



# History Lesson: A Race Odyssey

*Mary Lefkowitz*

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In the early 1990s, Classics professor Mary Lefkowitz discovered that one of her faculty colleagues at Wellesley College was teaching his students that Greek culture had been stolen from Africa and that Jews were responsible for the slave trade. This book tells the disturbing story of what happened when she spoke out.

Lefkowitz quickly learned that to investigate the origin and meaning of myths composed by people who have for centuries been dead and buried is one thing, but it is quite another to critique myths that living people take very seriously. She also found that many in academia were reluctant to challenge the fashionable idea that truth is merely a form of opinion. For her insistent defense of obvious truths about the Greeks and the Jews, Lefkowitz was embroiled in turmoil for a decade. She faced institutional indifference, angry colleagues, reverse racism, anti-Semitism, and even a lawsuit intended to silence her.

In *History Lesson* Lefkowitz describes what it was like to experience directly the power of both postmodernism and compensatory politics. She offers personal insights into important issues of academic values and political correctness, and she suggests practical solutions for the divisive and painful problems that arise when a political agenda takes precedence over objective scholarship. Her forthright tale uncovers surprising features in the landscape of higher education and an unexpected need for courage from those who venture there.

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