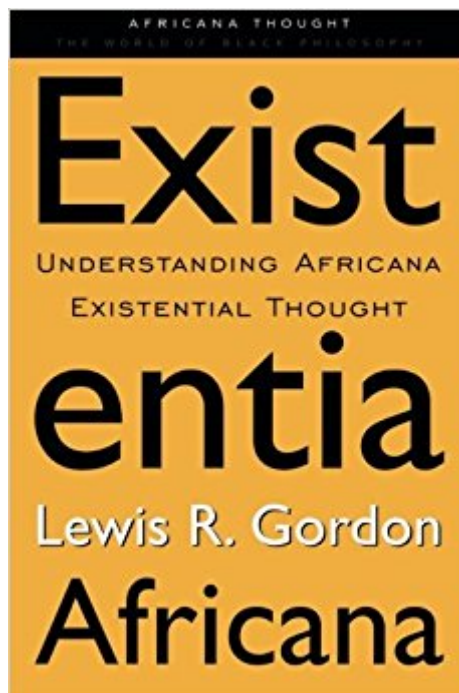




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# Existential Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought (Africana Thought)



## Synopsis

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## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Strongly recommended for all library collections...."-Choice "What does it mean to be a problem?' In the innovative essays of "Existencia Africana, Lewis Gordon returns to the exploration both of W.E.B. Dubois' question, as well as of the emancipatory tradition of Black existential thought....It is an immense and profoundly original undertaking."-Sylvia Wynter, author of "Do Not Call Us Negroes: How Multicultural Textbooks Perpetuate Racism and Professor Emerita, Stanford University "In "Existencia Africana, Lewis Gordon is once again at his philosophical best. Continuing from where he left off in "Existence in Black, Gordon develops Africana philosophy and critical race theory to a higher level of sophistication and originality that will certainly make him a forceful voice of the next millennium. Indeed, a much needed and truly liberating contribution."-Mabogo P. More, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa "Gordon once again brings his mastery of existentialist writers such as Frantz Fanon and Sartre to bear on issues confronting black intellectuals.."-M. Stewart, Austin College "This study gives Africana existential philosophy perhaps its most exhaustive analysis... The author discerns a dominant and pervasive race consciousness in Africana existential thought... Gordon has made a definitive statement of the wealth, validity, and historicity of Africana existential thought."-Tunde Adeleke, University of Montana

Lewis R. Gordon is Professor of Afro-American Studies, Modern Culture and Media, and Contemporary Religious Thought at Brown University. He is author of *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man* (1995) and editor of *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy* (1996), both published by Routledge.

Lewis Ricardo Gordon (born 1962) is Professor of Philosophy at Temple University, and an Ongoing Visiting Professor of Philosophy and Government at the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica. He has also written/edited *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (Cambridge Introductions to Philosophy), *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times* (The Radical Imagination Series), *Black Texts and Textuality: Constructing and De-Constructing Blackness*, *Bad Faith and Antiracist Racism*, and *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy*. Here are some quotations from the book: "Africana existential philosophy is a branch of Africana philosophy and black philosophies of existence. By 'black philosophy' what is meant is the philosophical currents that emerged from the question of blackness. I distinguish Africana philosophy and black philosophies because the latter relate to a terrain that is broader than Africana communities." (Pg. 5-6) "Sartre stands as an unusual catalyst in the history of black existential philosophy. He serves as a link between Richard Wright and Frantz Fanon ... and the historical forces that came into play for the ascendance of European philosophy of existence in the American academy." (Pg. 9) "This is not to say that Africana philosophy is existential in the sense of reducing it to a philosophy of existence. It is, instead, to say that the impetus of Africana philosophy, when the question of the black or the situation of black people is raised, has an existential impetus." (Pg. 11) "Our first observation is that racism is a form of dehumanization, and that dehumanization is a form of bad faith---for to deny the humanity of a human being requires lying to ourselves about something of which we are aware." (Pg. 85)

Sylvia Wynter has said that it is the challenge of the writer to create new "forms of life." Lewis R. Gordon has done just that with *Existentialia Africana*. With chapters such as "Can Men Worship?", "What Does It Mean to be a Problem'?", and one of the most moving sections, "Writing: Words and Incantation", Gordon pours out his soul in trying to explain to the reader why in the year 2000 black people in Africa and the African Diaspora are still regarded as problem people. The author is a writer, philosopher par excellence, a jazz musician, a product of both Jamaica and black America, the academy and the realm of grassroots political activity. Discussing persons such as Frantz Fanon to Angela Davis to Jean-Paul Sartre to W.E.B. Du Bois to Naomi Zack to Josiah Young to

Abbey Lincoln and to others, Gordon's words and incantation force the reader to confront the meaning of black existence from Jamaica to the United States to the UK to Africa to aboriginal Australia. Gordon differentiates between the European movement of thought "Existentialism", versus what he terms a "Philosophy of Existence/Existential Philosophy." A Philosophy of Existence addresses issues of freedom, anguish, dread, and responsibility in a way that does not limit discourse to European thought and thinkers such as Sartre, Heidegger, Jaspers, and Simone de Beauvoir. Dear reader, please read on if you are willing to confront these serious and pressing issues of our times.

Professor Lewis R. Gordon (Temple University) has outdone himself in this groundbreaking introduction to Africana existential thought! In addition to a breakthrough in Africana studies, Fanonian and DuBoisian students and scholars alike will appreciate the fruit of Gordon's labor. I would highly recommend anything written by Gordon; his style and method are very endearing to the reader.

If you are at the least familiar with Prof. Gordon's work, then you should need no prompting in purchasing this text. If not, then I wholeheartedly recommended "Existencia Africana" for anyone with an interest in race theorizing along existential lines. Gordon draws influences from such existential theorists as Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. DuBois, Jean-Paul Sartre, and bell hooks to paint a very coherent and useful picture of modern Africana existential thought. Buy it, and read it, you won't be disappointed.

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