Everyone reads life and the world like a book. Even the so-called "illiterate." But especially the "leaders" of our society, the most "responsible" nondreamers: the politicians, the businessmen, the ones who make plans. Without the reading of the world as a book, there is no prediction, no planning, no taxes, no laws, no welfare, no war. Yet these leaders read the world in terms of rationality and averages, as if it were a textbook. The world actually writes itself with the many-leveled, unfixable intricacy and openness of a work of literature. If, through our study of literature, we can ourselves learn and teach others to read the world in the "proper" risky way, and to act upon that lesson, perhaps we literary people would not forever be such helpless victims.

Spivak, Gayatri. *In Other Worlds*. London: Metheun, 1987. (95)

1. What does it imply about the nature of "a book" for Spivak to claim that "[without] the reading of the world as a book, there is no prediction, no planning . . . no war"?

2. Why might the so-called "illiterate" read the world as a book? (Presumably they don't read!).

3. The second half of the quote develops a distinction between "a textbook" and "a work of literature." How does Spivak characterize the difference between these two types of books? What is Spivak's attitude to these two types? Is Spivak being simplistic here? If you think so, what is she missing?

4. How does Spivak's use of the word "nondreamers" in the second line hint at her biases? What assumptions about those who read books is it ironically alluding to?

5. What do you make of Spivak's claim about the "many-leveled, unfixable intricacy and openness of a work of literature"? Is every novel you have ever read like this? Or is there an implied hierarchy ("some novels are real literature, some are not") behind this claim?

6. What do you think Spivak means by reading "in the 'proper' risky way"? How could it be that reading in such a fashion might assist us in not being "helpless victims"? Have literary people really "forever [been]" helpless victims?