

Can the subaltern speak by gayatri chakravorty spivaks

[History](#)



The paper "Can the Subaltern Speak by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivaks" is a wonderful example of an article on history.

The essay titled "Can the Subaltern Speak?" by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivaks questions the western perspective of post-colonial literary analysis, which, as she argues, only serves to further the interests of the west in a well-orchestrated move meant to silence the voices of the third world [the Subaltern]. More specifically, Spivak questions the validity [the essence] of third world studies inclined towards a research methodology that justifies the West's conquest of other cultures; a limitation well-articulated in a language that she sums up as hegemonic vocabulary. She criticizes different writers, male and female alike, right from with Marx to Foucault, Deleuze, and Derrida, for complicity in the perpetuation of neo-colonial imperatives of economic exploitation, political domination, and cultural erasure in the third world. Spivak goes deeper with her criticisms, attacking the subaltern studies group, a project led by Ranajit Guha, for re-appropriating themselves the Gramsci's term "subaltern" in a false attempt to "voice" out the concerns of the economically dispossessed in postcolonial India (Spivaks 83-84).

Hardly impressed with efforts, she wonders whether data harvested without the blessings of the subject in question, compiled in the language of the west, by a western writer(s), and sold for the benefit of the west can speak for the non-west without sustaining a western-discourse. While acknowledging the accuracy of historical accounts of injustices meted against the Indian subalterns and the third world by extension, Spivak notes that such outside attempts to "speak for" the subalterns and the third world

actually re-inscribes and cements the traditional imperialistic notion of their dependence on the west.