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The Case Against Afrocentrism

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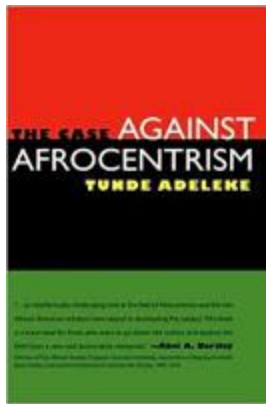
The Case Against Afrocentrism

By Tunde Adeleke

University Press of Mississippi, Cloth, 224 pp.,

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Description from the Publisher:



Postcolonial discourses on African Diaspora history and relations have traditionally focused intensely on highlighting the common experiences and links between black Africans and African Americans. This is especially true of Afrocentric scholars and supporters who use Africa to construct and validate a monolithic, racial, and culturally essentialist worldview. Publications by Afrocentric scholars such as Molefi Asante, Marimba Ani, Maulana Karenga, and the late John Henrik Clarke have emphasized the centrality of Africa to the construction of Afrocentric essentialism. In the last fifteen years, however, countervailing critical scholarship has challenged essentialist interpretations of Diaspora history. Critics such as Stephen Howe, Yaacov Shavit, and Clarence Walker have questioned and refuted the intellectual and cultural underpinnings of Afrocentric essentialist ideology.

Tunde Adeleke deconstructs Afrocentric essentialism by illuminating and interrogating the problematic situation of Africa as the foundation of a racialized worldwide African Diaspora. He attempts to fill an intellectual gap by analyzing the contradictions in Afrocentric representations of the continent. These include multiple, conflicting, and ambivalent portraits of Africa; the use of the continent as a global, unifying identity for all blacks; the de-emphasizing and nullification of New World acculturation; and the ahistoric construction of a monolithic African Diaspora worldwide.