SHARP in Focus Week, June 15 - June 19, 2020

Coffeehouse on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
An informal discussion about how academic societies, and SHARP in particular, can better promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

Date:
June 18 2020, 5pm CET

Hosts:
Marija Dalbello, Chair of SHARP’s Board of Directors
Jan Hillgaertner, Director of Transnational Affairs
Melanie Ramdarshan Bold, Director of Awards

Keywords:
Coffeehouse, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
From Danielle: @jean... I agree. Decolonizing is also about changing structures of power/disempowerment: arguably only dismantling the academy entirely and starting over would address the violence represented by the colonial institution (the academy). If we can't 'burn it down', how do we take action that brings change and justice?

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: That sounds amazing, Emily!

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: Would have loved to hear that!

From jco: Yes, @danielle- I think it would be good to avoid the word “decolonization” if this kind of structural change is not something folks want to commit to.

From Priya Joshi: “Mentor as one who demystifies the process of professional advancement.” Awesome, Emily!

From Marian Lefferts: @emily is there a formal process to bring together mentor and mentee, or is the relationship that 'comes about' somehow organically?

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: @Marian: I’ve done both. I have people like Danielle who I consider a mentor but she might not even know she’s doing this, but I have actively approached a woman of colour to ask her if she’d be my mentor (as a full Professor)

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: (she said yes, thankfully)

From Marian Lefferts: @melanie ;-) Thanks!

From Nora Slonimsky: Thank you so much, Emily — that framing of mentor is SO illuminating.

From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): Yes, Emily, that reframing of the mentorship relationship is powerful.

From Emily Joyce Magdelyn Knox: Glad to hear that!

From Priya Joshi: Networks and networking are so important in professional advancement and *visibility*. To that I’d add something I encourage my grads to contemplate: relationship management. You *make* the mentor you need.

From Ikram Belaid: Thanks Emily, I would love to hear more about your research on Own Voices :)

From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): Yes, same!

From Emily Joyce Magdelyn Knox: Hopefully I’ll be able to present next year.

From Priya Joshi: Here’s a great set of action items for grads by Sarah Wasserman (U Delaware): https://sites.temple.edu/pjoshi/files/2020/02/Wasserman_Feminist-Manifesto.pdf

From Sarah Werner: ooh, thanks for that, Priya!

From Danielle: thanks Priya!

From Priya Joshi: FWIW, I’m my dept’s placement officer, and in that capacity, I’ve assembled a group of resources for our grads. Please feel free to consult: https://sites.temple.edu/pjoshi/teaching/professionalization-information/

From Danielle: Thanks again Priya!

From Shafquat Towheed: Thanks Priya!
From Priya Joshi: Daniel: “Let’s take intersectionality seriously.” Nice. THANKS!

From Ellen Barth: Thanks!

From Emily Joyce Magdelyn Knox: Thanks, James!

From jcole: Excellent resources, @Priya

From Simon Rosenberg: Thanks, James!

From will-slauder: Welcome to SHARP Lara!

From Eleanor Shevlin: Thanks, Priya, for both of these—more established faculty have a responsibility to mentor and should be aware of the responsibility—and exercise it in equitable fashion. Emily’s point about not speaking about her research but focusing on decoding the process is a crucial example and framework.

From Eleanor Shevlin: Yes, many, many thanks, James.

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: Thanks Emily, James, and Lara!

From Sydney Shep: should creative research and maker culture be part of SHARP’s remit?

From Ellen Barth: Thank you, Lara!

From Danielle: Thanks Lara!

From Emily Joyce Magdelyn Knox: Thank you, Lara!

From Priya Joshi: Really nice, Lara and James!

From Simon Rosenberg: Thank you, Lara!

From Eleanor Shevlin: Thanks Emily, James, and Lara!—the question about having more of those involved in bookmaking is worth saying more about it—especially from those who are involved already and those who have BookLabs like UMD to name just one.

From Lisa Maruca: I have been to SHARP conferences in the past with hands-on workshops before the main meeting—would love to see more of that.

From Priya Joshi: YES—Contemporary! So important in book history work.

From Lisa Kuitert: Agree with Lisa Maruca

From Sydney Shep: the book is still the norm for book history as for the academy but new forms of scholarship are also creating new forms of dissemination such as networked open social scholarship. is this an area SHARP can take a lead?

From Priya Joshi: Shaf: love to hear how the series determines what’s “good” research and how you work with reviewers to facilitate your vision?

From jcole: @Sydney, great question. Here’s a cool new project that was highly collaborative in its development http://circulatingamericanmagazines.org/

From Emily Joyce Magdelyn Knox: Just FYI: Palgrave has a sale today in the US. SUMMER20 for 30% off if you’d like to get in the series.
From Sarah Werner: I'd also point to what Andie Silva and the other new SHARP News editors envision—we're eager to include different forms of research products in what we review/cover/publish.

From Sarah Werner: PRIYA YES!!!! That's a really good point about "good work".

From Sydney Shep: the price of books is often prohibitive for individuals and institutions in the global south.

From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): Yes, yes, @Sarah and @Sydney: We're looking to find ways to highlight in-progress work to drum up interest and support, rather than focusing simply on the end product.

From Kate Ozment: @Sydney yes, and even cost-prohibitive for those of us not at research institutions, especially now that inter-library loan is down because of the pandemic.

From Simon Rosenberg: @sarah and Sydney: Exactly, I was hoping that the new Sharp News might be a step in the right direction.

From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): Emily, YES YES.

From Stevie Marsden: Yes!!!

From Andie Silva: Yes, Emily! So important!

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: YES!!!!

From jlcole: “Good work” often means “Work like mine.” And yes, Emily—grammar is another “dog whistle,” often reflecting what Shaf said.

From Laura N.: Thank you Emily, exactly.

From Danielle: @Emily - yes! If you are working as an editor you can find a range of ways to support people re. writing, grammar, style, writing in 2nd/3rd/4th language.

From jlcole: Ironic that people writing in a second or third (or fifth) language are punished for that!

From Andie Silva: I also feel from personal experience that sometimes those of us whose first language is latinate language get flagged for issues of “style” i.e. we don’t “read” American/British.

From Andie Silva: So not just issue of grammar but “preference”…

From Eleanor Shevlin: Emily makes a good point—in terms of getting a copyediting, I’ve gotten my Office of Sponsored Research to fund English and Publishing Certificate graduate students to provide for free pre-publication assistance for faculty across campus. At the same time, this helps develop these students professional skills.

From Danielle: @Andie: yes... I think good editing is akin to good translation work: the style and cultural, linguistic differences and contexts need to be honoured.

From jlcole: “Beautiful writing” is also a disciplinary bias. Social scientists are trained to write very differently, and social science is often where scholars of color are “tracked”

From Priya Joshi: @Eleanor: what an awesome initiative. I’ll see if I can do something similar at my institution. Thanks.
17:49:40 From Gail Chester: There's a whole issue of class use of language, may feel you have to use academic language to be accepted. Also, who do you want to read yr stuff - is it only other academics?

17:50:24 From Andie Silva: Absolutely, Jean!

17:50:28 From Stevie Marsden: Yup @ Gail, very classed...

17:52:43 From Colleen Barrett (she/her): I love how manageable dues are; my main professional organization is like 3x this.

17:53:06 From Sarah Werner: @Colleen--yes! I agree, it's a great help to have affordable dues

17:54:24 From Ikram Belaid: yessss

17:54:37 From Sydney Shep: we can take the lead from the dh community’s alt-ac leaderships

17:54:58 From Priya Joshi: The Modern Language Association has prepared a handbook that prepares literature PhDs seeking jobs outside academia. Link here: https://connect.mla.hcommons.org/doctoral-student-career-planning-faculty-toolkit/

17:55:07 From James Hodges: i agree that the DH world is a productive place to look for alt-ac precedents and practices

17:55:21 From jcole: Does SHARP have guidelines about representation on panels? E.g., valuing inclusion of people from different ranks (and per @Gareth’s point, independent scholars and professionals)?

17:55:35 From Priya Joshi: Oh, and MLA is very keen to resist the “alt”-ac language: all careers are useful; ac is not the only destination...

17:56:12 From Sarah Werner: @Jean--that’s a good question and the quick answer is no--our conferences are so decentralized with local places running them, that it varies from place to place. But I do think that some set of guidelines could be helpful

17:56:16 From Lisa Maruca: Yes Priya, I think “career diversity” is a more useful term.

17:56:21 From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: I agree re alt-ac: not everyone does a PhD to pursue an academic career

17:56:41 From dalbello: yes, career diversity rather than some sort of marked category

17:56:56 From Andie Silva: DH also have a big focus on skill development and collaboration across ranks/institutional placement, which speaks to the point from Gareth before, as well

17:57:05 From Danielle: @Jean and @Sarah - v important point: we ought to have guidelines and make all processes (e.g. of evaluation re conf proposals) explicit

17:57:46 From Sarah Werner: I’m specifically wondering about what people think SHARP as an org do to support diversity at our events--including equitable inclusion of BIPOC book historians

17:57:57 From Colleen Barrett (she/her): Just throwing out there that librarians are scholars too! We just know stuff in a different context.

17:57:57 From Beth DeBold: It’s a small thing, but I always feel a little prickly when libraries and digital humanities are constantly referred to as “alt-ac”; I know it means very specifically outside
of university and college hierarchies, but it feels like calling something "alt-ac" equates to a devaluing of the labor that takes places in those spaces. don't think that's actually what's happening every time someone uses the term, but just something to consider--when you discuss "alt-ac" careers with students, we shouldn't be drawing a delineation between two areas where scholarly work of similar caliber actually takes place.

17:57:58  From will-slauder: @Danielle also chair guidelines in terms of moderating and calling on people and so on

17:58:04  From Shafquat Towheed: Very good question from Sarah Werner

17:58:15  From Cait Coker: Sometimes librarians and archivists also ARE book historians and scholars. (Where "sometimes" = "a lot")

17:58:23  From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): @Beth DeBold and @Cait Coker YES

17:58:23  From Eleanor Shevlin: Perhaps it would be useful to incorporate a panel or two at SHARP conference or feature a Zoom workshop that showcase career diversity and workshop ways to understand and articulate the transferable skills one has acquired.

17:58:24  From Beth DeBold: Cait, yes, thanks!

17:58:29  From jcole: I believe both MLA and C19 have explicit guidance about including a range of ranks. SHARP has an exciting opportunity to be inclusive of non-academics, book artists, etc.

17:58:48  From Priya Joshi: Well, the “Decolonizing Book History” roundtable didn’t make the first round for SHARP-AMST. Suggests that more programming committees need to move into an inclusiveness mindset. Love to hear from others on this.

17:59:15  From Cait Coker: 100% agreement with Beth: libraries aren't "alct-ac" we're "ac-ac" and frequently with our own requirements to publish or perish

17:59:19  From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): @Priya, YES, this is symptomatic.

17:59:36  From Sydney Shep: why are we focussing only on BIPOC? there are many other underrepresented groups who should also be around the table.

18:00:12  From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): Because Black Lives Matter.

18:00:20  From Kate Ozment: @Sydney given the crisis in the US, for many of us, BIPOC scholars and issues of colonialism are at the forefront of our minds

18:00:31  From Kate Ozment: And SHARP is the whitest conference I go to

18:00:34  From Danielle: SHARP membership includes a pretty wide range of professionals so yes, no 'alt-ac'... Also, we could create events that really build on the different professions already represented within our membership...

18:00:40  From E. Boeckeler (she/her): I'd like to see SHARP grapple with and showcase new methodologies for tackling book history in fields for which the evidence does not support traditional methodologies, a point brought up Decolonizing Book History. How can we support scholars working in those fields, and whose scholarship will still be evaluated by "traditional" methods?

18:00:40  From Sarah Werner: I agree, Sydney. This is an urgent question here.

18:00:41  From jcole: https://techcrunch.com/2019/02/05/google-home-can-now-translate-conversations-on-the-fly/
From Sarah Werner: clarify: I agree with Kate etc’s response that this is an important focus here right now.

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: Jean also gave some damning statistics about BIPOC rep in the academy.

From Sarah Werner: YES! to Shaf’s point.

From Ellen Barth: Thank you, Shaf! Agree!

From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): YES YES.

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: (at the decolonising BH roundtable)

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: Agree, Shaf!

From Simon Rosenberg: Thanks Shaf for making that point!

From Sarah Werner: Mel-yes-Jean’s info there was really a call for how urgent this is.

From Priya Joshi: YES, Shaf!

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: one way that other organizations handle these issues is to have standing panels from organizations. For example, the Aphra Behn society always gets a panel on women at the conference. It does SOME work in ensuring we hold space for voices that are historically marginalized.

From Sarah Werner: yes! to Shaf again about the possible enabling aspects of online!

From Stevie Marsden: Yes! Shaf <3.

From Danielle: @Shaf - that's a good idea re nominating people/contacts for events and/or groups and/or constituencies.

From Beth DeBold: I've never been able to attend SHARP, since as a librarian I always felt my professional organization had to be ALA-RBMS, so I'm so glad to be here.

From Sarah Werner: @Kate that's a good idea, thanks.


From jcole: Thanks for listening! I would just assert again that moving from being open to actively inviting is very important.

From Sydney Shep: digital is not available to everyone digital inclusion is a huge issue in New Zealand.

From Sarah Werner: @Jean–I think you’re exactly right, and one of the things I was hoping we could talk about is how to make SHARP actively inviting.

From Cait Coker: Beth, I prefer SHARP to RBMS, but I think it's a problem of our discipline to walk between library orgs and other orgs given our responsibilities.

From Priya Joshi: @Jean: great point about not just been open but *activating* openness.

From Danielle: @Jean - seconding Jean's point about being actively inviting...
18:03:56 From Simon Rosenberg: Maybe not even on that big a scale, why not offer some guest lectures to offer more diverse perspectives in classrooms of cultures that are not too diverse. Would be so easy with digital solutions nowadays!

18:04:02 From Beth DeBold: @Cait agreed!

18:04:30 From Beth DeBold: It’s always been super frustrating to have to choose, but I’m hoping to be more involved with SHARP after my experiences with these excellent panels this week

18:04:36 From Simon Rosenberg: Good idea, Jan!

18:04:36 From Ellen Barth: YES!!!!

18:04:38 From Lara Balaa: Yes!

18:04:41 From Priya Joshi: YES, to mentorship program at SHARP. I did that at MLA and it was awesome.

18:04:42 From Laura N.: YES!!!!!!

18:04:43 From Stevie Marsden: Yes, I think so!

18:04:51 From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): The chat has spoken :)

18:04:53 From Cait Coker: Yay, Beth!

18:04:56 From Marian Lefferts: @beth and @cait, likewise, also spanning SHARP and library land

18:05:01 From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: Hooray for the chat!

18:05:10 From Jan Hillgaertner: :)

18:05:24 From James Hodges: yes! but it should not replace opportunities for non-hierarchical forms of peer support =)

18:05:35 From Sarah Werner: @beth @cait @marian--I also obviously work to straddle both libraryland and other places. I find SHARP a really good home for this blend

18:05:43 From Gareth Mills: I should point out that the privileging of the idea that our work is a career path rather than a participatory discipline containing many different kinds of phd graduates falls really hard on BAME students. because there are also inclusivity problems at HE institutions a careerist focus means they are actually discriminated against twice

18:06:50 From Beth DeBold: I am actually heading over to the ALA-RBMS Diversity Committee meeting now, as a visitor--all of these meetings are open and you don't need to be a member to attend, so if anyone wants to pop around and continue this conversation in a library setting, please feel free to come by (will be ongoing until 1pm Eastern US): https://tamu.zoom.us/j/91082298116?pwd=MUxUVMlRaFg3NzBpRTFwUVQwcVlYQT0

18:07:01 From Laura N.: Agree, @James

18:07:04 From jcole: I'm an Early Career mentor for C19 and a key element is that I am supposed to introduce my mentee to other people. Actively network on behalf of my mentee.

18:07:09 From Cait Coker: Thanks for the head's up, Beth!

18:07:23 From Emily Spunaugle (she/her): Thanks, Beth!
From Priya Joshi: @Jean Cole: “mentors helping their mentees with networking.”
Great point!

From Gail Chester: Completely agree w Shaf and others, but PIs don't forget class as an issue for access. And money BIG issue for independent scholars

From Marian Lefferts: @beth! thanks, family is clamoring for dinner, but may be some other day, I would love to join

From Lara Balaa: More honest and constructive rejection letters!

From Priya Joshi: Awesome get together. Thanks so much, Mel, for organizing.

From James Hodges: thanks everyone!

From Sarah Werner: thanks Me!

From Emily Joyce Magdelyn Knox: Bye!

From Ellen Barth: Thank you all!

From Priya Joshi: Super panelists. Thanks!

From Simon Rosenberg: Great discussions here. Thank you so much everybody!

From Danielle: Thanks everyone - great ideas

From Andie Silva: Thanks, all!!

From Marian Lefferts: thanks so much!

From Vincent Trott: Thanks!

From Amy Sopcak-Joseph: Thanks for this!

From Gareth Mills: thank you!

From will-slauter: thanks!!

From Nora Slonimsky: Thank you!

From Ellen Barth: All are welcome at the AGM later!

From Laura N.: Thank you to all the speakers and for organizing this!

From margaretjoyce: Good discussion, thanks!

From Eleanor Shevlin: Thanks to all!

From Jessica Eickmann: Thank you!

From Lara Balaa: Thank you everyone!

From Nan Wolverton: Thank you all!

From Jan Hillgaertner: Consider applying for the SHARP Fellowships, we are committed to support scholarship around the world, not just in the US and western Europe

From Cait Coker: thank you all!

From Melanie Ramdarshan Bold: More news from us soon!