

## Episode 1.15 Rethinking Podcasts with THIS GUY (Points at Self)

October 27, 2017

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Dearest ones, I hope you'll forgive a rather short episode this week as I launch straight into telling you a little bit more about my secret feminist agenda, which is this podcast, *Secret Feminist Agenda*. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]

Hannah (Host): So as you've probably gathered by now, I'm an academic and one of my major research areas in the past year has become podcasting as scholarly communication, which basically is about arguing that we can use podcasts to do academic work rather than just having to publish everything that we do in journal articles written in totally inaccessible language. So, mmm, maybe six months ago I started working on a research project with a scholarly editor, Siobhan, (Hi, Siobhan) who's actually the person who suggested our sign off phrase, "Pass it on." Yeah. We started a research project together where we're working on developing scholarly podcasts, podcast that would be published by a scholarly press, that will sort of have the stamp of scholarly legitimacy on them, which matters really for one reason, which is that if people like me or like Marcelle Kosman, who a lot of you know from *Witch, Please*, if we're going to actually dedicate our time to making podcasts, to reaching larger audiences, to talking about academic topics with more than like the five people who read journal articles, then we need this work to be recognized as like actual scholarship. We need it to be recognized as an actual part of the work that we're doing and to get things like podcasts recognized as the work that you're doing, generally what you need is for them to be peer reviewed.

Oh, I've just realized that I've left out a really crucial detail here and that detail is that this, that *Secret Feminist Agenda* is the podcast that we're using as sort of our test case to figure out how to publish scholarly podcasts. As a side note, it actually took some convincing for Siobhan to talk me into recognizing that *Secret Feminist Agenda* is a scholarly undertaking. I guess, I guess I still have some of my own sort of internalized doubts about how embodied and emotionally-driven feminist labor can also be scholarship, but that might be a conversation for another day.

So, in a journal article you submit the article that you've written, all of your identifying features are taken off it and it is sent out to two other people in your field, your peers. They read it and they send back to the editor their thoughts about it and their advice about whether the journal should accept or reject it, or accepted with revisions and then all their identifying details are stripped off and those reviews are sent back to you, the author, and that's what's called double blind peer review. So the reviewers don't know who you are and you don't know who they are, and that sort of supposed to be the ideal of how peer review is going to work, right? Because nobody knows who anybody else is, so it's the most rigorous.

## Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

Well, as might be obvious, double blind peer review doesn't make any sense for podcasts. A couple of reasons: 1. It would be really hard to make this anonymous because I'm saying it with my voice and you know it's right there. It's right there in my voice is that it's me. Also because this is feminist scholarship, I talk a lot about my own life, so it's really not anonymous. Feminist scholarship is really hard to anonymize a lot of the time. Also, you know how podcasts come out regularly, like this one has been coming out once a week? Peer review takes months and months and months and months and maybe even years. Scholarly publishing is slow, so Siobhan and I have been talking about how are we going to develop methods for peer reviewing a podcast. We've reached the stage with this podcast where we need to start thinking in really serious ways about peer review and what that's gonna look like and part of that question for us is who are the peers for this project. Like, traditionally for scholarship, you would say that peers have to be other people with PhDs who have jobs at universities. They are the people who are qualified to say if something is or is not legitimate scholarship, but with a project like this that's inherently public facing, that's really about breaking down some of the barriers between the university and a larger public, it doesn't really make sense to limit our definition of who counts as a peer to just other academics. Meanwhile, double blind peer review also doesn't make a heck of a lot of sense and so we're going to try a couple of different things. For one thing, we're developing a platform where some other scholars can do what's generally known as open peer review. What that means is that when this first round of peer review is done by the scholars who are going to do it, you'll all be able to read it if you're interested and I'll share it with everybody and you can take a look at what people have to say that. The other difference is that I also want to gather peer review from you, the listeners of the podcast.

So what I'm asking from you at this stage is to go to the podcast website, [secretfeministagenda.com](http://secretfeministagenda.com), and on this episode post, so episode 1.15, leave me a comment and you can tell me what's working for you about the podcast, what isn't working for you, you know, what are your thoughts about the format? What are your thoughts about the guests? What are your thoughts about the kinds of conversations we've had? Are there other topics you would love to see discussed? Are there different formats or segments you would recommend? You know, [laughter] don't feel required to be critical if you just think it's working, you can say that, but you know, this is a really great opportunity for me to re-think the format, for me to re-think the kinds of people I've been inviting, the kinds of conversations we've been having. So, if you have thoughts about that, I would really, really welcome them and I'm going to incorporate that feedback and those thoughts into the next round of the podcast, that is *Secret Feminist Agenda 2.0*.

Which brings me to the other piece of news, which is in order to get all of this peer review done and to incorporate it and think about any changes we want to make to the podcast in its format, we are going on just the littlest hiatus, probably just until the new year, until January. And that said there's actually going to be like one or two holiday bonus episodes, so you won't go without for that long, but we want to be ready to sort of re-launch with some deliberateness and with some time to

## Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

do the re-thinking that we need to in the new year. So stay tuned for that. And in the meantime, head to [secretfeministagenda.com](http://secretfeministagenda.com) to leave any thoughts that you have as my peers. I would like you to review it. This is an experiment for us to see if this method of peer review garners useful feedback. So I'm go prove us right. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]

Hannah (Host): Now I obviously would not let you go before this short hiatus without giving you another installment of Kaarina's Cozy Self-care Corner. [Music: Kaarina's Theme: loon hoots, instrument plays]

Kaarina: Hi listeners and welcome to Kaarina's Cozy Self-care Corner and this week we have another creature feature. I'm here to talk to you about bats. That's right folks, it's bat week. Did you know that the smallest bat in the world weighs less than a penny? I know this because I follow great Twitter accounts like @Albertabats and @weratebats and I guess my conversation today is less about how wonderful bats are and how much I want them to do well and thrive and how sad I get when CBC radio regularly reports on their deaths, and more about learning and allowing ourselves to learn and allowing ourselves to be the kind of people who learn lots of things and are not limited by disciplines.

So when I was in school at every stage of school, it was made pretty clear to me that I was good at arts: English writing, reading, social studies. I was good at arts and humanities and I wasn't that good at science and math. Actually, I was amazing at math, I just didn't love it, so [laughter] I was pretty lazy about it. A lot of you probably have that same experience of being streamed into either arts and humanities or STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Now that I'm doing my PhD in humanities and English, I actually do work with technology all the time and I learn every day as part of my work how to broaden those skills and how to bring them to my humanities research. But I also read about bats in my spare time and octopus and I take all of these opportunities to learn things that I don't have space to learn in school and in my job and so today I'm just here to give you permission to be more complicated than the streaming of the education system allows you to be. I think that you can acknowledge how important humanities is to your STEM work or vice versa. I think you can acknowledge that even if you're not innately good at something, you can still spend time on it and you can still bring your passion and your energy and your own skills to it, and I just wanted to acknowledge that you could be a scientist. You could be a mathematician. You could be a frickin' astronaut. You could be everything that Magic School Bus promised you could be, and you can still be the artist and the reader and the writer and the historian. I believe in you. I believe that we are more complicated than this education system allows us to be, and I also believe that this kind of device of streaming is a technique of capitalism and oppression and that it benefits institutions and corporations more than it benefits anyone else and that if we were to see ourselves as multi-faceted and integrated and interdependent and work together always rather than against each other, we would do anything. We can take down capitalism with a handful of STEM and handful of humanities researchers. Ah, it will be so beautiful. So go do some reading on bats or whatever you want. It's okay to take that time to learn

## Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

something. They may not be explicitly valuable to your current work or your current activities, but that makes you feel excited and makes you feel connected to the world around you. Good luck. [Music: Kaarina's Theme: loon hoots, instrument plays]

Hannah (Host): All right. I've already plugged the website 14 times: [secretfeministagenda.com](http://secretfeministagenda.com). Of course you can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor and tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda, and in the meantime, if you're bored and sad that there aren't new episodes, go a rate or review it or get us new listeners and subscribers so that when we come back in January we're stronger than ever. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album, *Chub Rub*. As always, you can download the entire album on [freemusicarchive.org](http://freemusicarchive.org), or follow them on Facebook. That's it for now. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]