

Episode 4.21 Introducing the Amplify Podcast Network

May 28, 2020

- Hannah McGregor: [00:00](#) [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. And guess what? It was my birthday this week. Go ahead, wish me a happy birthday out loud. I'll sense it. [Short Pause] Thank you very much. It turns out that a birthday week is a kind of emotionally intense experience in the midst of a pandemic for me. I already have a tendency to have a pretty hard emotional comedown after my birthday. It's just like, a lot of attention, which I really enjoy, followed by a sudden precipitous drop off in attention. And that combined with the fact that I obviously spent my birthday largely alone this year, obviously virtually connecting with friends and even getting to do a couple of small, distanced outdoor in-person hangouts. But nonetheless, it was a much more solo experience than usual, and has turned this week into, let's say, an opportunity to really come face to face with the realities of my own loneliness. [Short Laugh] So that was fun.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:19](#) In fact, I initially thought about talking about loneliness in this episode, but then I thought, "Ah, I don't really want to focus on loneliness right now. I kind of would rather focus on connection." So, today I'm going to talk a little bit more about a new project that I'm working on that's helping me connect to a lot of folks. So, let's go. [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]
- Hannah McGregor: [01:44](#) I want to tell you today about the Amplify Podcast Network. So those of you who have been listening for awhile are probably aware that *Secret Feminist Agenda*, in addition to being a fun opportunity for me to talk with feminists about the things that they do and with you about my own feminism, is also a scholarly project. It was part of a SSHRC-funded project to develop methods for peer reviewing podcasts. SSHRC is the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council here in Canada and they funded this project as a preliminary exploration of what would be involved in my collaborating with a scholarly press, specifically Wilfrid Laurier University Press, to peer review and publish a podcast as a form of scholarship, not as a way of circulating the findings of a research project, but actually doing scholarship here, publicly, out loud, in this medium.
- Hannah McGregor: [02:54](#) And we had a lot of success in that first phase of the project. I mean, [Laughs] we made three seasons of this podcast, now more than halfway through the fourth one; we had those first

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three seasons peer reviewed and shared that peer review online; we got lots of opportunities to talk with people about this work; and really started building up some excitement and momentum around the idea of scholarly podcasting. So my collaborator at Wilfrid Laurier University Press Siobhan McMenemy and I decided we wanted to continue this work.

Hannah McGregor: [03:25](#)

But what we really wanted to do was not just keep making *Secret Feminist Agenda*, but further build the capacity for scholarly podcasting by creating a kind of scholarly podcast network. [Said Dramatically] And so was born Amplify. Or rather, was born the process of spending multiple months, putting together a huge [Laughs] grant to fund Amplify. That's kind of the main thing that I did with my fall, was put together this big grant. And we found out in March that it was successful and we got permission last week to announce that it was successful. There's usually a publication ban between you finding out that you got a grant funded and being allowed to actually talk about the grant being funded, but we can talk about it now! And I'm really excited to talk about it now.

Hannah McGregor: [04:20](#)

I've said multiple times in multiple venues that one of the reasons why I feel really passionate about this project, not just my making this podcast, but the larger task of building infrastructure around scholarly podcasts so that they can be taken seriously as scholarship, is that I think there's a lot of transformative potential in changing what we consider to be legitimate scholarly output. Especially because there is a tendency for overlap between the most marginalized folks in scholarly communities and those with a strong sense of commitment to publics outside of the university. So Black and Indigenous and racialized and queer and trans and disabled scholars just have more of a tendency of engaging with the communities to whom they, we, feel a commitment outside of the university rather than feeling contented with publishing more sort of conservative scholarship and more conservative or traditional forms.

Hannah McGregor: [05:34](#)

And one result of that is that those folks who are already the most marginalized people in academia also end up doing double the work, doing that public outreach, public engagement, or community accountable work and then also having to do all of the traditional work because the community accountable work, while universities might like it, doesn't actually count towards hiring or tenure and promotion. Which is to say that if we want to change who works at universities and what kinds of values universities have, we have to change what kinds of scholarship we value. And I think valuing non-traditional and public

scholarship is a really important part of the transformation of the university in general. I don't think that begins and ends with podcasts, but I think podcasts are a good test case. And the Amplify Podcast Network is an opportunity for us to expand this test case, to bring more people into the conversation around what scholarly podcasting might look like.

Hannah McGregor: [06:41](#)

So there are a whole bunch of different moving parts to this project. We, [Laughs] we divided it into task forces inspired primarily by the project management approach of the SpokenWeb project, which I'm also involved with. And I don't want to spend a bunch of time breaking down task forces for you, but I do want to tell you a few of the things that we're going to be doing. Maybe the biggest, most significant one is that we're going to be adding three new podcasts into the network. Those podcasts aren't, you know, coming out tomorrow. They need time for editorial conception and production and they're going to be peer reviewed before they're released, so it'll be a little bit longer before they're sort of out and available. But they're going to be podcasts by Daniel Heath Justice, who is an incredible Indigenous studies scholar at the University of British Columbia; by friend of the podcast and former guest Brenna Clarke Gray, who works in educational technologies at Thompson Rivers University—that podcast is going to be about post-secondary pedagogy, super excited about it—; and one by Kendra Cowley and María Alvarez Malvido, who are both finishing up Master's degrees in, I believe, library and information studies [sic: María is mastering in Communication and Technology] at the University of Alberta, and their podcast is going to be about critical librarianship.

Hannah McGregor: [08:05](#)

I'm really stoked that the podcasters that we're going to be bringing into the network are people who occupy really different kinds of roles within the university, who are at really different stages in their scholarly careers, and who come at the question of non-traditional scholarship from really different cultural and political perspectives. And I'm extremely stoked to get to hear these podcasts as they start to get developed. But that part, that like actually producing new podcasts part, that's actually not the work I'm gonna be doing. That's mostly Siobhan's work and the work of the press. The work that I'm going to be doing has a lot more to do with both building more capacity for scholarly podcasting in general as well as helping to make the scholarly podcasts already being created more sustainable and discoverable.

Hannah McGregor: [09:00](#)

So one of the goals that I have is to develop some educational resources for other people who are interested in making

scholarly podcasts and for other people who are interested in maybe getting their podcasts peer reviewed, not necessarily through Wilfrid Laurier University Press, but in whatever way they are interested in doing that. And so I'm right at the beginning right now of thinking through what useful resources might look like for people who are interested in getting into scholarly podcasting. I've done so many workshops on the topic and done so many sort of off-the-cuff Zoom calls and... You know, partially this part of the project is like a selfish desire on my part to not need to do as many workshops and Zoom calls. I would love to actually just have a thing I could point people towards. But I'm also aware that a useful, free, open resource is just going to reach a lot more people than I ever can individually, you know, [Laughs] traveling around to universities or taking individual Zoom requests.

Hannah McGregor: [10:07](#)

And I would love, if you're listening right now and this is a thing you're interested in and you have particular topics or problems or questions that you would like a educational resource to tackle, let me know. Shoot me an email, secretfeministagenda@gmail.com, and tell me what would be useful to you in the resource that I'm developing because I'm right at the beginning of thinking about it and really open to ideas about what that could usefully look like.

Hannah McGregor: [10:38](#)

And then the other piece of this is that sort of discoverability-sustainability thing. So on the one hand, just making sure that we're preserving the final files for all of these podcasts, so that they'll still be usable in years to come and that involves collaborating with Simon Fraser University and Wilfrid Laurier University librarians because librarians are the experts in data management plans and long-term data sustainability. But I am also working with the libraries to figure out some ways to make scholarly podcasts a bit more discoverable, by which I mean that right now, if you want to find a podcast that a scholar is making, you kind of have to either know who's making it or what the podcast is called because the search options on Apple Podcasts are not good. And you can't go into a scholarly database and look for scholarly podcasts because podcasts aren't in there, unless an individual episode has been published as part of like an online journal, which, which does happen sometimes. Otherwise it's not gonna be included in scholarly databases. And we want to figure out how we can get podcasts in there so that when people are researching, say, critical feminist perspectives on sourdough, my episode with Emily Hoven will come up. Or if they're trying to understand more about the intersections between disability, justice, and poetry, the interview with Okka will come up.

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- Hannah McGregor: [12:16](#) You know, I think that this is work that should be discoverable by people who are doing research on these topics. And I want that to be the case with the three new podcasts that we're creating and I want that to be the case with anybody else who is making a scholarly podcast and wants it to be something that other scholars can find. So we're going to be doing some extremely sexy metadata [Says With A Mock Cringe] term development. [Mock Enthusiastically] Yeah. This kind of infrastructure work that maybe isn't as...fun on the surface as, say, making a podcast, but is really, really important for making sure that these kinds of transformations to how scholarship is valued can be more sustainable, more long-term.
- Hannah McGregor: [13:06](#) At some point later, I'm going to go make a website for this project. Let's just say that URL is going to be, mmm, wait here a second. Yeah, it's going to be [amplifypodcastnetwork.ca](#). I know, extremely original.
- Hannah McGregor: [13:24](#) Anyway, you can go check that out and see whatever I figured out so far. And it will probably be like a picture of some headphones or some podcasting junk. Anyway, I'm really excited to share more about this project with all of you as it develops since this is the thing that *Secret Feminist Agenda* helped make possible. And I'm really excited that this podcast, whenever it comes to the end of its life, is going to have this longer legacy. So thanks for being part of that. [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]
- Hannah McGregor: [13:57](#) Okay, it's time to take a look into our Killjoy Survival Kits. [Sound Effect: Chest Creaking Open]
- Hannah McGregor: [14:06](#) I've got a couple of survival kit entries to share with you this episode. One is from Carolyn or Caroline who shared with me some of their approach to grieving a grandparent they've lost during the pandemic when they can't be physically nearby. They wrote, "I wear a ring of hers and have been focusing on the physical link between my hand and hers through it. I've been seeing her in the presence of the birds outside my window she would have loved so much. And I've been trying to see the light and shadows outside through her eyes." Thanks for sharing that. The other is from Rich, who shared a project that they're working on with a group called Your Workers My Family, which is fighting for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. And they shared that if you want to learn more about that work, you can check them out on Twitter @YWMForg. That's Your Workers My Family, Y W M F O R G. My survival kit this week was, [Sighs] whoo, the significantly sized vegan ice cream cake

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that I purchased for myself for my birthday, as well as the wonderful friends who helped pick that cake up for me when I hurt my foot the day before I was scheduled to pick it up and was temporarily housebound, as well as all the other friends who reached out to me, texted, called, met up in person, to make a really weird isolated birthday feel special anyway, Got some really great friends and I am really, really thankful for them. Don't forget to email me at secretfeministagenda@gmail.com or tweet with the hashtag [#secretfeministagenda](https://twitter.com/secretfeministagenda) if you want to share what's in your survival kit. [Sound Effect: Chest Slamming Shut]

Hannah McGregor: [15:55](#) As always, you can find show notes and the rest of the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter [@hkpmcgregor](https://twitter.com/hkpmcgregor), and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag [#secretfeministagenda](https://twitter.com/secretfeministagenda).

Hannah McGregor: [16:10](#) And of course, it's always super helpful if you rate and review the show. It's our best way to keep people finding it and listening to it. There's a new review this week from Emily Ower in Canada. Thank you so much. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album *Chub Rub*. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org or follow them on Facebook. *Secret Feminist Agenda* is recorded on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations where I'm grateful to live and work. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]