Ofelia Zepeda

- **Ofelia Zepeda** was **born** at Stanfield in Arizona in 1952. She is a Tohono O'odham poet and intellectual. She is Regents' Professor of Tohono O'odham language and linguistics and Director of the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) at The University of Arizona.
- **Place of birth:** Stanfield, Arizona

Stanza: I

Cuk Son is a story.
Tucson is a linguistic alternative.
The story is in the many languages
still heard in this place of
Black Mountains.
They are in the echo of lost, forgotten languages
heard here even before the people arrived.

Stanza: II

The true story of this place
recalls people walking
deserts all their lives and
continuing today, if only
in their dreams.

Continuation of stanza II

The true story is ringing
in their footsteps in a
place so quiet, they can hear
their blood moving
through their veins.
Their stories give shape to the
mountains encircling this place.
Wa:k is the story of
water memories of this desert.

Stanza: III

Citizens gravitate to Sabino Canyon.
The humming, buzzing, clicking of water life,
the miracle of desert streams
on smooth boulders.
Rocks, sediment older than life itself
serve as reminders.
It should be unnecessary for sticky notes
to remind us what a desert place is.

Continuation of stanza III

A place dependent on rains of summer,
light dusting of snow,
the rarity of dry beds as rebel rivers.
It is real desert people who lift their faces
upward with the first signs of moisture.
They know how to inhale properly.
Recognizing the aroma of creosote in the distance.
Relieved the cycle is beginning again.
These people are to be commended.

Stanza IV

It is others who lament the heat of
a June day, simultaneously
finding pride on surviving
the heat—a dry heat.
These individuals should simply
be tolerated.

Kunthavai Naacchiyaar

Government Arts College for Women (Autonomous)

Thanjavur - 613 007, Tamilnadu, India

Accredited by NAAC with B Grade with a CGPA of 2.22 out of 4.00 in the 4th cycle

The plastic Maori

- Murray Mahauariki

Dr. J. Maria Monaliza Burgess

Assistant Professor of English

Stanza- I

I'm viewed as a plastic Maori,
because of the way I choose to live life,
moving with westerns trends,
away from traditional life.

Stanza- II

This is all I have known,
being city born,
I did try to learn my Tikanga,
but I was severely scorned.

Stanza- III

Don't talk that white trash they reckon,
what are you trying to prove,
bloody plastic Maori,
you ain't Tuturu.

Stanza- IV

From this point on wards,
I've struggle to fit in,
not knowing where I belong,
my identity taken.

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Cactus Forever

- Mahmoud Darwish

Dr. J. Maria Monaliza Burgess

Assistant Professor of English

Cactus Forever

Where are you taking me, Father?

In the direction of the wind, my son

...Departing from the plain, where

Bonaparte's soldiers have built a hill to

Observe the shadows over the old wall in Acre,

The father says to his son: Do not be afraid. Do not

Fear the whisper of bullets.

Hug the ground in order to escape!
We shall escape and ascend upon a
mountain in the north and
Return when the soldiers go back to their far
away families

Who will live in our home after we leave, father?

It shall remain in the same condition as it was, my son.

He touches his key, like it is part
Of his body and he relaxes.

While they pass through a thorn fence, he told him:
Remember, my son,
Here, the English crucified your father
On cactus thorns
For two nights
and he never confessed.

When you grow older, my son
And recite to those who inherit rifles
An epic of blood on iron.

Why did you leave the horse alone?
—To be a companion to the house, my son
Homes die after their inhabitants leave.

When Father?

Tomorrow or maybe after two days, my son.

And it was a arbitrary tomorrow

Chewing the wind

Behind them during long winter nights.

Speak? – Summary

Gayatri Spivak

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an unsettling voice in literary theory and especially, postcolonial studies. She has describes herself as a “practical deconstructionist feminist Marxist” and as a “gadfly”. She uses deconstruction to examine "how truth is constructed" and to deploy the assertions of one intellectual and political position (such as Marxism) to "interrupt" or "bring into crisis" another (feminism, for example). In her work, she combines passionate denunciations of the harm done to women, non-Europeans, and the poor by the privileged West with a persistent questioning of the grounds on which radical critique takes its stand.

Her continual interrogation of assumptions can make Spivak difficult to read. But her restless critiques connect directly to her ethical aspiration for a "politics of the open end," in which deconstruction acts as a "safeguard" against the repression or exclusion of "alterities"-that is, people, events, or ideas that are radically "other" to the dominant worldview. She writes against the "epistemic violence" done by discourses of knowledge that carve up the world and condemn to oblivion the pieces that do not easily fit. Characteristically, she does not claim to avoid such violence herself; rather, she self-consciously explores structures of violence without assuming a final, settled position.

Can the Subaltern Speak? – Summary

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Can the Subaltern Speak?

"Can the Subaltern Speak?" may be Spivak's best-known essay; it is certainly her most controversial. Postcolonial critics, like many feminists, want to give silenced others a voice. But Spivak worries that even the most benevolent effort merely repeats the very silencing it aims to combat. After all, colonialists often thought of themselves as well-intentioned. Spivak points to the British outlawing of *sati,* the Hindu practice of burning a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. While this intervention saved some lives and may have given women a modicum of free choice, it also served to secure British power in India and to underscore the asserted difference between British "civilization" and Indian "barbarism." Hindu culture was driven underground, written out of law, denied any legitimacy. Can today's intellectuals avoid a similar condescension when they represent the oppressed?

What is Subaltern?

A subaltern, according to the dictionary, is a person holding a subordinate position, originally a junior officer in the British army. But Spivak draws on the term's nuances. It has particularly rich connotations for the Indian subcontinent because the Anglo-Indian writer Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) so often viewed imperialism from the ambivalent position of the' subaltern functionary in the complex colonial hierarchy, caught between detested superiors and feared "natives." The Italian Marxist theorist ANTONIO GRAMSCI later applied the term to the unorganized masses that must be politicized for the

workers' revolution to succeed. In the 1980s the Subaltern Studies Group (a collective of radical historians in India with whom Spivak maintains ties) appropriated the term, focusing their attention on the disenfranchised peoples of
India. The "subaltern" always stands in an ambiguous relation to power-subordinate to it but never fully consenting to its rule, never adopting the dominant point of view or vocabulary as expressive of its own identity. Subalterns, in the Indian context are defined as those who did not comprise the colonial elite- such as the lesser rural gentry, impoverished lamdlords, rich peasants and upper middle class peasants. "One must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous," declares Spivak. Can this difference be articulated? And if so, by whom?

As a way of mounting her critique of the scholars' assumptions concerning the subaltern in colonial texts, Spivak begins by turning first to the work of poststructuralist thinkers such as Michael Foucault and Gilles Deluze who have challenged the notion that human individuals are sovereign subjects with autonomous agency over their consciousness. As poststructuralism would have it, human consciousness is constructed discursively. Our subjectivity is constructed by the shifting discourses of power which endlessly speak through us, situating us here and there in particular positions and relations. In these terms we are not the authors of ourselves. We do not construct our identities, we have it written for us; the subject cannot be sovereign over the construction of selfhood. Instead the subject is decentered, in that its consciousness is always being constructed from positions outside of itself. It follows then that the individual is not a transparent representation of the self but an effect of discourse. Spivak argues that surprisingly for these figures, when Foucault and Deleuze talks about oppressed groups such as the working classes they fall back into precisely these uncritical notions of 'sovereign subjects' by restoring to them a fully centred consciousness. In addition they also assume that the writing of intellectuals such as themselves can serve as a transparent medium through which the voices of the oppressed can be represented. The intellectual is cast as a reliable mediator for the voices of the oppressed, a mothpiece through which the oppressed can clearly speak.

Spivak articulates her reasons for her worries in the first part of the essay, applying MICHEL FOUCAULT's understanding of "epistemic violence" to the "remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other." Foucault views intellectual power as functioning discursively to produce the very subject over which it then exercises mastery. Of course, no discourse succeeds in obliterating all alternative discourses. Intellectuals have frequently tried to create counterdiscourses that contest the dominant discourses, with the hope of connecting with the oppressed's own acts of resistance. Spivak sees postcolonial studies as a new instance of this attempt to liberate the other and to enable that other to experience and articulate those parts of itself that fall outside what the dominant discourse has constituted as its subjecthood. She asks whether such work can succeed. Can-with or without the intervention of well-intentioned intellectuals-the "subaltern" speak? Her blunt answer is no.

Romanticizing of the "Other"

Because subalterns exist, to some extent, outside power, theorists and advocates of political transformation have consistently looked to them as a potential source of change. Marxists speak of and for the proletariat, feminists of and for oppressed women, and anticolonialists of and for third world peoples. In part, Spivak is reacting against the persistent tendency of radical political movements to romanticize the other, especially against the notion that third world peoples must lead the fight against multinational global capitalism. To assign them that role is to repeat colonialism's basic violence, which views non-Europeans as important only insofar as they follow Western scripts. Furthermore, when most f the power resides in the West, why should the least powerful of those caught up in globalization be responsible for halting its advance? Finally, Spivak points out that the suggestion that all third world peoples stand in the same relation to global capitalism and should respond to it in the same way is "essentialist."

Essentialism

Essentialism names the belief that certain people or entities share some essential, unchanging "nature" that secures their membership in a category. In the 1980s, essentialism was the target of much feminist criticism because activists recognized that generalizations about "woman" inevitably exclude some women. One response was "difference feminism," which stressed alliances among women across their differences and hoped to replace a solidarity based on shared essential qualities and experiences. Spivak's landmark contribution to this debate was the concept of "strategic essentialism." In some instances, she argued, it was important *strategically* to make essentialist claims, even while one retained an awareness that those claims were, at best, crude political generalizations. For example, feminists must publicize "the feminization of poverty"-the ways in which employment practices and wages, divorce law and settlements, and social policies ensure that in many societies women make up the majority of poor adults. Of course, many women are not poor, and poverty has causes other than an individual's sex, but to battle effectively against the poverty of some women requires the strategic essentialism of highlighting the gendered nature of economic inequality.

Leftist intellectuals who romanticize the oppressed, Spivak argues, essentialize the subaltern and thus replicate the colonialist discourses they purport to critique. To replace this leftist fantasy of an untouched or essential purity lodged in a particular group, Spivak reminds us (citing Ranajit Guha, a founding member of the Subaltern Studies Group) that a person's or group's identity is relational, a function of its place in a system of differences. There is no true or pure other; instead, the other always already exists in relation to the discourse that would name it as other.
Although Spivak acknowledges the "epistemic violence" done to Indian subalterns, she suggests that any attempt from the outside to ameliorate subaltern's condition by granting them collective speech will invariably encounter the following problems:

a) A logocentric assumption of cultural solidarity among a heterogenous people
b) A dependence on western intellectuals to "speak for" the subaltern condition rather than allowing subalterns to speak for themselves

Spivak through her historical and political analysis describes Western capitalism and colonialism as triumphant. The whole world is now organized economically, politically, and culturally along the lines of Western discourses. Although those discourses are not perfectly aligned, their multiplicity generally reinforces rather than undercuts the marginalization of nonwhite peoples and the dual marginalization of nonwhite women.

Sigmund Freud

Spivak then turns to Sigmund Freud in an effort to develop an appropriate model of intellectual work. Freud furthers the analysis of colonialism by helping us see how the very identity of whiteness itself is created in part through the self-proclaimed benevolence of colonial action. More important, he implicitly cautions us against scapegoating or, conversely, creating saviors. Spivak's "sentence"-"White men are saving brown women from brown men"-serves to justify colonial interventions if white men are taken as saviors and brown men are scapegoated as oppressors (of brown women). A post colonialist discourse could just as easily scapegoat white men, with the inevitable consequence of presenting either brown men or brown women as the saviors. Spivak thinks that Freud (as both a positive and a negative example, since he himself didn't always avoid scapegoating) can aid us to keep the "sentence" open, to explore the dynamics of the unfolding human relationships without foreclosing narratives by assigning determinate roles. She remains leery of any attempt to fix and celebrate the subaltern's distinctive voice by claims that the subaltern occupies the position of victim, abjected other, scapegoat, savior, and so on. The critic must remain attentive to the fluidity of possible relations and actions. Spivak's discussion of Freud is offered not "as a solution" but "in acknowledgment of these dangers" of interpreting and representing the other.

Neither Freud nor Spivak is silent. They each make various determinate claims and. Spivak says, reveal their "political interests" in those claims. As intellectuals., both are at home (although their belonging is qualified by Freud's being Jewish and Spivak's being a nonwhite women) within the dominant discourse. The subaltern is not similarly privileged. And does not speak in a vocabulary that will get a hearing in institutional locations of power. The subaltern enters official and intellectual discourse only rarely and usually through the mediating commentary of someone more at home in those discourses. If the problematic is understood this way, it is hard to see how the subaltern can be capable of speaking.
In the third part of the essay, Spivak offers yet a further twist. She tells the story of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri's suicide not as an example of the Indian woman's inability to speak within Western discourse, but to show that Indian discourse has been so battered by the storms of (colonial) history that it, too, offers no resources for successful communication, Bhubaneswari's suicide is misunderstood by everyone, including her own family-and no one in India seems interested in Spivak's return to and reinterpretation of the event. "Unnerved by this failure of communication," Spivak wrote her "passionate lament: the subaltern cannot speak!"