

The Equality Arizona Podcast, Episode 1

SPEAKERS

Michael Soto, HLT Quan, tanner menard

Michael Soto 00:00

Well, welcome to the Equality Arizona podcast everyone. This is a program of Equality Arizona, Arizona's leading LGBTQ civil rights and human rights organization. And my name is Michael Soto. I'm the executive director of Equality Arizona, and I'm excited to be one of your co-hosts for this podcast. Dr. Quan, would you introduce yourself?

HLT Quan 00:23

Thank you, Michael. I am HLT Quan. I'm an associate professor at Arizona State University in the school of social transformation. I'm a political theorist, and a documentary filmmaker for many years.

Michael Soto 00:37

And tanner, would you introduce yourself?

tanner menard 00:40

Absolutely. My name is tanner menard, my pronouns are they them and theirs. I'm a member of the Atakapa-Ishak Nation and belong to the alligator clan. I'm a traditional healer, an MFA candidate at NAU, I'm a poet and composer, and I'm an organizer for Equality Arizona.

Michael Soto 01:04

Wonderful. Tanner and Dr. Quan are the other co-hosts for this podcast, and I'm so excited to explore the ideas that we're going to be exploring together throughout this podcast season. We're going to start today by talking a little bit about why we wanted to do this podcast. And so I'm going to hand it over to tanner first, to share a little bit about why they wanted to do this podcast.

tanner menard 01:29

Thank you, Michael. You know, as we move in to this digital era, during the quarantine, one of my concerns that I've noticed is that so many young people who are potential voters are looking for answers and the answers that they're looking for — there's so many different people and different people with agendas, who are using misinformation to steer those young voters towards right wing agendas. And it felt important to me to look at the areas where young people are turning to things like conspiracy theories and curating their realities online. And as they curate their realities online, they're often they often become prey to different interests that want their vote or want their money or want their minds or want their, you know, they really want to, like, take how these people think and steer it in a certain direction. And my thought was that I really want to help people learn how to think because often there's not a single answer to a question, but there are good ways to think about complex issues. And so I want to be able to address, you know, how do we think about complex issues? And how do we get comfortable with not even really knowing the answer, but knowing how to think about things that we don't have clear answers for.

Michael Soto 03:20

Dr. Quan, what appealed to you about doing this podcast?

HLT Quan 03:25

Well, I think when you folks reached out to me, as someone who has been doing public education, as a public intellectual, both as a filmmaker and as a professor, and also doing a radio program, both public affairs and music for a number of years, I think it's an incredible opportunity for folks to kind of engage in public dialogue. And as a public intellectual, I think it's critically important, especially at a time where Democratic politics — It's very fraught at the moment, where it's not that it's just now being fraught, it just more intensely being undermined in a way that many of us have not experienced before. Now, some of us have, depending on who we are positionality-wise. I think that to be able to understand, just unpack these complex issues that tanner's talking about, allow the public, allow a community to engage in the issues in a way that can move us forward. Now in a community, such as Arizona or Phoenix, or the LGBTQ communities, (and I'm saying communities plural because they're the community is quite diverse) I think it's important that we are able to think through complex issues, but also name certain issues that are not right now in public discourse, right? So a lot of media is actually corporately and commercially produced for a very specific purpose in general to generate profit, to sell a particular product, be it political ideology, or a commodity, like your shirt or your shoes. And so I think it's critically important that there's independent media, that there's grassroots media, and that the people in the community themselves can have the skills or be it to create, produce their own new media, but also to have the language and to tell the story for themselves. So in many ways, I hope that this podcast will help facilitate that conversation, to help facilitate a public discourse on the key issues that are facing an incredibly diverse and challenged LGBT community. Because we live in a time of extreme inequality. Right, and there are many vulnerable populations, not to mention a raging pandemic that's going on where in which people have, you know, not extraordinarily great access to health care, to affordable housing, etc. And so to empower our community, in part, requires us as a community to have difficult dialogue. Right, and to also have a certain kind of way to engage in public discourse without shutting down different challenging points of view. I think that's very important, and as a public intellectual, I think it's part of my role to help facilitate that conversation.

Michael Soto 06:56

Wow, yes. I'm, one, always inspired by both of you and everything that you bring to these conversations. And, you know, I think you both touched on this idea of creating public discourse, independent media, and political education, right? Equality Arizona, one of our most important roles, I think, is creating opportunities for political education and for understanding ways to have difficult conversations, to have conversations where you don't agree with everyone entirely, to have diversity of thought around our communities, right? LGBTQ communities, and the issues that we face. All of this are reasons why this podcast, I think, will be incredibly valuable to Arizonans, and to hopefully people around the country and the world. And so, you know, one of the, as we started discussing doing this podcast, we wanted to first tackle the idea that we're in a crisis of knowing in this, in 2020, in the age that we're in; I think we've been in it for a while. And that was an idea that appealed to all of us to sort of launch this political discourse, this public discourse on this political education. So what is this crisis of knowing? And why do you want to talk about it as public intellectuals, as people working in the community and working to increase people's political knowledge and ability to have discussion?

HLT Quan 08:33

What that's that's the issue, isn't it? Today, we are debating over basic, what we used to think as objective facts: whether or not there is climate change, whether or not — 'what is the election result?' Right, now, 'did the Holocaust happen?' Now, these are factual historical events. But I think is important to put in perspective, that history, historical facts, has been written by those who are in power. And so knowledge has never been contested free. Right, so there's always been at one level, a contestation around the interpretation of facts. But there are certain ground rules that people often respect and follow. So that's what we assume. Because objectivity is one of those things that can be used as a cudgel right? To dismiss marginalized, vulnerable populations who make a claim to knowledge, right? So we don't pay attention to what our mothers say. But we do pay attention to what our doctors say. Well, why is that? Why is the 'Dr. Quan' — right, there's a 'Dr.' in front of my name — makes my knowledge more legitimate. Now, if it is because it's based on my research, and it's based on my many years of studying it, and I have evidence of verification: there's certain rules, right? Then we say, okay, that's more legitimate. But it's the name, is the title alone, legitimize what I have to say. So because I have a "Dr." something in my name, can I say that something that happened didn't happen? That's the moment we're in right now. Right? The moment we're in right now is where we say, no one can be trusted. Not that some people should not get automatic free pass, because they have a certain title in their name. So, we've gone through a few decades in the academy and outside where in which rightly so we question Truth with a capital T, that there's multiple interpretations of facts. Not that facts are not real. Right. So today, we are in a moment where we say, well, facts is whatever we think it is. And that is, that's a crisis. That's a crisis. That's I mean, that's the most fundamental kind of way to think about this. But it isn't just that we don't know what we know. That's what we mean by 'crisis of knowing.' But we don't even have a way of asking questions about, how do we know some of the things that we think we know, cannot be trusted, or should not be trusted, or should be trusted? That's what I hope what we'll do is, is at least begin, for instance, what's the difference between, you know, poor people, through experience and intuition, having an idea that policies are largely made by people in power? That's an intuition. But that's that's also a hint at some sort of conspiracy on the part of the wealthy. Maybe not intentional or not, not a full blown, planned out conspiracy. But what's the difference between that and a conspiracy narrative that's produced on the part of the powerful to use that to distract? Or to begin to question, or to, to sort of as a way to create a kind of chaos in knowledge, where we can no longer rely on anything concrete? So because we don't know exactly whether or not someone's experiences, what they say it is, is it therefore we can deny the fact that there are climate catastrophes that are happening, and that is going to get worse? You see, so, I'll leave it at that, and I know tanner has, wants to get in here.

Michael Soto 13:42

Jump in tanner.

tanner menard 13:47

I really appreciate that when we began discussing this, that we decided that we would start with talking about a crisis of knowing because I think it's very clear that that is what is taking place and I guess, you know, my point of view: I'm a poet, and also a traditional healer, so the places that I work in are very in-between spaces, where it's a benefit not to know the answer, where the question that's left open is what is important. And I think that, you know, also as an indigenous person, as a Creole person, I live in a very kind of, you know, liminal space, meaning a very in-between space racially. In terms of you know, my indigenous worldview is very different from a modern worldview. And also, when I was 20 years old, 9/11 happened, and I lived through that moment in time. There were, after 9/11 happened, there were a lot of conspiracy theories that began to take hold, as there are now and as there were in previous

times. But I think that the reason that these sort of things are taking place is that there is a lot that's withheld from the public: by the government, by big tech industries, by corporations, by the news. There are a lot of truths that are not revealed entirely because of different agendas. And I think that, you know, like, as a person who lived outside of academia for a long time, I think that I can like relate to what a lot of average people perceive and think. And I think that people want, people know that something is not right about what's happening; people know that they are not being told the truth very often. And so I feel like people are naturally very suspicious and naturally don't, they don't know what to believe. And for instance, you know, this morning, I'm right now back home in Louisiana, I went and visited my grandmother outside this morning. We, you know, we did sit the appropriate distance apart from one another. But we spoke about what's going on in the world. And though we have very, we come from very different generations, we have very different political ideologies. We have very different religious philosophies. We have some of the very same questions about what's going on in the world. And I think that I'm curious about that. I'm, just as a human being, I'm very curious about what the average person, you know, that's born on the Earth that comes out of you know, that we live here on the Earth, we have to eat food from the Earth, we have to drink water, we have to breathe the air together on the Earth, we have, you know, we think we talk we laugh, we communicate with one another — normal human interactions. But we're living in an era of extreme technological advancement. We don't know how to navigate it. yet. We don't our nervous systems have not adapted to living in this high tech reality. And also in a reality where industrialization has reached a point where what the earth looks like, feels like and even the chemical composition of the Earth is changing so rapidly, that we don't really know how to exist in it anymore. And the answers to those questions are coming to us from the corporate and government entities that are producing that change. And they're very, they're conflicting. And I think that people like don't know how to ask questions about how to exist in the reality that is unfolding in front of us. And so I am curious, not only to talk about this and have a conversation about it, but to learn for myself how to navigate this new reality, and how to ask questions. How to like, to go, you know, like, if I see a meme, does a meme produce reality for me? Does it, you know what I mean? Like, that's the kind of thing like, how do you look at a meme and analyze your emotional response to it? And then look for appropriate answers to see: is that true? You know, like, it's, how should I feel about this?

HLT Quan 19:29

Yeah, I mean, I think that's right. I mean, I think in many ways, we are living in a moment of being inundated with too much information. Now, part of it is, and when I say "we" I want to be very specific, about a certain kind of way of life, that you know, an affluent country, yeah, even when we are poor, allow us, afford us, in a way that some people in the global south or some people in some neighborhood, in some zip code or census tract in this, in the United States may not have access to. So, because of the digital divide, because of the extreme wealth inequality in this country, there are people who are in fact not experiencing, or in fact, are facing an extreme lack of usable information. Right. So, I want to make sure that we not over generalize this sort of "crisis" quote unquote, because at one level knowledge, as Foucault, Michel Foucault, the French philosopher, pointed out a long time ago, is power, right. And, of course, Foucault was not the first person to recognize that; that Foucault is associated with knowledge = power, that equation that he came up, with also itself reveals the power, the asymmetrical power relationship around knowledge formation. That is to say, the reason why we know that Michel Foucault explained that knowledge is accompanied, would usually reveal power relationships is because he was a French philosopher, right? Because you and I know, that our mothers or our grandmothers might have said something similar, but because of the positionality, maybe because they're women, because they were women of color, maybe because they were working class people, that they were somehow perceived, as not real contributors to real knowledge, that what they

have are anecdotes, but not theory, not philosophical insight, right. But as we know, outside of the Western experience and Western knowledge formation, we learn differently, we learn through oral history, we learn through experience we learn through emotions, through affect. So that itself is — but it is the case, often, that what we know, is a reflection of what we've been taught, and what knowledge is privileged in society. So knowledge is very difficult. So when we're talking about a crisis of knowledge, there is also often an accompanying crisis of privilege, a crisis of power, imbalance of power. Does that make sense? And so, if we think about cooking, for instance, as chemistry, as mathematics, as physics, we may think of women's role in society very differently, we may think of the domestic realm very differently than the public realm, and what knowledge is acceptable to speak about in the public versus in private. And how we learn relationships differently. Does that make sense? So, again, this isn't the first time we are in this position, but that we are in the situation right now, in part is exacerbated. It's not that we are not always questioning, because again, part of the postcolonial knowledge, sort of postcolonial postmodern introduction of postcolonial, postmodern theory into Western Liberal economy at one level has been about the questioning of only one type of knowledge that's produced, or that certain knowledge is privileged, right? Because whenever there's a — whenever we are talking about knowledge, we have to talk about the injustices that surround the people who have been denied the right for like, they don't have the right to be believed. We experience that very intensely right now, because we have an epidemic of police killing, an epidemic of police killing black and brown people, particularly young brown and black men, because they have a certain way of knowing: criminality. But also because society have associated people with uniforms — people like the police, like the military — as a source of legitimate knowledge. And people who are not in a position of power as I was saying before because of the title or because the uniform, they're not believed. So despite the evidence that we see with our own eyes, all of these video testimonies, juries after juries after juries, it is true that we don't have white supremacist law technically anymore (in other words, there's no law that said white people are better than black people or brown people) but the way we enforce the law so unevenly, because of the way what we think we know and who is bad, who is good, who's a criminal, who's not. And so now we have this epidemic of police killing. And yet, we keep saying they haven't done anything wrong, there is no conviction. I'm not saying that you should send people to prison. I'm not saying any of that stuff. What I am saying, though, is that what it reveals is that when these people are not being held accountable, part of what is revealed — yes, systemic racism, yes, anti black and anti brown violence — but also, there is a way in which we don't trust, brown and black people as knower, as the people who can speak to their experience as legitimate. And we have been in that crisis for a very long time.

Michael Soto 26:03

Yeah, I think of I mean, with every, every age, right, whether that's with the institution (like historical ages, I'm thinking about here) like institutions like the Catholic Church, right, or print — the first print books, right, first sort of technology that allowed the wide distribution of printed knowledge. Today, we have that through Silicon Valley, right, and sort of the, this new way of distributing knowledge, but it's always controlled through what you're talking about, Dr. Quan, is these unjust power distributions, right? Where typically, it's, we've seen throughout history, right? How it's white supremacy curating that knowledge, right. Patriarchy is curating that knowledge, right, in these ways they get widely distributed, that creates this asymmetric access to knowledge.

tanner menard 27:03

I think that that's definitely true, but I think that one of the interesting things about what I see going on, I mean, it's just my personal observation, but you know, there's a, there was an Indian man, a man from

East India, who came to the United States in 1969, named Yogi Bajan. And very early on, one of the things that he said was, he said, you know, in a few years, you're all going to have all of the knowledge in the world, and it's going to fit into the palm of your hand. And he said this in this in the 70s, because he was a visionary. And he said, that's going to fundamentally change the human experience. And so I think that whereas it is true that there are a lot of power brokers who are really curating knowledge, we are in a moment where there's a sort of total democratization of knowledge, because everyone can communicate through social media. And depending on their intuitive ability and analytical ability to manipulate how that information is broadcast to people, pretty much anyone can become a quote unquote "influencer," not only in something like fashion, but also in a political ideology, and in whatever it is. And that's why, you know, I was driving around — there's a person that runs for Congress in Louisiana named Clay Higgins, who's associated with Donald Trump, who's, I mean, a really, in my opinion, kind of barbaric, Louisiana politician, but he's been able to get his message out in this area because of his use of social media and the way that he plays on some basic fears of people in this area. And so, and at the same time, we see people on the other side of the spectrum, who are able to broadcast messages that empower people in a way that we have, that I have never seen in my lifetime. I mean, when I was, you know, when I was growing up in the rural South, I knew two gay people. I knew two gay people. And so for me to become a queer person I had to go out into the world. I had to experience things. I had to make a lot of mistakes, and I had no sense of personal empowerment as a queer person. Now, now, you know, being able to work as an organizer for Equality Arizona, I feel like I've been able to broadcast a very empowering message for queer people in Arizona, and all I have is our Facebook account, and — but we've done it, we, you know, we've changed the fabric of the community in a lot of ways through the work that we've done. And what I see is, is that we need to, we need to come up with ethics, about how we navigate these conventions, these online conventions, so that we can come up with standards of trust, because things have changed so much that I think that there is sort of no standard of trust, and we're kind of like in a wild west moment of the algorithm. And so the democratization of knowledge has led us to a person like Donald Trump and Clay Higgins and all of these other sort of right wing figures that, you know, we don't necessarily want to be governed by. So that's, that's my thought there.

HLT Quan 31:26

I think to certain extent, it is true that the Internet and social media have allowed for a certain type of discourse and public conversations that may be difficult, may have been difficult before, particularly in terms of volume, size, scale, whatever term you want to use. It is also true that activists all over the world have appropriated technology for movements; there's no question that the historic mass protests that we experienced in the U.S. this year, but also elsewhere in the world this year, would not have been possible without a facilitation, and use of social media. I would also, me personally, I am wary of the idea that somehow democratization of knowledge alone gave rise to someone like the Trump character, partly because what Trump, the elevation of Trump into the White House has as much to do with his ability to weaponize social media as his ability to weaponize white male privilege and toxic masculinity and a racist trope that is very much part of our social imaginary, our way of life, right? To understand that because someone like me, say, if I wanted to run for president, without the resources, I could, I may get a few thousand followers. I mean, I would not have the apparatus, I would not have the machination to manufacture a certain kind of narrative. And especially if I do not tap into a certain kind of psychology. And so we need to be careful to create this, the market, when more than 90% of media — and when I say media, I mean everything from what you read to what you hear music-wise, to games, to television, to film — more than 90% of media are owned by half a dozen corporations world wide. There is no actual substantive democratization of knowledge. There's a flow of information that

sometimes we can appropriate for our use. Sometimes we succeed, sometimes we don't. But the power, this kind of chronic and persistent, unequal distribution of power, isn't because people haven't thought of better ideas, it's because people are invested in sustaining this system and this unequal distribution of power. And I don't mean there's a group of people in a smoke filled room behind closed doors that are conspiring to do this, I mean, the logic of capitalist accumulation, the logic of wealth hoarding, and therefore certain classes of people, certain groups of people are better able at competing informational channel than others. So yes, theoretically, anyone could be an influencer. But only some people will have millions of followers and may get elected — a few, very, very few will get elected to be President of the United States.

Michael Soto 35:23

That's such a critical point. I think we, in the age of social media, Google, and the Internet, we have, we want to believe that knowledge is democratized, right? And that anybody can create the same level of knowledge and understanding. But power still does shape knowledge, right? power, still shapes information and data, right, like all of that is we just we have a different way of accessing it now. Instead of going to the library, we type something into Google, right? And often, I think, get less reliable and actual information, then, perhaps previous forms or ways that we sought information. But we still have, whether it's a library, Google, we're still contending with that power and privilege of who says, 'This is knowledge. This is information.' So I'm wondering if, and you both touched on this in ways, is it, is part of working against this power and privilege relearning how to ask questions, and relearning how to understand different forms of information, data and ways of creating knowledge.

HLT Quan 36:34

I think tanner is right, I think we have a whole lot more information today, some of us especially with access to this information than we have ever been in human history. And part of what that means is that we require more skills. So yes, it's about relearning. I think about like, I don't know if you know this, but the very first feminist radio on the Internet actually came out of Central America, right? This group of women. They called themselves FIRE (like a feminist radio endeavor, international radio endeavor, in Spanish, of course, I'm just translating, but the abbreviation is FIRE). And the way in which they started that radio, that Internet, first feminist Internet — and it didn't come out of North America, it didn't come out of Europe, which at the time, and by the way, this was a long time ago, it was in, in the late 90's, early 2000's — it came out of an old, I don't know, like at the time, it was like a fourth, fifth generation — no, it was like a third generation Apple PowerBook, okay, and an old car battery, and they ran it in the back of their car somewhere, because they had to move around to find Internet modem access to the Internet. It's like half a dozen women in Central America, they were part of the larger NGO, I think the French acronym is AMARC, which is the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters. Now, the reason why they did that was because they understood that radio remain the primary source of information for community people, for poor people who don't have access to television, who don't have access to print, and also who may be illiterate. In other words, they did not have access to education. And so the creation of this radio program became a necessity for empowering the community so that people would, and so they had to teach themselves a whole new way of distributing the media. But the questions that they were asking, the material that they were bringing to the radio was not new. These are the same questions that they'd been asking about gender equality, about wealth distribution, about land reform, the same questions they were asking for decades in their struggle for justice in the community. So I think at one level today, there is, in fact, the reason why we are experiencing an acute crisis of knowing is because this crisis, in part is manufactured from the top. Right, we have the Office of the President and the State, one of the most powerful states in the world: the United States

government. Right, there are — many of the functionaries in the Trump administration, their role is to manufacture quote unquote "alternative facts," right? That's an intentional campaign to create. It's not that we don't have some of these quiet questions before. I'm not saying that. There's an incredible book that came out last year by Russell Muirhead and Nancy Rosenblum called *A Lot of People Are Saying*. 'A Lot of People Are Saying' — that's the title, and the subtitle is 'The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy.' Part of this campaign to manufacture so called alternative facts is so that we, and as tanner said, from the very beginning, we're living in a very precarious time. There's a — the State is withholding a lot of information, right? People feel vulnerable. And what that means is that they are asking questions, and they should be asking questions. And when you have the combination of people feeling disempowered, and the state withholding information, and an intentional misinformation campaign, because in every — I mean, when you look at states, or particularly authoritarian states, manufacturing propaganda campaigns is one of his chief responsibilities. Right, it's a different form of political education. It's called political miseducation. Right? I mean, you look at fascist regimes, you look at authoritarian regimes, propaganda, and misinformation campaign are very much part of the drive to destabilize, delegitimize democratic authority. And this is not coincidence, and this is not — So it's a wonderful book to read about why there's new conspiracism, that people believe in conspiracy, that everywhere they look is a conspiracy. There's a reason for that, right? So I think we need to learn how to ask the questions, we need to ask questions about assumptions. We need to ask questions about how do we verify, how do we evaluate evidence? What is good evidence? What is bad evidence? This is what I was saying earlier, right? We should not trust the police just because they are the police, right? If we see evidence of police violence, with our own eyes, that should be some sort of basis for reality. Does that make sense?

Michael Soto 42:38

It does, well, and that should be like you're saying a reason to ask questions, right? Like that is a reality that we can see that offers an opportunity to ask questions, because it seems to me that questions are the greatest threat to this manufactured crisis, right? And questions are always the greatest threat to authoritarianism and to those who hold privilege, power, and extreme wealth. And so it seems totally in their interest, right, to keep us from asking questions and keep us in this feeling of constant doubt and post-truth, and like there are no answers anymore.

HLT Quan 43:17

Yeah, I mean, I think, I think that doubt — skepticism is good, right? Like, we should be somewhat skeptical. We shouldn't believe everything that people tell us. But we have to learn how to ask questions about, like, is that logical? Is it, can we verify evidence? Is there evidence of this? Does it make sense, right? And whose sensibility are we talking about? Right, because it makes perfect sense for Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon, to not give people a break to go to the bathroom as often as they need. It makes perfect sense for Jeff Bezos, to basically keep people at barely minimum wage, and working in warehouses, even when the warehouses are in areas like this Phoenix area where it's 100 something degrees inside these metal boxes, right? And very high risk of injuries. It makes sense because his purpose is to build a more powerful Amazon Corporation. And accumulate as much profit as possible, right, and as much influence in society as possible. And he's done that this year. He has benefited greatly from the pandemic, and people having to order food because they're afraid to go to the grocery store, rightly so. But does that make him a reliable witness for how workers' lives are going, how well are workers' lives? He may be a really good witness for someone, you know, for telling people how to, like, just make as much money as possible. But he may not be a reliable witness for what constitutes a livable wage for workers. Does that make sense?

Michael Soto 45:20

Totally makes sense. Similarly, why the stock market or GDP isn't a good economic indication of the economic health of people. Right? It's one narrative, but it doesn't say how healthy people in that country are in an economic sense, right?

tanner menard 45:41

Dr. Quan, I'm really glad that you brought up Michel Foucault. And I hope that as we progress with this podcast that we can talk more about the philosophers and intellectuals that have shaped how we define the LGBT community today. I was driving through Tyler, Texas about a week and a half ago, and the radio choices, they're pretty limited. And I had about an hour where I was listening to this religious radio station in the middle of, you know, really rural part of Texas. And they were talking about postmodernism and critical theory, and they were explaining it to people in their community so that they could understand and undermine how, you know, young queer and trans people identify themselves nowadays, and how we use those terms of identification to empower ourselves against the sort of patriarchal system that we're living in. And I think that that's one of the things that you know, as a, you know, as just a person who lives life and, you know, is a queer person, you know, I came upon these kinds of terminologies just through memes on the Internet, and I did research and I, you know, I had the educational background to actually be able to look up these words, and to be able to read about postmodernism and figure out what it was and how that was shaping my identity and whatnot. But I feel like the left in the LGBT community, many people are aware of these things, but not everyone is. And we don't necessarily spend the time educating ourselves about the philosophies of the right in the way that they spend time educating themselves about the philosophies that influence our community. And so one of my hopes in this podcast is that we can explore these kinds of topics. Because the other side — is not that there are only two sides — but the right is, and the religious right in particular, are definitely examining these things and educating parents so that they can dissuade their children from, like assuming these kinds of identities, for instance. So I really appreciate that you brought up Michel Foucault, and I hope to learn a whole lot from you about those sorts of things.

HLT Quan 48:45

Yes, thank you, tanner, I, you know, I think that's the thing about conversations. One of the things I said earlier was about what I'm hoping that this podcast will do, and one of which is that it creates these kind of public conversations. Because when we make declarative statements, what we do is we foreclose the public discourse, we say, either you believe in this or you don't, in conversation, there is some good faith. I think; there's some good faith behind this. And I really want to have more good-faith public conversation, that we have some faith in learning from each other, that we are co-learners in this conversation, and that we'll learn from each other through conversations, and in the conversation, we advance the course of knowledge. And so yes, I'm very much hopeful we'll talk about Foucault, we will talk about different philosophers as they bring to, if they help us in some way, in various discourse. I think part of what's going on too, is that we need to approach knowledge with a kind of a sense — for me, I always was taught that no knowledge is too sacred or profane for interrogation. And that means we need to ask questions. Whose knowledge? What is it for? Right? How did it come to be that we believe that the police should be the only source of, reliable source of information for police violence? When did we, how did that happen? So I know we talked about future podcasts, and I'm really looking forward to having these conversations about artificial intelligence, about bodily autonomy, about surveillance, about voting suppressions, these are the issues that actually very much affect the LGBT community. Sometimes we have these conversations head on, and sometimes we sort of cast them

into the margin. And I think that the more we have, the more conversations we have around these issues, hopefully, the more we'll get used to asking questions about why we know what we know, or how we know what we know.

tanner menard 51:33

Thank you, um, you know, I, as an indigenous person, I often feel like the very ancient knowledge that I'm very fortunate to know a little bit about does not fit into the world that I'm living in, and that there's no place for it in conversation. And my tribe, our name is Ishak, and it just means The People. In Flagstaff, you know, one of the tribes that lives here are the Diné, and the name of their tribe means The People. And almost every tribe in this continent, when you ask, what does the name of your people mean, they say The People. And so what that implies, though, is that other tribes are not The People. Your tribe, is The People. And so I feel like as a human family, what's happening is that many The Peoples are now living in very close proximity to one another. And we need to learn how to see each other all as The People, because what I want — you know, like, I work as a political organizer, I work as a poet, I work as a healer, I do all these things — what I really want as a human being is, I want to be able to communicate with the people around me, I want to be able to sit in the room with my grandmother, and be able to have a conversation. I want to be able to sit in the room with a person that has a different ideology than I have, and be able to relate to them as a human being. And I feel, I feel the thing that hurts my heart, my spirit the most, is that we're reaching a point, a crisis of knowing, where we don't know how to, we don't know how to have a conversation with one another anymore. We don't know how to see the humanity in one another anymore. And so my personal commitment as a human being is I want to learn how to listen to other people, and be able to, when I hear something that I don't agree with, to ask questions, and to learn how to communicate in such a way that I will be heard.

Michael Soto 54:32

I am so looking forward to these conversations about how we know what we know, why we know what we know. And I'm so excited to learn from both of you and to just be in this conversation with both of you. So thank you both for contributing so much to this first conversation, and I'm looking forward to every single episode that we work on together. Thank you everyone so much for listening today. I know that I learned from these amazing, powerful thinkers, Dr. Quan and tanner. I'm excited for our next episode, which is all about voter suppression and how that impacted this election, and how understanding voter suppression historically and present day can help us understand what happened in this election and what will happen in future elections. We'll be tackling all sorts of different topics throughout this season, asking questions of each other, asking you to ask questions, for the core purpose of understanding what's happening in our society, for increasing political education, and for increasing this public discourse around these critical topics. So we'll see you next time.