

Limited Speech Holds Endless Misunderstandings

2013

09:55 minutes

Single channel HD video

In 2010, Noam Chomsky, a linguist and political activist, was invited to give a talk in Birzeit University near Ramallah. Identified with the radical left, Chomsky was denied entry to Israel and sent back to Jordan. Shortly after the incident, Dana Weiss from the Israeli Channel 2 met with him at the hotel lobby in Amman for a 40- minute interview. During the interview, deep ideological tensions between Chomsky and Weiss surfaced.

In the video, the interview language is cut apart into individual word fragments. This material is then recomposed into a new monologue told by a third, invisible character. The tense tone of the interview clashes with the intimacy of the new text. The repositioning of words allows the invisible character to articulate intimate thoughts that Chomsky and Weiss can't express.

According to Chomsky's theory "Universal-Grammar", language enables the pronunciation of endless expressions with a limited amount of words- a vocabulary. Similar to verbal language, the video's image is a system with an inner grammar. It depicts a deserted landscape, portrayed through a complex of digital fragments. In this landscape, the relations between a limited amount of fragments create endless variations of the image.