



## The Cornel West Reader (Basic Civitas Book)

By Cornel West

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Cornel West is one of the nation's premier public intellectuals and one of the great prophetic voices of our era. Whether he is writing a scholarly book or an article for Newsweek, whether he is speaking of Emerson, Gramsci, or Marvin Gaye, his work radiates a passion that reflects the rich traditions he draws on and weaves together—Baptist preaching, American transcendentalism, jazz, radical politics. This anthology reveals the dazzling range of West's work, from his explorations of "Prophetic Pragmatism" to his philosophizing on hip-hop. *The Cornel West Reader* traces the development of West's extraordinary career as academic, public intellectual, and activist. In his essays, articles, books, and interviews, West emerges as America's social conscience, urging attention to complicated issues of racial and economic justice, sexuality and gender, history and politics. This collection represents the best work of an always compelling, often controversial, and absolutely essential philosopher of the modern American experience.

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## **The Cornel West Reader (Basic Civitas Book) By Cornel West Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #314163 in Books
- Published on: 2000-08-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.63" w x 6.00" l, 1.64 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 624 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

The grandson of a Baptist minister, West is a professor at Harvard University who has adeptly combined the introspective strengths of the academic philosopher-theologian with the activist and humanist elements of the African-American religious tradition and black nationalist thought. This mammoth collection of social commentary, interviews, essays and memoir details his evolution as a social analyst and public figure, gathering some of his finest work from his previous books (*Keeping Faith*; *Prophetic Fragments*; *Race Matters*, etc.) as well as from a wide range of academic sources. Calling himself "a Chekhovian Christian," West is deeply concerned with the corruption of the dignity of the everyday citizen and the betrayal of the ideals of American democracy through its embrace of racist and sexist beliefs. While the range of his philosophical sermons can occasionally be overwhelming, his eclectic interests and original observations are quite rewarding. Whether he is discussing Marxist theory, slavery, architecture, black sexuality, black-Jewish relations or bebop and rap, his often complex statements yield a continual flood of surprising insights. West is at his most accessible in his interviews with philosopher George Yancy, TV host Bill Moyers and African-American feminist writer bell hooks. This collection amply attests that West's reputation as a brilliant, humane voice in American intellectual discourse is richly deserved. (Nov.)

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From Library Journal

This reader, edited by West himself (Alphonse Fletcher, Jr. University Professor, Harvard Univ.), presents essays covering his impressive career and development as an intellectual, philosopher, cultural critic, and "Chekhovian Christian." Arranged in eight thematic sections—autobiography, modernity, pragmatism, Marxism, political praxes, Christian thought, the arts, and controversial racial issues—this work reveals that West's profound commitment to and quest for social justice, across differences, is unrelentingly compassionate and sometimes decorously and ostensibly innocent. Yet West does not feel obligated to write for the everyday folks, especially black folks, he champions. The selected essays, unlike those in his best-selling *Race Matters* (LJ 3/15/93), are highly theoretical and academic, accessible only to the highly educated. Furthermore, West himself declares that he has given up journalism (a forum in which he could create and maintain a broader audience base) because journalistic writing "can become too simplistic, flat, or clever." For most, these scholarly writings will be too obtuse, convoluted, and pretentious. Recommended for academic libraries. —Sherri Barnes, Univ. of California Lib., Santa Barbara

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From Kirkus Reviews

An invaluable introduction to the writings of one of our most prominent and prolific public intellectuals. West (*Restoring Hope*, 1997, etc.) is one of those rare African-American scholars who has been able to break out of the Black Studies ghetto not only in the academy but also in his widely and often popularly published work, as this hefty anthology plainly attests; at the same time, he asserts the continued power of Marxist thought without being confined to the only slightly less restrictive pigeonhole of socialist theory. He is as comfortable writing on William James and Josiah Royce as on Antonio Gramsci and Martin Luther King. And this retrospective collection certainly validates his stated desire ``to lay bare the basic structure of my intellectual work and life.'' Although much of the material has been published in book form before, West manages to put the pieces together in revealingly and economically thematic chunks. Those who find his technical and philosophical writings daunting will appreciate his more accessible interviews, including discussions with Bill Moyers, Anders Stephanson, and George Yancey (although a lengthy discussion of Georg Lukcs may leave most non-Marxists behind). Unfortunately, West does himself no great service with

an introduction that is pompous, ponderous, and parodically self-satisfied. And while he refers to himself there as a ``Chekhovian Christian," West seems to have missed the dry humor that underpins much of Chekhov's best work, while understandably eschewing the rueful resignation of the Russian's plays. At his best, however, West is a lucid and serious thinker and an elegant and often impassioned writer, as this generous helping of his work reminds us. Skip the introduction and read the rest. -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### Debra Jones:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in each way. By being competitive right now, people have do something to make them survives, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Sure, by reading a publication your ability to survive increase then having chance to stay than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading a new book, we give you this The Cornel West Reader (Basic Civitas Book) book as beginner and daily reading book. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

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#### Lisa Christopher:

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#### Adam Perlman:

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