

Big Ideas Workshop

Can I speak now? Spivak's big idea



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About us



Gertraud



Nicola

Gayatri Spivak

- She was born in India in 1942
- Now she teaches at an American University
- She is interested in how people at the bottom of society can speak for themselves
- And how they are silenced by others

Colonised people

- » When India was ruled by British people, they had to speak English
- » They had to learn British ways to be heard
- » Their own voices were silenced

Spivak's Big Idea

A subaltern was a junior officer in the army who did not have much power.

Spivak used this idea to talk about people who are left out

The subaltern is being ignored by

those who speak FOR them

and

those who speak AGAINST them.

And...

- » Researchers, organisations and the media can do the same thing
- » They may want to hear about the experiences of people who are excluded
- » Then they write about these stories in THEIR words

Beware of experts!

bell hooks thinks the same!

[There is] no need to hear your [native] voice, when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself.

No need to hear your voice.

Only tell me about your pain.

I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way.

Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own.

I am the expert

Talking and speaking

- » Are these the same thing?
- » Speaking here means **SPEAKING UP**
- » People may be able to **TALK**, but can they **SPEAK UP?**
- » People who cannot **TALK** may still be able to **SPEAK UP**

Cinderella

Cinderella is a sort of subaltern

She has to do everything her stepmother and her stepsisters tell her.

No one sees her or listens to her. She has no money and no one who supports her. And then the prince comes along – together with the royal family.....

Acting as a subaltern

Welcome to the Cinderella-Talkshow!

Questions

- Is your voice heard?
- Who hears you?
- Who does not hear you?
- What happens to you if your voice is never heard?

Questions

- Who does society ignore?
- How can we get people who are ignored to be really listened to?
- We are talking about these ideas to you. But are we letting you speak? Are we listening to you?
- What is the difference between talking and speaking?

What others said:

- *It is easy to slip into the role of the powerful even if you are subaltern.*
- *Even those who try to support her in fact don't care about Cinderella's opinion.*
- *In reality, distinguishing between the good and the bad is not that easy.*
- *The most powerful person in the scene is the talkshow host.*
- *If I were Cinderella, I would travel around the world and don't care about men and family 😊*

Why did we develop this workshop?

When we planned this workshop, one intellectual/academic said she did not think people with learning disabilities needed to know about these writers.

But now, self advocates are teaching Spivak and Freire at universities and in other places .