

# [A language older than words](https://assignbuster.com/a-language-older-than-words/)

A Language Older Than Words Response Paper In the novel A Language Older Than Words, Derrick Jensen covers many different themes in the many chapters that he has divided his book into. The two chapters that really interested me were Breaking Out and Economics. The two themes that Jensen discusses is the relationship with the self and other as well as the monetary symbol in our society respectively. I was able to relate to both of these topics in different ways. In the chapter Breaking Out Jensen focuses on the image of the self and the relationship we have with each other.

Jensen writes about how we are constricted to our own concentration camp in our society. It is not an actual concentration camp yet it is a concentration camp in our way of thinking and constructing the image of ourselves and our relationship as human beings. “ In a concentration camp, it is better (in terms of maintaining physical life; spiritual life is an entirely different question) to be the killer than the killed, better to be a collaborator than a resister, a guard than a collaborator, a supervisor than a guard, and better still to be the boss (125). He states that having everyone act in his or her own best interest may not be the best interest for society in general. “ Part of the reason we’ve been able to convince ourselves that by exploiting others we’re acting in our own best interest is that we’ve accepted a severely constricted definition of self (125). ” Jensen speaks about how the image of our self is not the image that we should accept. We must break out of that concentration camp that society has constructed and create our own view of what type of individual we want to be without the help of society or the fear of society judging ones self.

The quote that Jensen wrote about the concentration camp really strokes a chord in my head. My own analysis of this is that we are stuck as a society by always wanting to be the best and not looking out for others. The mentality of all men for themselves has spread in our society. I was thinking we are always competing in life. Whether it is for a job or a spot in a class, we are always competing. This competition creates this mentality that it is better to be the killer than the killed.

The constricted definition of the self that Jensen speaks about relates to the workbook from class. When it speaks about sexuality and how there isn’t just male or female when there are many different colors of the rainbow. As a society we shouldn’t have to be constricted to what they want us to identify with. We need to break out of our ‘ concentration camp’ and create our own identity without the help of society judging us. In the chapter Economics, Jensen writes about the fact that money rules all.

He speaks about how everything in life turns into a money exchange. “ I’d like three books, two packages of chicken McNuggets, and a blow to go, please. That which it is possible to reduce to a commodity and sell, is. That which can’t, is either (by definition) devalued, ignored, or simply destroyed (139)”. Jensen is trying to show the reader that everything has a relation to money. We need money in order to do the many things in life such as travel yet there are things that we don’t need money for. Here’s the problem: in this tidy world of economic categories, there’s no room for love, joy, mystery, for the sometimes confused and confusing, sometimes clear and clarifying, sometimes beautiful, sometimes magical suction of body on body, skin on skin soul on soul (139). ” How I see this quote is that Jensen is saying we are so consumed in getting more money that we don’t have time for the things that really matter in our life like love and happiness. I can see where Jensen is coming from. I think our society is stuck into thinking that money is a priority.

I think it is important because we do need money to survive yet we shouldn’t let money run our lives. The first quote shows how we see money as a constraint to happiness, love, and mystery. This reminds me of the discussion that we had in class on how we would like to travel the world when we graduate yet we are not able to because of the constraint of money and getting left behind in this ‘ rat race’. We have all these obligations one after another that we are not able to pursue the things we really want to.

Jensen brings a lot of good questions to mind while reading his novel. He is not afraid to say what he believes is happening to our society even though it seems like our society is corrupt. His thought on relationships opens up my window to knowing how easily people can ‘ stab’ each other in the back in order to be the killer not the killed. His topic of money in our society shows how we are truly materialistic. We must give everything a dollar value and if it doesn’t have a dollar value then it is not valued. How much is happiness?