

## Episode 1.2 Social Media & *Moana* with Lucia Lorenzi

July 21, 2017

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Welcome to our second ever episode. I'm really, really tickled by how much people enjoyed chatting with Xine last week and I promise the conversation you'll hear today is going to be every bit as good. But first, I want to tell you what my secret feminist agenda is this week. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]

Hannah (Host): In honor of the announcement of the new 13th doctor for the series, *Doctor Who*, my feminist agenda for this week is women taking over every form of traditionally male-dominated popular culture. Seriously it... I have a lot of feelings about the announcement of a female doctor and I'm hoping that I might actually reach out to and find a *Doctor Who* fan, who I could do a whole episode with on this topic, but I'm going to talk about my feelings very briefly today, and that is that a franchise like this one that is so queer and so interested in the complexities of identity and so much about a non-human other whose ability to transform constantly is the source of their magical relationship to humanity—the fact that this franchise has struggled to justify having a woman, uh, is fucking bananas to me. Um, everything about the doctor as a character lends itself to gender bending and people's reaction to it is hysterical over-the-top misogyny and just exactly the register that reminds us that some of the most basic forms of feminism are still remarkably urgent. You know, I've had people talk to me on Twitter about how necessary and important this moment feels to them.

I've also been noticing this weird script happening at the same time where, you know, lots of white women are celebrating this. It's a white woman who's been cast, the extremely talented Jodie Whittaker who was wonderful in *Broad Church* if you haven't watched it yet, the saddest series in the entire world. And you know, I've seen a lot of, a lot of white women celebrating this, and then people of color being like, well, "I really wish it had been a person of color" and white women saying, "Yeah, I know. It's so sad at how slow progress is and what's happening." There's this really weird naturalization of progress as white women first. A white women first, then men of color, and then maybe women of color. That is a narrative that white women have been invested in since suffrage when white women actively advocated for them getting the vote before black men did. And it's a narrative that's premised on white woman's staking their claims and whiteness being a more important than masculinity. So I get my first crack at things before a black men do because I might be a woman, sure, and that makes me less human, but I've got all this whiteness to justify it. Yeah. So I'm having a really complex feelings about this, about the way that the, the, the celebration of this new diverse sci-fi fantasy nerd culture thing is a white women and sometimes men of color and so very rarely women of color.

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And along those lines, if you have not watched the trailer for the new *Wrinkle in Time*, which is being directed by Ava DuVernay, please go watch it immediately. It looks breathtaking and revelatory and also has a woman of color as a protagonist, a girl of color, and multiple—like Mindy Kaling's in it, and Oprah Winfrey's in it. It looks really, really good. Um, so yeah, I am here for women just stealing every form of sci-fi and fantasy property that men thought that they owned. I just, all of the—I say men can have no stories, no stories for men anymore. You've had enough. Um, but I'm not here for the narrative that says white women get everything first. So, let's stop saying that. Let's stop naturalizing how progress works and start insisting that everybody continue to do better in a way that... yeah, sure, *Star Wars*, great start. Let's give me some fucking women of color, please. Christ sakes. [Music: Mesh Shirt by Mom Jeans]

Hannah (Host): And now I want to introduce my friend Lucia. Lucia Lorenzi is an anti-violence scholar, speaker, and consultant based here in sometimes sunny Vancouver, BC. Her research focuses on representations of sexual violence in Canadian and Indigenous literature, drama and other media. She's been interviewed on the *CBC* and the *Globe and Mail* and more and she blogs about sexual violence at *Rabble.ca*. In her spare time, because somehow on top of all of that she's got spare time. she's a singer-songwriter, a mixed-media artist, and a lover of all things *Star Trek*. I invited her over for vegan ice cream and berries, local Vancouver berries, and couch hangouts. Here's a little piece of the very long conversation we had. Two kinds of warnings before we get started. First, a content warning for extended discussion of sexual violence and rape. Second, spoiler warnings for the movies, *Moana* and *Maleficent*. If you haven't seen those yet and you don't like getting spoiled, pause now. Go watch them both. They're urgent. Anyway, here we go. [Music: "Cranes in the Sky" by Solange]

Hannah (Host): Yeah, so you watched *Moana* recently. Tell me about it.

Lucia (Guest): It was a revelatory moment, because I don't watch Disney because I didn't grow up with Disney because my mom's like, "I don't know what that is. What is Barbie?" I had a Fidel Castro ragdoll as a child. If that tells you anything.

Hannah (Host): I think I need you to clarify what it's telling me. Is your mom like an amazing radical?

Lucia (Guest): In some ways? Yes. I just, I, I have no idea. Um, but Disney has always been beyond me. Um, yeah. And I don't usually watch animated films either. Not because I don't appreciate the artistry and stuff like that, but yeah, everyone's like, "You have to watch it." And I'm like, "Oh, do I? Fine. I will watch it. Right now." And it was... it was everything that I needed. It was everything that I needed it to be... and more. Yeah. Yeah.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. So, let's backtrack a bit because I want to give some context for—you wrote this really incredible Twitter thread about, like, what your reading of

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*Moana* was in relation to your reading of *Maleficent*, which is another movie that Marcelle made me watch because it got kind of critically panned and

Lucia (Guest): But it's so good.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. Marcelle was like, "This movie is fucking incredible. You have to watch it." And I was like, "It looks a little dumb." She was like, "Shut your face and watch it." And I did, and then I tweeted her after, [laughter] I think I texted her after, and I was like, "That's the gayest thing I've ever seen." She was like, "Yeah, I know."

Lucia (Guest): [laughter] It's so gay. I love it.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. So the backup context was, can you tell the good people a little bit about like the work that you do on your Twitter feed in particular? Tell us about, tell us about your Twitter persona.

Lucia (Guest): Jesus.

Hannah (Host): Your very important Twitter—

Lucia (Guest): I would say that I'm very prolific.

Hannah (Host): And important.

Lucia (Guest): And prolific. Yeah. It's just become a repository for things that I'm thinking, but also it's become a way to think through. And once I learned that you have to thread your tweets so that then you can follow them? [laughter] Someone's like, "You don't read your tweets, so I can't follow you." Like, "Okay sir." I mean it's helpful, but you could have said it nicer. Um, yeah, I just realized that it's a great place to archive things and think through things out loud and, strangely enough, they seem (like, the things that I tweet about) seemed to resonate with people. And I feel like Twitter's a place where I— a lot of my feelings live on Twitter, like whenever I'm like, "Hi, I'm experiencing shame right now. Let me talk about it #shame #Can'tAffordTherapy."

Hannah (Host): [laughter] #Twitter is my therapy. But like, seriously though it is sometimes, isn't it? It's like, a lot of the time, I think, a thing that happens to people whose experiences of the world are not validated by mainstream narratives—so, a femmes, queers, people of color, trans people—is that what you need is a community who are going to be like, "Yes. That thing you were experiencing is real and true." And Twitter does that.

Lucia (Guest): Yeah. Yeah. There are things—not that my Facebook is full of, like, people I can't share stuff with, but it's... it's different. There's something about Twitter being so public that I almost feel more comfortable being just like, "I'm just gonna let it, I'm just going to let it all out there. And you can just Google it all dear employers."

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- Hannah (Host): [laughter]
- Lucia (Guest): Sometimes I think about that too. I'm like, "I don't have a locked Twitter feed." No, it's alright. It's okay.
- Hannah (Host): Yeah, I mean, you are, you are like a feminist, public intellectual—not "like" a feminist public intellectual. You ARE. That was the Californian "like." You are a feminist public intellectual and that involves a certain kind of, like... risky publicness around messy subjects and messy affect, right?
- Lucia (Guest): Yeah. And it's also a place where I think I've developed like a sense of anger? Because I didn't, like many people, I did not grow up expressing anger.  
[laughter]
- Hannah (Host): [laughter]
- Lucia (Guest): And I get really mad sometimes and I go on Twitter and I'm like, "Listen, I'm mad. And I sometimes don't know if I have a right to be mad. Do I? Please validate my feeling." Because then I'm, like, the world is just gaslighting me constantly and I need to know that I'm not losing my shit all the time.
- Hannah (Host): Yeah. It was talking to our mutual friend, the delightful and perfect human Erin Wunker today about the inspiration behind starting this podcast. And I was saying that when I go too long without talking to another feminist, I start to gaslight myself. I start to say like, "Oh, that's just in your head. You're just making things up, that you're overreacting to that that's not actually what happened there." And then the second I sit down with another feminist and I'm like, "Oh, I kind of had this frustrating interaction today." And they're like, "What? That's absolutely fucked up. Burn everything down." And I'm like, "Oh, thank you." Yeah. So this whole podcast project is just like, "Let's just get together and make sure we're not gaslighting ourselves. Okay?"
- Lucia (Guest): Yeah, no, absolutely. And I think that Twitter's also become a place where I try to, in my own imperfect way, give a shit about myself and my place in the world and not self-destruct, because I am prone to doing those things. And especially because Twitter—I mean I know that for a lot of people, especially a lot of feminists, Twitter is a horrible place, like a frighteningly horrible place and I feel lucky that in a lot of ways I've been protected from, I think, what I see other people going through. And certainly I have moments where like with the UBC Accountable thing, I'm like, "If I use this hashtag, they will come." They will come. And I had some of that, although the block button is just fantastic. It's wonderful. Mute early and mute often.
- Hannah (Host): [laughter] Yeah. Somebody told me at one point to mute instead of blocking because then you never have to see that person, but you don't give them the satisfaction of posting a fucking screen cap of like, "So-and-so has blocked you." And then they can be like, "Mmm. See, won't engage in debate." Instead, just

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fucking muting them. Um, okay. So, with that piece of context, tell me more about what *Moana* meant to you as a movie. Means to you. Not past tense. It's an ongoing journey. Future tense.

Lucia (Guest): I'll give a brief recap. So, a young woman, Polynesian I believe, grows up on this island where you don't venture out beyond the reef because it's dangerous. She's the daughter of the chief and is thus tasked with a lot of political power. And her family is never like, "Oh, you know, like you're a girl, like this is going to be weird for you." It's like, "No, this is what you will be doing." And eventually when resources start dying on the island, she was like, "I have to leave and fix this."

Music: [Music: "I am Moana" Lyrics: "I'm the girl who loves my island. I'm the girl who loves the sea. It calls me. I am the daughter of the village chief. I am descended from voyagers who found their way across the world. They call me. I've delivered us to where we are. I have journeyed farther. I am everything I've learned and more. Still it calls me...]

Lucia (Guest): And at the heart of it is this story about Maui, who's a demi-god who steals the heart of the goddess Te Fiti, and she's just like, "I hate everyone" and wreaks havoc on the world. And so it becomes this story about this young woman who needs to...like, who is going on this journey to help heal not only her community, but there's this righteous anger like, "You stole this goddess is heart? What the fuck is wrong with you? You just, first of all, you don't steal shit from people. That's rude," [laughter]

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Lucia (Guest): "But like you have—the wrath has been unleashed." And what's interesting for me is that I originally thought it was going to be about like, "Oh, this demigod who has to atone for sins and Moana will just be an adjunct character." But it really becomes about these two women, these two female characters. And I think what was interesting for me, not that I, and I think I had a moment where I'm like, "God Lucia, not everything is about rape. Okay? Like you can't just can't just put like a, like a violation story into everything." But it really read—Like, for me, it really was a story about what happens when someone is profoundly violated and how they cope with that and then what are the possibilities for moving past that? Like, what needs to be restored and who does that work of restoration?` Because I, like for a billion years, have had this idea and I think even for me in terms of my own relationships, I just hope that a man restores my faith one day. Like, put's my heart back together and I'll be fine. And realizing that's not how—that's not my process of healing. Like, my process of healing is hanging out with other femmes and queers and being like, "You are literally giving me life right now. Like, you are sustaining me in these huge and important ways." And so, like *Maleficent*, it was a movie about this amazing femme power and that you don't need shitty men to apologize for what they've done in order to feel like a vibrant human being again, or goddess, in this case.

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- Hannah (Host): I love that reading so much because it really did sort of get to—I mean, the other... I would say that there's three really key women because the third important one is Moana's grandmother, who comes back in these really beautiful ways. There's a (I'm going to put at the beginning of this a *Moana* spoiler alert: if you haven't already seen it, go fucking watch it before you listen to this.)
- Lucia (Guest): It's on Netflix.
- Hannah (Host): It's on Netflix, you have no excuse, but there's this scene, her grandmother dies towards the beginning, and then she comes back as a sting ray or as some kind of ray. And there's this scene where her grandmother shows back up and I was just sitting on the plane just like loudly, like [sobbing sounds] The person beside me, he was like, "Ah, are you okay?" But like that intergenerational women's relationships and the, sort of, the femme healing that happens through Moana's relationship with the goddess and that idea that... a shared experience that women, femmes, queer people, trans people have is that of violation, of being told that they are a thing that can be used by somebody who thinks they have a better sense of how the world ought to be organized and that that is not actually repaired by that same person continuing to have the power, but changing their mind about how the world gets to be organized. That is repaired by taking the power out of that person's hands and putting it back where it should actually be. Right?
- Lucia (Guest): Yeah. One of the things that I saw where some people said that they were uncomfortable with the ending because they thought it was forgiveness. That, you know, he, at first, he's like, "Hey girl, what's up? Long time, no see." And she just gives him like, the best glare. Like Rhianna level, just like, no fucks to give with this person. And then he's like, "Okay, actually I'm really sorry." And there were no excuses. "I'm like, yeah, I'm just, I'm sorry," and I'm like, "Whoa, no excuses? Cool!" What's that like? Don't know what that's that like.
- Hannah (Host): Can you imagine receiving an apology that genuine? I was wrong and I have no excuses.
- Lucia (Guest): What?! Do those exist? And then she, you know, she restores his power, but for me I saw more kind of like as an act of mercy, like, "Okay, you really fucked up. Go out into the world, don't ever fucking do this again to anybody." Like, "I don't need to forgive you. You just need to go and be a better person/demi-god."
- Hannah (Host): Yeah.
- Lucia (Guest): Because I don't... Yeah, it was great, because I'm like, "Oh yeah, forgiveness isn't necessary. Sweet!"
- Hannah (Host): And also, like, punitive models of responding to sexual violence don't work. Like, that's the carceral model of, like, anybody—you know, the rapist always has to

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be an outcast, which we know just continues to socially construct rape as a thing that is done by outsiders and others and strangers and monsters, not by, you know, a charming character voiced by The Rock. So like insisting that like, "No, you're going to be drawn back into this community, you're going to be part of the story; you're going to be part of what's going on here; you're going to be held accountable to your community for what you've done. And then, you know, if and when you prove that you are ready to make amends, you are going to be given a shot to do that." And like don't pretend for a second that if he pulls the shit again, he will be to get away with it. But like, yeah.

Lucia (Guest): Exactly, and I think for me, with *Maleficent*, there was Stephen, I think his name is? Stefan? But like, he's unrepentant the whole time. Like, he's vindictive and horrible, and like that's another story. Like, sometimes, you know, there are people who just will never apologize for their shitty, awful behavior and those people like you need to save yourself. Like, you can't keep waiting for an apology when someone's like, "I will kill your soul and destroy your whole life."

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Lucia (Guest): And so, seeing *Moana* after that, I'm like, "Ah, there's another option." Like, there's... we're just expanding the range of what the experiences can be.

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Lucia (Guest): And... yeah, it was good too. I just, because I would've felt uncomfortable if he'd been like, punished, you know what I mean? Not just being like, "I love The Rock" [laughter]

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Lucia (Guest): He gives me feelings.

Hannah (Host): You just got real, like, like hair-twirly there.

Lucia (Guest): He gives me feelings. Um, but yeah, it was just, it was really nice and I don't—and I mean in some ways hopeful because I look at people who have hurt me and the ways that I've tried to engage them and they're like, "Ha ha fuck you, like you're a terrible person." And I'm like, "Uhh, I'm just going to crawl back into therapy now."

Hannah (Host): [laughter] Yeah. And I also, like, there's something about the form of heroism that *Moana* models that's like... you know, what is the triggering moment, right? The sort of traditional triggering moment for masculine heroism seems to me to be different from what triggers Moana, which is like imbalance, a risk to her community. Something that everybody else is telling her is just the way the world is and she just needs to live with it, but she looks at it and she says like, "No, this is actually wrong. Like, everybody has told me that this is just the way things are and I'm looking at it and saying no. The status quo is actually wrong

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and broken and I think it can be better than this and I am going to go do something that's really hard and scary to try to make things better for everyone," which is like—like makes her an astoundingly feminist hero, right? Like, that's, that's what it's all about is being like, "No, I'm actually gonna refuse claims that this is inevitably and permanently the state of the world and I'm gonna see what I can do to try to make it less broken than this."

Lucia (Guest): Yeah. And I just liked the way that Maui kind of comes back in and leaves and then she's just like, "Well fine. If you're not invested in this, then that's fine. Like, you do you, but I'm going to go fix this shit because it needs to be fixed." Yeah. For me, the moment that [strong exhale] gives me feelings is when Te Ka is this magma—just like the CGI was also ridiculously beautiful—and she's just angry and there's, like there's this fire in her eyes and she's just like this burning shell of a goddess. And she said,

Hannah (Host): God, we've all been there, huh?

Lucia (Guest): Every day.

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Lucia (Guest): That's how I wake up. But she's just like crawling towards Moana, because she sees the heart and she's so desperate and Moana is just like, just walking with her hair in the wind and it's like, "Girl, this doesn't define you." And I'm just like, "Ohhuhho I can't—" It's like, "I know who the real you is." And I'm like, "I do too," like, [laughter] know what I mean?

Hannah (Host): [laughter] Yeah, yeah, I sure do.

Lucia (Guest): And when she presses her forehead against, you know, Te ka's forehead... Ah, intimacy.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. Yeah. So like, these communities of care that are, that look at people who have been like so, so, so fucked up by, you know, terrible things that have been done to them and are like, "Yeah, no, I see you. Like I see who you actually are."

Lucia (Guest): Yeah. And I think, yeah, that's a big part of it because I think a lot of people are like, "Woah, what happened to you?" And even if it's, even if it's like a sort of a sense of like, "I don't know what I can do" there sometimes is this reticence to just be with people in the swamp?

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Lucia (Guest): And just be like, "This just is what it is." Because when I get reactions from people and I not—sometimes it's perceptions of like, "Oh God, like Lucia is fucking talking about rape again on Twitter." Like, "Oh, like that girl must have a lot to say in therapy."



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Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Lucia (Guest): And it's been a decade. So yes. But just be like, "Oh, I'm not monstrous." And if—because I'm usually like, "I am broken, I will never re-enter society and I am fundamentally just irreparably damaged and afraid of myself." Right? Like I just, and that was a really beautiful moment of like, "I'm not afraid to be in this place with you." Yeah.

Hannah (Host): Yeah, yeah. That, I mean broken is the word that I have also so often used against myself as a, like, you were too fucked up to have good things. Um, and that like seeing these narratives of women who have been, like, broken down by the things that have been done to them and that not being the end of their stories? That not being, like—I mean that's, you know, back to *Maleficent*, right? That it, that it treats that, her seeming-villainy, as sort of one step in this very complex journey that she is going through, which is the journey of healing, ultimately. But like, yeah, that, that insistence that to show people the way in which you have been wounded by the world is bad or wrong, or inappropriate. Which then breeds this culture in which we all have to pretend that nothing terrible has happened to us, which is a burden that unjustly lies on the people who are substantially more vulnerable to violence, so that we all have to like, like both do all of the regular stuff of moving through the world and then do all of this extra emotional labor of pretending that the world is not fucking us up every day.

Lucia (Guest): Yeah. And I feel like at a certain point, and I don't know when that point was, it might've been maybe like a year or two into kind of the very public activism. Like I started talking about sexual assault in 2011, I think, but then... yeah, just in the past few years, I can't, I can't contain it anymore. Like, if I can't go, I can't—I mean obviously my work is about sexual assault, so there's that connection as well, but I can't move through any of the worlds that I am in, my professional life and my personal life, I just I can't pretend anymore. It's exhausting and some people are like, "Well, what if your students like, whatever." I'm like, "Yeah, and the fact that I've been public about it is why I've had students who disclose to me, right?" Like, that I know what it's like to feel that way.

Hannah (Host): I have also had this experience and the more open I am to students about, for example, struggles with mental health, the more likely they are to come to me and talk about what's going on in their own lives, which then gives me a chance to like actually be a real teacher and mentor to them and then actually means that they can like thrive in your class because they're not trying to pretend they're fine when they're not. Um, and that can't possibly be the point of school is to teach everybody to pretend to be fine when they're not. Like, if it is, I'm out.

Lucia (Guest): Yeah.

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Hannah (Host): It reminds me of what Tanis MacDonald said at the end of a panel that you and I both spoke on at a conference recently where she, she sort of—there was a lot of crying happening in that room. [laughter] And Tanis, you know, got up right at the end and she said, you know, "I just have one last thing I want to say. I've said it many times and I'll say it many times again, crying is good pedagogy."

Lucia (Guest): Yeah. And I did not stop crying for days. Like, I was on the plane home and I was just like, [emotive exhale]. But it's also like, the way the body that I bring into a classroom is not white and, like, I present myself and my femininity in a particular way. Like, I can't escape that, so why would I be like, "No, no, everything's fantastic. Like, it's fine. I didn't just come from some ridiculous encounter or whatever."

Hannah (Host): Yeah. I think that's the message that is given a lot is like, 'Well, do your best to pretend that your body doesn't have a race or a gender, because then people might mistake you for a white man.' The bodies that don't have races or genders, right? The bodies of white men. Which is like, no, fuck that... entirely forever?

Lucia (Guest): Entirely. And absolutely. And I feel like, I mean I'm still working on having a body [laughter] and like what that, what that looks like politically and what that looks like, I guess in my, in my personal relationships, but also in like who I am as an academic, because I was having a conversation with somebody about like, you know, I'm trying to figure out the book that I'm going to write. And I'm like, I've always said like I don't talk about my own experiences in my research. It's just something that I've never done. I've talked about my own experiences as a reader. Like, I'm reading this text and this is what I'm experiencing, but I'm like, I can't, I literally can't. And now I'm wondering, well, can I? And if I can, what does that look like? Without feeling like it's gratuitous or that I'm exploiting myself or that... Yeah, I think that's something that I'm still struggling with, is I can bring those things into the classroom. But in, like, my scholarly research, sometimes I'm just like, "Oh, like I can't do it yet." Like I haven't proven myself with like the amazing theoretical monograph in which I lay, you know, open a new view on the field and then I can be like, "Let me tell you a story about my life."

Hannah (Host): Because it feels like less legitimate knowledge. Like it's, it's not, you know, what's legitimate. What's legitimate is something purely conceptual that you can prove by propping it up on a history of knowledge produced by white men and things that you know, in affective and visceral and experiential ways, those aren't real.

Lucia (Guest): Yeah. I've been reading Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake*. Christina Sharpe talks a lot about like using the personal but also in terms of like Black knowledge about, like, yes you can teach slavery, but there's a knowledge that Black people have that's in excess of these very rigid constructs. And I think for me, as I talk more about race and my experience of Blackness, that's also become an entrance

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point into which I can access the personal because I think I've always been like, "Yeah, I'll talk about it through gender, but I'm obviously—like, obviously I don't just move through the world as a woman. Like, I am a black woman, I'm a light skinned woman, I have passing privilege at times. And so, putting those two things together feels like it's a way that I'm, I guess, reconciling those things and coming at it in that way. Like, a piece that I'm writing right now about CanLit and Blackness: it's the most terrifyingly vulnerable thing I've ever written. Ever. It's terrifying because I'm really like, I feel like I'm acknowledging the entirety of my body and I'm like, "Oh yeah, Shit." It's horrifying. But it's also, it feels necessary and I'm glad that I'm doing it. And I think that there are—I mean, I think that I have a group of friends and colleagues that I can think through those problems with, which is amazing.

Hannah (Host): Yeah, it's really, it is really striking how the function of white feminism within academia has meant that, like, there is space for women when women are white or when women of color will consent to not consider their race and the way that that means they move differently in the institution. And also, part and parcel of that is that the version of feminism that has thrived in academia is very "Lean In" feminism. It's very like, uh, you know, be one of the boys. Prove yourself through the same ways. You know, that model of like, well, "I came through this and I survived it and therefore it was a valuable thing to come through and survive and therefore you must also survive it" rather than like, we can actually change the way these institutions work.

Lucia (Guest): Because I see a lot of ways in which people don't survive. Like the people who,

Hannah (Host): Who's "we," who's the "we" who surviving this?

Lucia (Guest): Because it's not the people who are dropping out of graduate school because it's hostile and they face so much racism in the classroom, like overtly, but also all of the microaggressions that exist. And the people who are going through their programs or, you know, they've taken up a job and they're like, "I'm barely holding on" and I feel like... I think there's this sort of general, like a way, like a survival that's accepted, like "Oh, me too! I'm barely hanging on, it's fine," but then there's like the real moments of "I need help," like "I need to be sustained."

Hannah (Host): Yeah. There's a sense very much that I think in academia, like in a lot of other cultures where stress and overwork is praised and valued, that in fact burnout and poor mental health are seen as signs that you are doing it right? And so it becomes really hard to find the language to say like, "No, no, no. I'm actually not okay." And this sort of ties us back into that, the beginning of this conversation about Twitter, like finding a space where you can say even if you're screaming into the digital ether, like, "I'm not okay!"

Lucia (Guest): "Just so somebody knows!"

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

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- Lucia (Guest): Yeah, for sure. And I feel like for me, the not—I mean, I've been, I've struggled mental health stuff a lot since I was 15 mostly, but my physical health really took a turn for the worse in my PhD and I got really, really sick and I think in some ways I'm better at being like, "Yeah, physically, like I'm not okay" because I can quantify it and I'm fatigued or like I, I literally can't move, or whatever. But it's also, yeah, it's also made me be like, I'm chronically ill. The chronic part means forever. [laughter]
- Hannah (Host): [laughter]
- Lucia (Guest): Because some people are like, "Oh no, no, no, no, like,"
- Hannah (Host): "You'll get better, just uh just go for a jog and eat more vegetables."
- Lucia (Guest): Kale. Affirmations. And it's like, "No, what if, what if this is forever?"
- Hannah (Host): Yeah.
- Lucia (Guest): How am I going to hold space for myself? And how are other people gonna hold space for me if some degree of not-okayness is chronic?
- Hannah (Host): In our, sort of, self-determination and wellness-driven late capitalist culture, it's like, "Oh, it's not okay to not be okay. You need to make yourself well." And it's like, "Well, some forms of illness are not—like, there's not a fucking thing I can do about it and it has to be okay that I'm going to not be okay."
- Lucia (Guest): Yeah, I mean I would say that in the past year and a half, like, career-wise, killing it.
- Hannah (Host): [laughter]
- Lucia (Guest): Twitter, killing it. Instagram, killing it.
- Hannah (Host): Oh yeah.
- Lucia (Guest): Literally. Um, like, personally I'm like fuck. Like I. It's been the hardest year and a half of my entire life and sometimes I just find it so amusing when I'm like, "Wow, look at me doing the things." But like... just fucked up and loving it.
- Hannah (Host): Yeah [laughter]
- Lucia (Guest): Feeling fine. [Music: "Cranes in the Sky" by Solange]
- Hannah (Host): If you'd like to learn more about Lucia, you can follow her on Twitter @empathywarrrior and read some of her work at [empathywarrrior.ca](http://empathywarrrior.ca). If you want to follow me, I'm @hkpmcgregor. And if you want to tweet about the show, use the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. I'm still looking for sign off

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suggestions. @hbeebananabee suggested, "Shhhh," which is hilarious and a strong contender right now. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album, *Chub Rub*. You can download their entire album on free music archive.org, or follow them on Facebook. Lucia's theme this week was "Cranes in the Sky" by Solange, and please go watch the video for that song immediately because it is breathtaking. You can always find the episodes as well as weekly reading lists at [secretfeministagenda.com](http://secretfeministagenda.com). Finally, don't forget to rate and subscribe on your podcatcher of choice to help spread the word and tell a friend. Friends love podcasts recommendations. That's a fact. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Still, still waiting on that sign off.