arrival or discovery, which I want to put in quotations the notion of discovery,

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because people were living and they didn't need to be discovered.

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But Columbus, all of these stories or whatever, that we, in our growing up,

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we would hear certain stories in school, like about Columbus, about discovering

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of America, even Thanksgiving is a kind of problematic holiday,

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which Native Americans basically saved the white settlers when they arrived.

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They fed them because they would have starved and died.

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And now thinking back, maybe they shouldn't have done that, but they didn't do that.

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So it's a, and the story, too, is, I mean, in that story, if you think about crossing borders,

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people were invading, right, the Americas, and actually participated in genocide.

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So the story, I mean, giving blankets to Native Americans, knowing that

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they would get sick because they didn't have the same immunities,

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for instance, for smallpox, and a lot of illnesses that came from Europe

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was on purpose, and it was an invasion, and it was a way to [...] um

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They also, developed, as you were talking about, this notion of mutually agreed borders,

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they many times did sign agreements at the time, but they didn't believe they owned the land.

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So it was not really a fair agreement of the borders.

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And South Texas where I live, I live right now,

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I live very close, I still live very, again live close to the border.

04:52 - 04:58

I moved away from South Texas for many years. It was probably away for about 20 years and returned.

04:58 - 05:03

Um, the region that I live in right now is very rich. It's very diverse.

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And for me, growing up in that kind of environment in south Texas,

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is I grew up with hearing Spanish and English, right?

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So when I went away to school and to fly home and hearing Spanish on the airplane, I'm like

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I'm almost home, I hear Spanish again. And that's better.

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I also have Texas itself is a combination of cultures,

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and much of it is definitely influenced by Mexican culture,

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definitely the notion of Tex -Mex and food.

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And there's a little arrogance about food, too, that it's better.

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This combination, this mixing, right? um [...] so, it's both... a

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In Texas there's a story, too. San Antonio is the place of the Alamo.

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In the Alamo, there's this battle cry, and it's like, remember the Alamo.

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So this battle is kind of a really horrifying thing. And what happened was

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the, you know, there was this war, and basically the Spaniards were, they won.

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And Texas, the Texans who were being independent,

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they were their own country for a while. Texas was its own country.

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They wanted their independence, and they did not want to be part of Mexico,

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only because they wanted to have slavery. So, and Mexico did not allow slavery.

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So, it's a very bad story. So, it's a very bad story, because it's like, remember the Alamo,

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and then there was this battle cry, and there are stories of knives.

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And, it's a really messed up story, by the way, the Bowie knife.

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It's, it's, it's, so, remember the, like,

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they lost, the Texans lost, and then they went back and won,

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because of this terrible story. But, it's a very troubling thing, because...

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my whole time growing up, what I felt was, I mean,

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I mean, there was the story you would hear in school, right?

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And, that's kind of like a celebrated, yay, Texas, or yay, USA, right,

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that has pilgrims, and, um, you draw turkeys with your hands, right, the growing-up.

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But, later, you complicate that notion.

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And I always, as a child, I moved quite a bit.

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So, I always was part of inside, outside identity. In the United States, I moved quite frequently.

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So, the people that were most kind to me, were people that maybe,

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were perceived to be on the border, or, or fringes. Um, so.

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I don't know why I'm going completely into this story, but it's um

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the notion of even the way that Texas looks, or the United States,

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the whole bottom half was Mexico.

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And through agreement, this agreed, you know, we have Louisiana Purchase, we have all of these things that

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one colonized group [laughs in disbelief] with one, we have...think about the colonies.

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We have explorers signing treaties with other colonizers, right,

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so the French came and colonized, the Spaniards came and colonized,

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we've got all of these messed up people taking land, like they're playing a Risk game or something.

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But the notion of Texas and the border right now,

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we've got the, it's really interesting because it's divided by a river right now

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the Texas -Mexico border, but it used to be, that border,

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not til ..., it moved, it moved south, so they, it was more north,

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they, that was after the United States was even established,

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they kept moving it more and more south.

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So, there's been, the notion of borders, from my, there, again, there's the

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specified, we see maybe a geographical, or the way that I see it as a boundary

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that can be real, like the bars, like the closing of a door, or the opening of a door

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but then the metaphorical. And I think that

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people who live in these regions don't have, it's really difficult to have a clear notion of border like

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it's all this or all that, because it's not.

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And the culture in South Texas, and actually, and we can look at Southwest,

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in the southwest United States, is very influenced by Mexican culture.

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And we, and many things are embraced, right

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So, things that are embraced are food, music, right, there are all kinds of things that people love.

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But right now, what I see, the most concerning thing I see about

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borders is the notion of people being illegal,

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even calling a person illegal, I mean [...]

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And then immigration, it's like there's a notion of doing it the right way, or the wrong way.

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And I'm very, I'm very troubled by that. I also see that

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the linkages there, I see borders in relation to where one lives

09:56 - 10:03

as being completely arbitrary, right? And in some cases, like the United States example,

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every single holding in the United States is problematic.

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There is not one area that is ... Like the notion of,

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I would say, an authentic or deserved or whatever kind of notion.

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Every single piece is in some way problematic.

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Native Americans, their land were completely just taken

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and really put into dire straits. And really the examples,

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the number of peoples that died, it is a form of genocide, is what happened.

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And so surviving and then for me, the parts that I'm interested in

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so it sounds really depressing.

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I'm making the United States sound horrific and terrible.

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The parts that I'm interested in, the work that I do in the borderlands,

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the work that I do is in the criminal justice system, primarily with mothers and women,

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people that are silenced, and I have a strong commitment to social justice.

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And for me, like being both,

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like having a notion where you can be in both spaces, and also

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not dehumanizing people just because maybe they're on the wrong side of the arbitrary border.

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I know for my own family, too, we were able to

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migrate and immigrate into the United States from famine and

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were well, not really welcomed, but tolerated.

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So, that's something that right now we're seeing [...]

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I'm troubled to hear so many people be so negative about the notion of border crossing and borderlands.

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So, again, real and imagined, and even if away from the border,

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and I would say that there's an internalization,

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people internalize that as an identity, too, being both,

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or being in the, especially I would say,

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and I have many friends that are bilingual,

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living in kind of two culture so at the same time, or multiple, even more than that, cultures, so

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there are opportunities in studying the borders.

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I do like the notion that you brought up about this agreed -upon thing,

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but I think that the way deployed by people in power, it hasn't been,

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for the most part, the United States experiment has not been, wasn't

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like an agreed -upon thing. So I think it's troubling.

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So, I'm trying to think of one other theme, genocide,

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Colonization in the United States, that's a big part of thinking about borders.

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There's also a notion of, like, some people doing it the right way

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and some doing it the wrong. And it seems that

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the notion of the right and wrong, there's a value judgment.

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It also tends to be based on class and ethnicity.

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So some immigrants are more welcome than others.

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And if you add religion, it gets even more complicated. We haven't been accepting.

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So my notions of borders and borderland studies has primarily been, again,

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in southern, like the southwest region of the United States,

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primarily in Texas and California, and then prisons,

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so I do a lot with that.