

Feminism

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Feminism If one takes a look at the social environment, one can not help noticing that it is usually comprised of different groups of people, some whom may be oppressed. That is why it is particularly important to facilitate a dialogue between various parts of the population. However, in her essay *The Problem of Speaking for Others* Linda Alcoff argues this action is not advisable for number of reasons. This paper will analyze these reasons. First of all, it would be important to explain why speaking for other is a problem. Thus, it must be noted that any dialogue is exchange of opinions, but one of the essential parts of this process is also the presence of a certain party that is willing to articulate its position. In other words, speaking for others substitutes the real representatives and has a negative impact on the interaction.

There are several elements of the above mentioned process that were addressed in the essay in question. The first one is epistemic location. Alcoff suggests that it is crucial to fully understand the location of a person within the social environment in order to determine whether one is able to be a valid representative of ideas (7). In other words, what a person says might not fully reflect the real state of affairs and, therefore, this kind of information is able to contribute to distortion of the general picture, contributing to development of misunderstanding that inevitably leads to a conflict. What is more important is that the information that is being said by a person with epistemic location that does not give one credentials to do so can hardly be received as truth. Thus, it is highly doubtful that a person who does not belong to a group is able to articulate its views in a correct manner, reflecting all the peculiarities of the position that is taken by it.

Another important element of the process of speaking for others is the

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negative impact that this practice has on the group of people that is being represented. Indeed, on the one hand, this process simply contributing to reinforcing the oppression of this group since it shows that the people are not able to speaking for themselves which enhances the weak image of this group. On the other hand, surprisingly enough, but speaking for other actually silences this group of people, not allowing them to express the ideas that they have in a manner that they would like to use (26). This means that these people are deliberately excluded of the dialogue which harms the way they are represented in the society.

As once can easily see, speaking for others might seem as an effective way to protect interests of a group, but in reality it does quite the opposite: on the one hand, it allows a person who does not have the right epistemic location to expressed information that may not be fully truthful and, on the other hand, it reinforces the oppression of the group in question by silencing its representatives.

Works Cited

Alcoff, Linda. " The Problem of Speaking for Others." *Cultural Critique* 20 (1992): 5-32. Print.