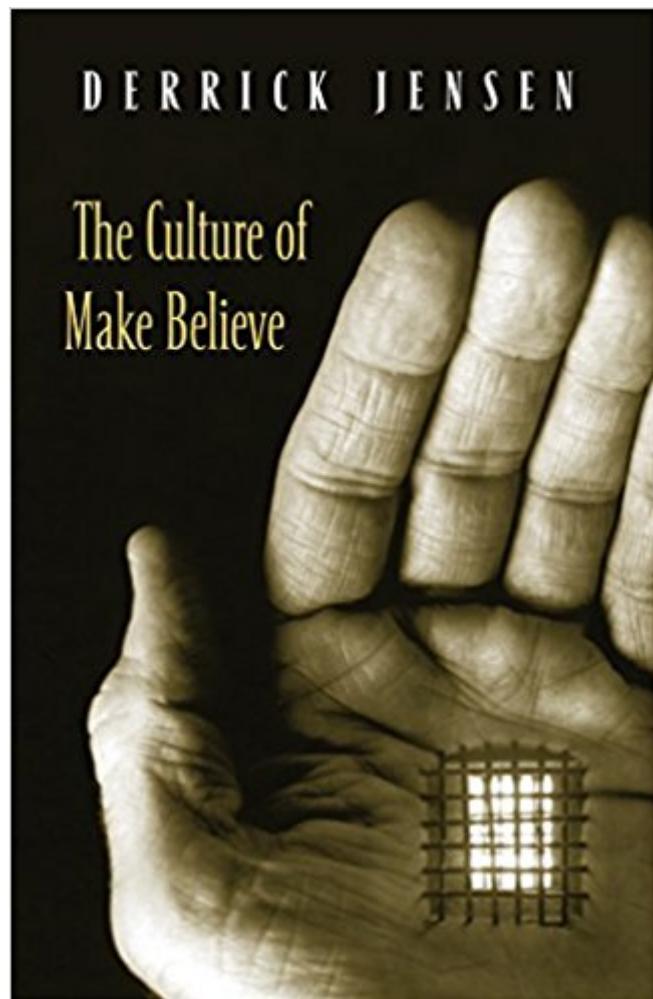


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The Culture Of Make Believe



Synopsis

Derrick Jensen takes no prisoners in *The Culture of Make Believe*, his brilliant and eagerly awaited follow-up to his powerful and lyrical *A Language Older Than Words*. What begins as an exploration of the lines of thought and experience that run between the massive lynchings in early twentieth-century America to today's death squads in South America soon explodes into an examination of the very heart of our civilization. *The Culture of Make Believe* is a book that is as impeccably researched as it is moving, with conclusions as far-reaching as they are shocking.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Writing with the same driven passion and intense intelligence as his critically acclaimed *A Language Older Than Words*, which examined the interconnections between personal and social violence, Jensen says this book "is more about racism and far more broadly hate as it manifests itself in our Western world." As in the earlier work, Jensen paints on a huge canvas he details American racism from the genocidal slave trade through lynchings to the 2000 murder of Amadou Diallo by NYC police, and covers a wide range of other cultural horrors as well: the massacres of Native American people, the Holocaust, the 8,000 deaths from the 1984 Union Carbide gas leak in India, and the deaths of 500,000 children in Iraq. The book is packed full of startling details South African apartheid laws were enacted at the direct request of the De Beers diamond company to facilitate business; aspects of Christian doctrine supported slavery until about 100 years ago. But the uniqueness and enormous power of Jensen's work is his ability to forge these events into an

emotionally compelling and devastating critique of the intellectual, psychological, emotional and social structures of Western culture. Along with greed and globalization he says that the valuing of production over life and the abstract over the particular have set Western culture on a course that will end "really, with the end of the planet." While some readers might take umbrage at his more unsettling associations he compares Hitler's political language to Teddy Roosevelt's Jensen's intricate weaving together of history, philosophy, environmentalism, economics, literature and psychology has produced a powerful argument that demands attention in the tradition of such important books as Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* and Brigid Brophy's *Black Ship to Hell*. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This passionate book chronicles the violent hatreds that have been overwhelming our planet, tracing them back through their sources in imperialism, slavery, the rise of global capitalism, and the ideologies of possessiveness and consumerism. Jensen's previous book, *A Language Older Than Words*, a reflection on family violence and childhood abuse, attracted a wide audience. Here he puts together statistics, bits of history, and reflective interviews with friends and acquaintances to examine a world in which hatred and destruction come all too easily. As in his previous book, his intent is to recall victims as individuals. His focus is on the dangers of abstraction and the economics that result from our viewing people and things as sources of profit and elements in systems. What he intends is not a systematic picture but a stunning collection of horrific close-ups. Africans and Indians are most often in view, and women are never far from his mind. Our disdain for the environment also intrudes frequently. Jensen's solution is a return to the simple life, perhaps much like that of the hunter-gatherers, yet he knows that such a turn must be "the end of civilization." Readers will be moved by his argument, though more likely they will be inspired to look for solutions that let us keep art, science, and the great treasures that go with complex communal life. Surely not all abstract thought is bad, but Jensen's aim is to shock us awake and let us stew in the world's injustices, and at that he duly succeeds. Leslie Armour, Univ. of Ottawa, ON Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This is one of the most difficult books I've read, and I'm not known for shying away from difficult topics. Derrick Jensen looks deep into the dominant culture and what it does to women, indigenous people, race, the natural world, and why this culture has come to act as it does. It is painful to look so honestly, even at history you think you know, but find there are details you missed. It is a hard

read, but if we don't start looking then how can we change it? I highly recommend it, even if it takes you over a year to finish as I did. Immeasurably thought provoking.

Derrick Jensen does a superb job weaving issues like environmentalism, racism, and sexism together as a way to explain Western Civilization's problems. It is usually seen as normal for people within our culture to look down on more "primitive" societies, but this book challenges all of us in this Western age to consider the ways it was founded, how it operates today, and its future place in years to come. It's a long read, but the content is worth paying attention to and thinking deeply about.

After diving into "A Language...." and establishing a new perception for seeing the world in a much different light, I whole heartly endorse Mr. Jensen as one of the few leading the way into a possible NEW WORLD order, one involving understanding, forgiveness and redemption for the hate and greed that have been at the forefront of civilization. With "Culture of Make Believe" Derrick has done the research for us, compiling hundreds of observations and conclusions about the current state of affairs which have lead us to the insanity of our present state. Read, observe and apply all that has been revealed. Thank you Mr. Jensen for giving many the tools to see and hopefully a changed heart to act upon these atrocities that have kept us all from "experiencing" the world as human beings. Highly recommended and a must read!

I read this book after completing Derrick's excellent book, *A Language Older Than Words*, and was again astounded by the wonderful prose and well-researched facts that were prevalent throughout *The Culture of Make Believe*. I recommend this to anybody who wants a better view of how things really are. It certainly changed my mind about a lot of things, even though I normally take such books with a grain of salt. When I had finished the book, I passed it around to several of my friends, friends whom I thought wouldn't be so receptive to anti-culture themes present in the book, and each thanked me afterwards. Anybody claiming that this book preaches to the choir is obviously full of themselves from assuming anything that will help get their argument across. Though this book is much longer than his first, it didn't carry much unneeded baggage, and I easily finished it within a few days. If anything, I wished that it had gone deeper into exploring the 'Dark Heart of Civilization', but after finishing, my mind was satisfied. Again, I say read this book, it will certainly change your viewpoint, unless your viewpoint is already beyond saving.

He is amazing! I read this book over and over and learn more each time.

This book is a masterpiece, outlining the history of civilization's assault on the natural world and all living things and analyzing the underlying pathology in detail, with example after example.

Best life-changing book I have read so far! This author is deep!!!

I'm a fan! It's not easy reading but worth every word.

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