



## Not Out Of Africa: How "'Afrocentrism'" Became An Excuse To Teach Myth As History (New Republic Book)

By Mary Lefkowitz

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*Not Out of Africa* has sparked widespread debate over the teaching of revisionist history in schools and colleges. Was Socrates black? Did Aristotle steal his ideas from the library in Alexandria? Do we owe the underlying tenets of our democratic civilization to the Africans? Mary Lefkowitz explains why politically motivated histories of the ancient world are being written and shows how Afrocentrist claims blatantly contradict the historical evidence. *Not Out of Africa* is an important book that protects and argues for the necessity of historical truths and standards in cultural education. For this new paperback edition, Mary Lefkowitz has written an epilogue in which she responds to her critics and offers topics for further discussion. She has also added supplementary notes, a bibliography with suggestions for further reading, and a glossary of names.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Amazon.com Review**

Wellesley classics professor Mary Lefkowitz takes aim at the basic claims of leading proponents of Afrocentrism, in this expansion of her New Republic article exposing flaws in the argument that black Africans were responsible for the great civilizations of Egypt and Greece that brought praise from historians and criticism from Afrocentrists. Lefkowitz argues that the Greeks' African heritage touted by Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop is based upon a single dubious source and that Egyptians never considered themselves black Africans, in fact, that they consciously disassociated themselves from blacks. She argues that the legacy of these two cultures remains so rich even foes of European civilization want to claim that legacy for themselves.

#### **From Publishers Weekly**

"I am defending academic standards," declares Wellesley College classics professor Lefkowitz, expanding on a New Republic article that brought her praise from historians and criticism from Afro-centrists. Her methodical study, moderate in tone, does not survey the full flower of Afro-centrism in American curricula but takes potent aim at some of the basic claims of leading proponents of Afro-centrism. For example, she shows that influential Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop asserted the Greeks' African heritage based on a single, highly dubious source. Similarly, she explains how claims tracing Greek religion and philosophy to Egyptian origins are based on clearly suspect Greek sources. Moreover, she shows how those Afro-centrists who say the Greeks borrowed an "Egyptian Mystery System" from Africa are actually relying on an 18th-century French novel. This book is a sobering rebuttal of those academics too spineless to challenge teachings based more on identity politics than on solid scholarship.

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#### **From Library Journal**

Lefkowitz (classics, Wellesley Coll.) here refutes the idea that Greek philosophy was stolen from Egypt. Those classicists who believe there are Egyptian antecedents for Greek philosophy are known as Afrocentrists, and it is Lefkowitz's intention to show that their "theories are based on false assumption and faulty reasoning, and cannot be supported by time-tested methods of inquiry." Lefkowitz claims that the Afrocentrists are perpetuating myths and that they protect their claims by labeling those who question those claims as narrow-minded or racist. The author does not challenge the need to present these ideas in classrooms and public forums, but she adamantly opposes the concept of these theories being represented as fact. As she points out: "The events of this century have shown that it is dangerous to allow propaganda to usurp historical truth." Recommended for higher-education libraries and for African American collections. ?Jonathan Jeffrey, Western Kentucky Univ., Bowling Green

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