Many Hands Make Invisible Work

Please consider responding to our survey regarding volunteerism within academia at **http://bit.ly/invisiblework**!

Many Hands Make Invisible Work:

Volunteerism and the Female Academic

Carmen Christopher, Sarah McGinley, Megan Mize, Danielle Roach
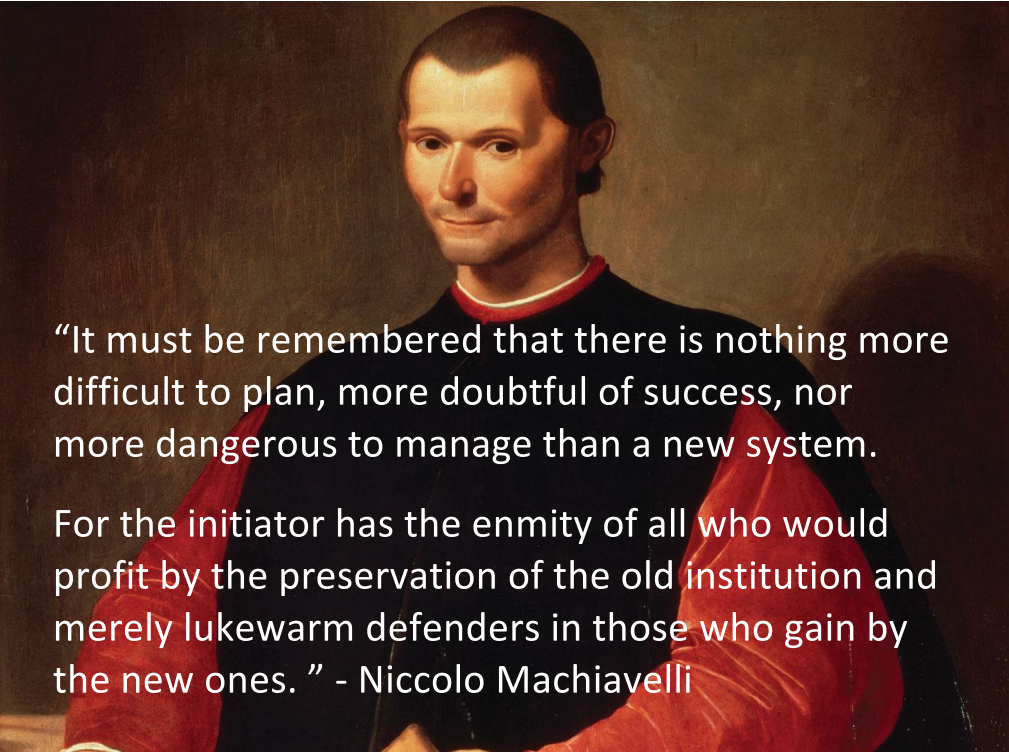
"Many Hands Make Light Work"

- examine the invisible labor of female scholars, both as it is perceived by women themselves and as it is (often tacitly) accepted and even endorsed by departments and institutions

- investigate issues of hierarchy, looking at ways in which such labor is often unwittingly co-opted

- ruminate on identifying ways in which the institution functions as a mechanism of effacement and on looking toward strategies for correcting those imbalances.

"Many Hands Make Light Work"

Can we identify the systemic ways in which volunteerism and service is feminized, and erased through institutional assimilation?

If such an identification is possible, how might we actively intervene without damaging careers or programs or continuing to replicate more labor as part of the counter-actions?

The Machiavel

"It must be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than a new system.

For the initiator has the enmity of all who would profit by the preservation of the old institution and merely lukewarm defenders in those who gain by the new ones. " - Niccolo Machiavelli

- English Graduate Organization
- Humanities Unbound
- Summer Doctoral Institute
- Dissertation Bootcamp

The Bentham

"Create all the happiness you are able to create; remove all the misery you are able to remove. Every day will allow you, --will invite you to add something to the pleasure of others, --or to diminish something of their pains."
— Jeremy Bentham

- Learning Center Director
- Summer School Director
- Teaching
- Professional Development Committee
- Advising
- Committees
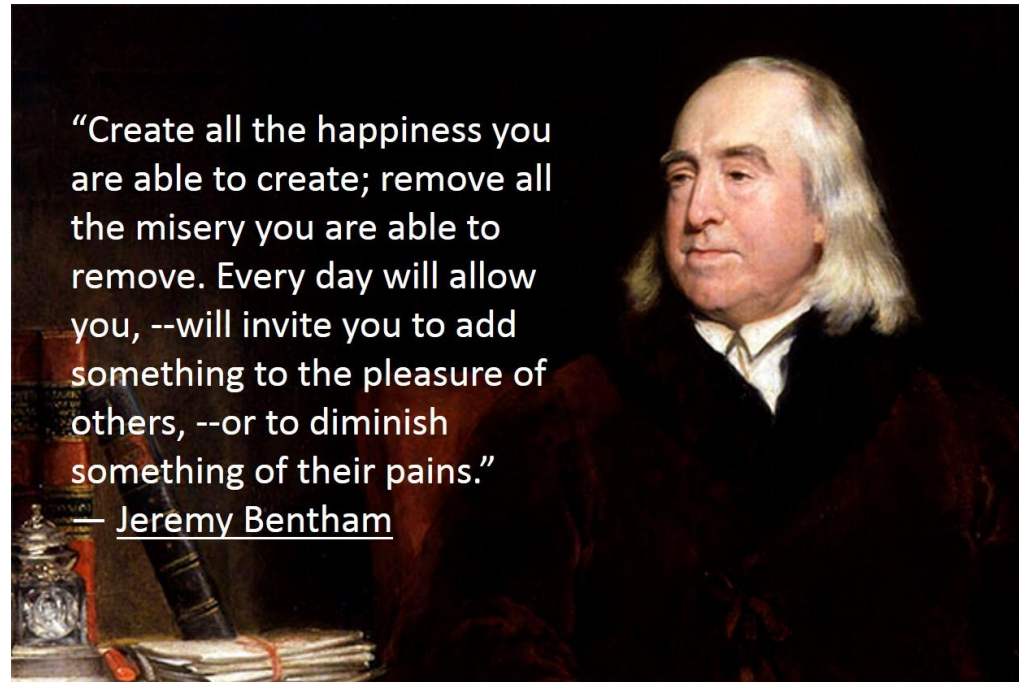
The Gilligan

"In the different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure of connection."
-Carol Gilligan

- Instructor
- Advisor
- Chair of CCCC Play and Game Studies SIG
- Event planner
- Former graduate assistant

The Foucault

"The panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may put it to, produces homogenous effects of power."

"But the guilty person is only one of the targets of punishment, for punishment is directed above all at others, at all the potentially guilty." - Michel Foucault

- Senior Lecturer
- Union Organizer
- Faculty Senator
- TA mentor
- Independent Studies and Internships
- Conversation Partner

Shared Strategies for Making Service Visible

Idea	Pros	Cons
Award	Public recognition; perhaps monetary award (greater chance of having monetary awards connected to it)	Competition; one-time recognition; often requires additional labor to nominate and provide evidence for or relies on others to be willing to give their time to nominate; gendered notions of value and labor may come into play; sometimes "paper plate" awards
Reassigned time	Smaller workload; able to complete work to higher standards	Doesn't solve the "problem" of projects without sustained leadership; projects will likely be subsumed into the person's workload

Shared Strategies for Making Service Visible

Idea	Pros	Cons
Title	Offers professional acknowledgment from the institution; can be passed to others; possibility of resources tied to title (e.g., student worker, administrative assistance)	Doesn't reduce labor involved in the project; adds to workload (e.g., training of student worker/admin; development of processes & procedures) EX: Many WPAs (which is a feminized position)
Repetition	Becomes expected, integral, necessary; generates community perception of value; becomes visible when it is no longer offered	Long term strategy to becoming programatic; fosters value only by the willingness to provide free labor for extended period of time

Shared Strategies for Making Service Visible

Idea	Pros	Cons
Publication/ Presentation	Professional experience/recognition (add to CV)	Time, effort; audience is typically extended, not immediate; delay in acknowledgement; publication or conference may not be considered "respectable" for TT; vulnerable if perceived as publically undermining or criticizing program or taking credit for efforts
Ceasing Particular Service	Highlights the value of previous effort; gap becomes clear; may become programatic	Some may rely on product of service; may shift burden to others to provide

Shared Strategies for Making Service Visible

Idea	Pros	Cons
Harnessing Social Media	Rapidly shares/highlights efforts to multiple audiences; may foster positive perceptions in one's professional network; provides insight in real time of one's daily efforts	Cultural perceptions of what "counts" and "bragging" make this difficult for some, as service is often scripted as something one should do but for which one should not expect public praise; women are treated diff'tly on social media (a la Jamie H.) & may be harassed or denigrated; acknowledgement is peripheral; vulnerable to lasting public perception
Gift cards/other gifts	Seems equivalent to cash; can be used for personal items--at user's discretion	Not often supported by institutions because of tax complications; often gifts are much smaller than the equivalent wage

We Invite You to Share

- What are your stories of volunteerism within your academic or scholarly role?

- Are your uncompensated efforts typically recognized in a satisfactory way?

- How do you make your service "count"?

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