

"There is no living political writer who has more radically changed  
how more people think in more parts of the world about political issues."  
—Glenn Greenwald

noam  
chomsky

masters  
of mankind

essays and lectures, 1969–2013

# Masters of Mankind: Essays and Lectures, 1969-2013

*Noam Chomsky, Marcus G. Raskin (Introduction)*

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# **Masters of Mankind: Essays and Lectures, 1969-2013**

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Praise for Noam Chomsky's *Hopes and Prospects*:

"A revelation. . . . This is a book woven through with hope and awe at all the people who slip beyond imperial control and establish real democracy . . . a treasure-trove."—*The Independent*

In this collection of essays from 1969 to 2013, many in book form for the first time, Noam Chomsky examines the nature of state power, from the ideologies driving the Cold War to the War on Terror, and reintroduces the moral and legal questions that all too often go unheeded. With unrelenting logic, he holds the arguments of empire up to critical examination and shatters the myths of those who protect the power and privilege of the few against the interests and needs of the many. A new introduction by Marcus Raskin contextualizes Chomsky's place among some of the most influential thinkers of modern history.

**Noam Chomsky** is Institute Professor in the department of linguistics and philosophy at MIT. His work is widely credited with having revolutionized the field of modern linguistics. He is the author of numerous best-selling political works, which have been translated into scores of countries worldwide. His most recent books include the *New York Times* bestseller *Hegemony or Survival, Failed States, Power Systems, Occupy*, and *Hopes and Prospects*.

**Marcus Raskin**, co-founder of the Institute for Policy Studies and professor of public policy at George Washington University, is a social critic, activist, and philosopher.

## **Masters of Mankind: Essays and Lectures, 1969-2013 Details**

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# From Reader Review Masters of Mankind: Essays and Lectures, 1969-2013 for online ebook

## Randall Wallace says

“The definition of terrorism is virtually the same as the definition of the official policy of the US” – thus my favorite modern day hero sums up the insanity of expecting anything other than rogue state criminality from our present government. After all, the US is openly committed to terrorism according to its OWN definition of the term. Of course you are not supposed to realize or ponder such a thought, let alone tell a neighbor. But this is Noam’s latest book where again he exposes lies by using language as a critical means to repair tears at humanity. WWII taught American planners large wars might be the only thing that can lift the US out of a depression (lots of \$\$\$ materiel either destroyed or left on battlefields) and that unlimited profits awaited for every act of unprovoked aggression which could be sold or pushed through the American people however immoral, illegal and even un-Christ like. The armament industry thus became the US financial stabilizer while Americans were depoliticized through the proud bread and circus tradition (corporate football games do wonders to keep the warrior spirit from reflecting both on the consequences of both football head injuries and the consequences of hundreds of years of consistently illegal usually racist military intervention carried out in our names solely for corporate state benefit). Colonization has been the goal of western civilization since the first interaction with Native Americans. If we can’t remove you to get at the land under you, we must culturally colonize you so you won’t be a threat to our sociopathic culture of threats and appropriation. Luckily a large percentage of Americans get their paychecks from the weapon industry so massive pressure exists to not even glance at any obvious moral dilemma. And luckily we are told constantly on TV to protect ourselves individually (buy this alarm, be afraid) but never to protect our community. Stay atomized my friend. Look at the American Business community and you are looking at a very class conscious organization built on class warfare telling the people there is no class warfare. Conservatives only want to drown the government in a bottle because the government historically has cared more for the people than private capitalist companies do – class conflict means profit when the masses stay docile and distracted enough through corporate bottled celebrities & sports, and state sponsored exceptionalism & nationalism - whatever keeps us from seeing other peoples and cultures as having the same dreams for their children, rights and value as ours. Some pale white apologist must explain why the New York Times once publically called Eugene Debs, “an enemy of the human race” for mentioning that Americans might learn much by looking where real power lies in America. Since the Truman Doctrine, every intervention had to be sold as countering the soviet threat in order to eliminate possible discussion. In this con artist bait and switch ploy they simply replaced the word “subsidy” with “security” and –bingo- the pesky public didn’t say anything because only a commie would question “security”. ? Historically we only “resort” to violence because someone made us “have to” you see... Would Eddie Haskell of Leave It to Beaver have run our country any differently? The UN worked fine for the US until decolonization happened and the US had to turn on the UN because privately to the US it now represented “the tyranny of the majority” (and of course that is unacceptable to all sociopaths, isn’t it?) As a UN correspondent at the time said the US saw it was no longer assured “an automatic majority”. Most thickheaded playground bullies hate level playing fields – largely because all they are selling is talk, backed up by force. Government invention against level playing fields has been the rule for 200 years (protectionism anyone?) so the free market is a fantasyland that exists only on FOX News. Noam teaches us to see the constitution as a document written to check “democratic tendencies” and that Samuel Huntington and others have labored long hours to make the iron fist of America seem invisible to us by design, felt but not seen. The Gospels includes the story of the hypocrite, Jesus wanting to help the poor and the idea of turning the other cheek – if we undertook liberation theology, our government would ban the bible. Luckily, who is a hypocrite is only determined by the mainstream press which never mentions Jesus’s preference for the poor or turning the other cheek (except as an outdated concept like

diplomacy which can't be used because our enemies -usually trained by us- are too fierce for reason). And so, with our middle finger raised high, we name our instruments of war after the cultures we openly destroyed and stole from (so why not steal their names too): Apache, Comanche, Blackhawk, Tomahawk while never pausing for a second to wonder what would we ourselves would have said if the Nazi's had named their weapons of death "Jew" and "Gypsy". Time and time again, the law of universality applies to every nation but ours (and Israel's); look at what we did is Nicaragua alone was a slaughter – the equivalent to 2.5 million dead in the U.S. – wow. That alone would be more per capita deaths than the Civil War and all 20th century wars combined. Clearly not worth discussing at any cocktail party if you want to keep your job applauding corporate agendas over petty concerns for the survival of the human race. Another case is the lack of knowledge/interest within the United States in the murder of Archbishop Romero (and tens of thousands massacred via US funding). However, Latin Americans all know about it. But without media coverage our crimes don't "take place", only their crimes do. Counterterrorism is usually based on a lie (the people we are fighting are really bad people and they made us be bad just like them but we didn't want to be bad darn it) and the desire for more arms profiteering to keep the economy afloat. According to the principle of universality if we bomb others illegally, they can do so to us – Cuba and Nicaragua actually have a perfect case when we pause to study what the US really did their countries. Noam ends the book with the notion that US state planners knowingly built our entire transportation system to maximize use of fossil fuels NOT to minimize use. Of course fossil fuels are a finite resource so the question becomes "what were they thinking?" Note that our vaunted highway system was first called the national defense highway system to sell it to the public through fear – the commies are coming. It's effect, like the effect of Suburbia itself, was to atomize the community, separate people from each other. Noam's amazing point is that it didn't just happen – it was designed. They wanted the MOST destructive society possible to keep profits as high as possible (because you have to keep buying stuff even though this way the planet runs out of resources sooner). That's why, in a fit of short term thinking, they bought up the trolleys and reduced US trains to a level below Bulgaria. Great book filled with amazing insights- buy it and read it.

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### **Cheryl says**

This series of essays and lectures give us a glimpse of Noam's unique perspective on the state of our union. Being a less informed or thoughtful person than I would like to be, at times I struggled to follow his arguments. He assumes that the reader knows something (my problem, not his). However, I believe I was able to benefit from his main points. He helps us to see behind the stories we tell ourselves (and are encouraged to tell ourselves) and to identify the specific weaknesses in our system of "real existing capitalist" pseudo-democracy. As a #resist, human rights, and true democracy activist, these essays strengthened my appreciation of the pseudo-democracy we currently have and the importance of being alert to underlying motives of most legislation and war efforts and moving power back to "the people" and limiting that of banks, corporations and wealthy self interests.

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### **Jason Marciak says**

A collection of lectures spanning almost forty years of world history seen through the lenses of political economy, global and governmental policies tied to developing a global economic foundation. Chomsky places focus on linguistics while keeping the examination rooted in history. He offers "the other side of the coin" in the way of perspectives that inform the structure behind global corporations and their connection to polity in the west, specifically the united states, in decisions spanning the time frame of the lectures.

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## **North Idaho College Molstead Library Reads says**

Chomsky provides refreshing perspectives on global politics and the power dynamics that all citizens have to deal with.

Recommended by: Connor Haas, Library Clerk

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### **John says**

With a title like this on a essay collection one would think that there would be juice. Not so. This is nothing more than Chomsky jargon from beginning to end with no coherent content whatsoever. It is a very easy task to find a sentence or paragraph that means nothing at all. Is he counting on that his name adds some value to it? That the reader should think that this is profound somehow because Chomsky wrote it? The only way to know in what direction his opinion goes is what adjectives he puts in front of key words. Like "rugged" in front of individualism. So I deduce that individualism is bad. No wonder people praise Naomi Klein, she has at least some clarity. Chomskys style of writing is basically a thousand quotes and a few comments in between whereas he tried to bind it together some kind of coherence, a skill he lacks. And he is a linguist and intellectual? Of the worst kind, of so. This is my second try at his mumbo jumbo, have two more short books left - and then maybe I will try one of his better known works in case he is just a bad writer of essays. Somehow the even the writer of the introduction has nothing but praise for this guy that does everything he can to muddle the waters of truth rather than clarify them - even if he tries to criticize the right things he do it wrong. The high points are the two last chapters that are slightly better than the rest(meaning that they are somewhat readable), but even here it shines through when I manage to distill out the argument and opinion that he is superficial, simplistic and totally wrong.

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### **Dale says**

This collection covers ground familiar to regular readers of Chomsky: the role of intellectuals in defending the status quo; the history and role of propaganda in the enlightened Western Democracies; the manufacturing of "consent"; the existential dangers of Real Existing Capitalism.

The 1996 essay "Consent Without Consent" was the most interesting of the lot, for me, because it was a reminder of just how far Bill Clinton and the New Democrats had already steered the Democratic Party away from anything resembling a party of the people. Already by then the Democratic Party, and Clinton in particular, understood that a party platform should be treated only as a public relations tool, and not as something that should have any influence on actual policy. This, of course, has been the practice of both major parties ever since, with the result that on most substantive issues there is very little difference between the two parties, aside from rhetoric and tactics. The financial elite must be served, and both parties understand that and act accordingly.

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## **Eric Camarillo says**

Brilliant. This is recommended reading for anyone who wants a greater insight into political machinery. Be prepared to get angry, though, if you thought the world was fair or if you thought just working hard would be enough to get by. Chomsky also provides a searing critique of the role so-called advanced civilizations play in global politics and economics.

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## **Connor Haas says**

Another fine selection of various essays and speeches from the United States most important intellectual. What was particularly interesting was Chomsky's lectures early in the book.

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## **Bchara says**

I was curious to read something by this author, since i often hear his name mentioned, in my country, mostly by the anti-USA crowd. And now i can see why. This guy is basically saying: the USA has done everything wrong and is responsible for every bad thing in the world. No wonder also that his "essays" (this book being a compilation of 6-7 articles) sound like a déjà-vu (or actually a déjà-lu), since it seems like a blend of basic upper-class leftism (gauche caviar) and angry anti-usa propaganda. But said by an american, this time, instead of soviet-era nostalgics and dictatorship/islamist spokespersons. So, this book gathers a number of papers, from the oldest to the newest. Naom Chomsky criticizes american financial economic system, social system, environmental strategy, republicans, democrats, USA foreign politics, USA military, pilgrims and how they took indian lands, etc etc. To note that the tone in the oldest papers was cautious while in the most recent ones, one can find quick, hardly evidenced assumptions. Well most of these things are true, many may be true as well, it's not me who can argue against Chomsky, one of the prominent usa thinkers. But regardless of that, i wasnt much impressed: the fame attached to the author didn't match the awe i was supposed to feel from the book, maybe because, as i said, it mostly reminds me the discourse of the pro-syrian, pro-iranian clique in Lebanon that offers a far worse alternative than the USA.

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## **Reynaldo says**

All the essays of the book are connected by the same DNA: courage and energy to denounce the inequality in the world and find the causes that create it through clear language, hard facts and footnotes. Each essay develops a specific topic (the relation of power and knowledge , war crimes, climate change, capitalism, terrorism, and most important the possibilities of humanity) , that is related with previous ones, to build a detailed view of the power relationships in the world and the negative influence of the "significant classes" and the "intelligentsia" that serve them. Highly recommended to understand and learn the real facts and truth of power (master of mankind) that media usually doesn't communicate. Chomsky wrote these essays over more than 40 years with awesome clarity and language full of emotion.

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## **João Cruz says**

Os senhores do mundo são pessoas que nós não gostaríamos de ter como amigos. Mentem descaradamente, mandam matar mas ficam "chocados" quando outros os copiam, roubam, enriquecem desmesuradamente e, por fim, estão-se nas tintas para a mais queeminente catástrofe ambiental global...

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## **Ollie says**

We all know how Noam Chomsky is called the "greatest living intellectual." What people might not be aware of is how that classification was originally used by the New York Times to more or less pan a book of his. As in, "How can the greatest living intellectual write such a bad book?" Something like that. I'm paraphrasing of course. But people ought to know that (and Chomsky certainly brings it to people's attention when he gives a lecture), but it just goes to show, why would someone who is in such a position of power and authority (the New York Times) speak favorably of someone who has spent their lifetime challenging power and authority?

It's these positions of power and authority that are the target of the latest collection of essays and lectures by Noam Chomsky. Now of course challenging authority is something Chomsky has done in countless other publications, but as the man doesn't write "full-length" books anymore, we are left with his lectures and essays to bring us up to date. Masters of Mankind deals with subjects such as institutional authority (who are more interested in their doctrine and pleasing the rulers of the state than actually improving the lives of its citizens), challenging the status of the "intellectual" Reinhold Neibuhr (and a slight dissection of his work as being biased, unscientific, and absurd), the single-minded focus of the government (no matter who the president is) since World War II to focus on building and "saving" the economy by legislating for richest businessmen, the selfishness of the US and its muscle-flexing when bringing democracy to foreign countries, and the ignorance, carelessness, and poor management of our administrations (including Obama's) in handling the climate crisis. As always, Chomsky offers nothing if not an enrichment of our lives when we read him, and this is no exception.

One noteworthy thing about reading a collection spanning such a large period of time, is how straightforward and easier it's become to read Chomsky over the years. While some of his older pieces of writing are a difficult to follow or use unfamiliar jargon (to me at least), Chomsky's writing has become clearer and simpler, easier to follow, and much more enjoyable over the years. A relief as we need someone with his perspective now more than ever. Chalk this book as another one for required reading.

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## **Benoit says**

J'ai aimé les derniers articles, les plus récents. Ils traitent pas mal d'environnement. Les premiers sont trop centrés sur les Etats-Unis et traitent de problèmes un peu lointains pour moi qui suit dans la vingtaine. Noam Chomsky nous abreuve de références bibliographiques, il est aisément de creuser chaque sujet un peu plus profondément.

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### **Billie Pritchett says**

As the subtitle says, Noam Chomsky's *Masters of Mankind* is a collection of essays and lectures. The book takes on intellectuals who support the status quo, government subsidies for corporations, exceptionalism for some countries with regard what makes war just, among other topics. It's at least a good book to get you interested in reading more about the topics in question and getting together with people who want to support public policies to make better changes for our societies.

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### **Christine Edwards says**

This definitely takes effort to read - not because it is difficult, but because it makes you think. Remember to make note of the original date before delving into an essay or lecture. The content is often time-relevant, but it is interesting to see how Chomsky's words from the 70's relate to issues of today. This book is not for everyone, but if you enjoy a higher-level of intellectual thought or want to challenge yourself to read something of that caliber, then I encourage you to give it a look.

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