Absent Voices, Invisible Lives

The history of academic disciplines and science is not different than the history of the cultures that produce them. The groups in power define the field and decide who gets to visibly contribute and become part of the discipline’s history.

An essential part of critical thinking is to always consider whose voices are missing. Looking at a traditional PSY textbook, what do the picture of the “founders” of the field tell you? Here’s a clue: They will all be white men, with the exception of 1-2 token women and people of color thrown in to attempt to be “inclusive”.

Despite the powerful “in-group/ out-group” dynamics of who is credited with major developments in any field, there have always been outsiders doing their work invisibly, without public recognition or support, often while fighting significant personal battles to be included at all.

Part 1:

Your task is to find those outsiders who were significant in the development of the field and make their lives visible. Pick one and make a single PPT slide that tells us her story (women of color get 10 extra credit points!), what she accomplished, what were her specific barriers and how did she overcome them? [80 pts].

*Each student must choose a different woman in the history of psychology.* While there are plenty to choose from, the easiest will be chosen first. I have put up a DB to identify your chosen person. First come, first served. If you see that a classmate has already “claimed” your psychologist on the board, choose a new one. Pick your person early for best selection. The assignment will be due just before Spring Break in March.

Part 2:

After Spring Break, you will be required to view the whole slide show and write reactions to two other projects for the final 20 points.