



On Nature and Language

Noam Chomsky , Adriana Belletti (Editor) , Luigi Rizzi (Editor)

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In *On Nature and Language* Noam Chomsky develops his thinking on the relation between language, mind, and brain, integrating current research in linguistics into the burgeoning field of neuroscience. Following a lucid introduction is a penetrating interview with Chomsky, in which he provides the clearest and most elegant introduction to current theory available. It makes his Minimalist Program accessible to all. The volume concludes with an essay on the role of intellectuals in society and government. A significant landmark in the development of linguistic theory, *On Nature and Language* will be welcomed by students and researchers in theoretical linguistics, neurolinguistics, cognitive science and politics, as well as anyone interested in the development of Chomsky's thought. Noam Chomsky is Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Chomsky has written and lectured extensively on philosophy, intellectual history, and international affairs. His works include *The Architecture of Language*, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, *Cartesian Linguistics*, *Language and Mind*, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, *At War with Asia*, *For Reasons of State*, *Peace in the Middle East?* *Reflections on Language*, *Rules and Representations*, *The Culture of Terrorism*, *Rethinking Camelot*, *JFKm the Vietnam War and US Political Culture*, *World Orders, Old and New* and *The Common Good*.

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Fatih Bozda? says

to be honest it was hard to read and examine examples of first part.

Maureen says

Chapters 2 and 3 were speeches, which is why they were readable to non-specialists like me, and there was some interesting stuff there. Chomsky compares the field of linguistics to that of chemistry in the 1800s. Chemists didn't understand why reactions happened the way they did, but did their best to develop principles and knowledge about the topic, and eventually physics and chemistry were unified and the chemical observations were explained in terms of protons and electrons. I got halfway through the interview with Chomsky in Chapter 4 before the language became too technical for me to follow. Chapter 1 was an overview of something that I didn't even attempt.

Silvio Curtis says

Four talks by Chomsky on a trip to Europe. The first two are very big-picture speculations on the future of linguistics, directed at a nonspecialist audience, covering a lot of the same ground. The main point seems to be that linguistics is in the same place relative to neuroscience as chemistry was relative to physics in the nineteenth century - it can be reduced to neuroscience eventually, but only after a lot of empirical work and conceptual rethinkings of linguistics that we aren't in a position to make yet, and maybe even bigger overhauls of neuroscience. The next and longest is an interview with Chomsky about the newest research strategy in his branch of linguistics, the Minimalist Program. This throws around a lot of jargon that I'm not familiar with, even with basic syntax from Intro to Linguistics and a lot of knowledge about historical and descriptive linguistics, and the editors' introduction doesn't help even though it's supposed to. Chomsky comes across as a lot more humble and empirically oriented than that Intro to Linguistics class left me expecting; on the other hand, it still sounds like he and his school are basing their theories on an inexcusably small set of languages. even with humility accounted for. The last essay is political and I hope it gets through some people's heads how indistinguishable the US's violence toward people in other countries has been from the USSR's, and hasn't changed since the USSR's been gone.

Doug says

Not merely for the penetrating essay 'The Secular Priesthood and the Perils of Democracy', this is another gem in Chomsky's review oeuvre of the history and philosophy of science, mind, and language.

Blue Moon-Shepherd says

Brilliant, as always. Whether Linguistics, Mind, Politics; whether English or Spanish; he is worth reading, and then reading again. His are not for the readers unfamiliar to the topics in Linguistics. However, for the rest? There's a reason why msm call him a dissenter: he speaks an informed truth.

Ariel Littlemermaid says

Too much academic jargon made my head hurt...

None the less, I guess it's such a great book for PhD students or Linguistics professors!

Kmsprag says

Although it contained some interesting material, it was a bit disjointed and overly technical for the layman reader. I found it interesting how much time was spent defensively justifying their pursuit of a minimalist program thru references to other scientific struggles for understanding and yet comparatively little time was spent discussing the meat of their theory(sorry, approach) A little defensive perhaps? For someone interested in an introduction to the work the Chomksyians are doing in linguistics, this may throw you into the deepwater, for an academic, you can probably find better articles. The political essay at the end was compelling(as always) but added to the disjointedness of the book.

? says

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