



Africana

By Kwame Anthony Appiah, Henry Louis Gates



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Inspired by the dream of the late African American scholar W.E.B. Du Bois and assisted by an eminent advisory board, Harvard scholars Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Kwame Anthony Appiah have created the first scholarly encyclopedia to take as its scope the entire history of Africa and the African Diaspora. Beautifully designed and richly illustrated with over a thousand images - maps, tables, charts, photographs, hundreds of them in full color - this single-volume reference includes more than three thousand articles and over two million words. The interplay between text and illustration conveys the richness and sweep of the African and African American experience as no other publication before it. Certain to prove invaluable to anyone interested in black history and the influence of African culture on the world today, *Africana* is a unique testament to the remarkable legacy of a great and varied people. With entries ranging from "affirmative action" to "zydeco," from each of the most prominent ethnic groups in Africa to each member of the Congressional Black Caucus, *Africana* brings the entire black world into sharp focus. Every concise, informative article is referenced to others with the aim of guiding the reader through such wide-ranging topics as the history of slavery; the civil rights movement; African-American literature, music, and art; ancient African civilizations; and the black experience in countries such as France, India, and Russia. More than a book for library reference, *Africana* will give hours of reading pleasure through its longer, interpretive essays by such notable writers as Stanley Crouch, Gerald Early, Randall Kennedy, and Cornel West. These specially commissioned essays give the reader an engaging chronicle of the religion, arts, and cultural life of Africans and of black people in the Old World and the New.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Legendary scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois labored to complete an "Encyclopedia Africana" before his death in 1963. Just over 35 years later, two Harvard educators, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Ghanaian-born Kwame Anthony Appiah, have brought Du Bois' intellectual dream to life in *Africana*, the most complete and comprehensive record of the Pan-African diaspora compiled into one volume. With over two million words and 3,500 entries from more than 220 contributors, Appiah and Gates sought, as they put it, to "give a sense of the wide diversity of peoples, cultures, and traditions that we know about Africa in historical times, a feel for the environment in which that history was lived, and a broad outline of the contributions of people of African descent, especially in the Americas, but, more generally, around the world." To fulfill this aim, they consider biographical, political, artistic, economic, historical, and geographical data; a brief sampling of topics includes "Food in African-American Culture," "Creolized Musical Instruments of the Caribbean," and "Anthropology in Africa." The section on Africa fills about two thirds of the book, loaded with invaluable information--from the ethnic and colonial factors that contributed to violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Eritrea, and Sierra Leone to the educational, linguistic, and social advances in Tanzania, Gabon, and South Africa. The legacies of the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe are also presented in great detail. The encyclopedia also contains documented evidence of African-derived peoples in Asia, including the exploits of Malik Ambar, who arrived in India from Ethiopia as a result of the East Indian slave trade.

Turning to the Western Hemisphere, *Africana* skillfully and succinctly synthesizes the lives and achievements of a multitude of African Americans, from 18th-century inventor-astronomer Benjamin Banneker to late-20th-century heroes like Colin Powell, Tiger Woods, and astronaut Mae Jemison. You'll learn about the little-considered black presence in Canada; *Africana* also uncovers hidden pockets of black culture in surprising places like Chile, Paraguay, and Argentina (where the Negro population, we discover, was reduced by a process of miscegenation known as *blanqueamiento*, or whitening). The upper-crust veneer of the Argentine tango is peeled away, revealing the dance's roots in the rhythmic innovations of 19th-century Afro-Argentines. With all of the aforementioned headings and topics, however, it's the special essays that best detail the treasure chest of scholarship of *Africana*. Robin Kelley examines the volatile clash between "Malcolm X and the Black Bourgeoisie"; Thomas Skidmore deconstructs "Race and Class in Brazil" and the myth of "racial democracy"; Mahmood Mamdani, in "Ethnicity in Rwanda," brilliantly decodes the complex and maddening colonial manipulations that erupted in genocide and made the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups "more political than cultural identities ... one is power and the other is subject."

A splendidly packaged reference work that will adorn libraries and homes for years to come, *Africana* defines the black experience in the same sweeping way that the *Encyclopedia Britannica* defined Euro-American civilization. More importantly for young readers, the magnificent collection shows that Africans and the continent's descendants are a truly global people who have made tremendous contributions to human civilization. --Eugene Holley Jr.

From Publishers Weekly

In 1909, W.E.B. Du Bois dreamed of editing an "Encyclopedia Africana" filled with all that scholars knew of the history, literature and art of the great continent and its diaspora. Such a tome, Du Bois hoped, would, like Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, serve as a springboard for future scholarship and a bulwark against racist misconceptions. At the century's close, editors Appiah and Gates, an African and African-American respectively, have fulfilled Du Bois's vision with aplomb. For this accessible, fascinating volume, the two

Harvard professors have commissioned and condensed more than 3000 articles by more than 400 scholars. Though the bulk of the entries are devoted to the African continent and its descendant cultures in Latin America, the Caribbean and North America, the encyclopedia also addresses the African presence in Europe, Asia and the rest of the world (each article is color coded for easy reference). Entries range from a paragraph on Abaku s, "all-male secret societies created by African slaves living in Cuba during the mid-19th century," to Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's six-page essay on "Women and the Black Baptist Church." The selections, which run the gamut from the Middle Passage, Rastafarians, the Montgomery bus boycott, rap and every African country, are notable for their clear presentation of facts and their cogent, fair-minded analysis. Some entries, such as John Burdick's "Myth of Racial Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Interpretation," are really treatises on significant social issues. And the many minibiographies of accomplished artists such as actor Paul Robeson, singer Diana Ross and saxophonist Charlie Parker highlight the tremendous impact African-Americans have had on North American culture. Bursting with information and enhanced by contributions from its illustrious advisory board, which includes Jamaica Kincaid, Nell Irvin Painter, Cornel West and Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, this book belongs on every family's reference shelf. Du Bois himself could not have done better. 1000 photographs, maps and illus. Agent, Lynn Nesbit. \$500,000 national marketing campaign; featured selection of BOMC, the History Book Club and QPB; 10-city author tour; 22-city national radio and TV satellite tour. (Nov.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Appiah and Gates, both eminent African American scholars at Harvard, have edited a massive encyclopedia covering virtually every facet of Africa and the African Diaspora, although the focus is on political, social, and cultural history. With more than 400 contributors and 3000 articles, the work includes 12 Featured Essays by internationally known scholars like Cornell West ("W.E.B. DuBois") and David L. Lewis ("Harlem Renaissance"). These well-developed analyses are ten to 15 pages in length. Shorter entries, usually from half a column to five pages in length, run the gamut of topics from Nelson Mandela to Tupac Shakur. The contributors include major figures like Gates as well as junior scholars from a number of countries. While obviously focusing on Africana, the compilation avoids extreme ideological stands. The entry on "Afrocentrism," for example, is a model of balance and clarity. The editors have admirably fulfilled the dream of African American scholar and leader W.E.B. DuBois, who worked for much of his life to create such a monument. Highly recommended for all but the smallest libraries. Anthony O. Edmonds, Ball State Univ., Muncie, IN
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Darius Cramer:

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Pamela Watkins:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with their family or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book that you just read you can spent the entire day to reading a guide. The book Africana it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book offers high quality.

Stan Smith:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Africana, you could enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout men. What? Still don't obtain it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Elizabeth Givens:

The book untitled Africana contain a lot of information on this. The writer explains your ex idea with easy means. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read that. The book was written by famous author. The author will take you in the new period of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice read.

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