



## Lies about Black People: How to Combat Racist Stereotypes and Why It Matters

**Omekongo Dibinga**

**Michael Eric Dyson, Contributor**

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*Lies about Black People* is an antiracist, activist text that dissects harmful racist myths.

With a penetrating blend of history, anecdotes, interviews, and poetry, Omekongo Dibinga analyzes some common stereotypes about Black people, all of which continue to inflict trauma and some of which have ended in Black people's deaths. The book shows how such lies are embedded in the US's disempowering vocabulary, policies, and social structures. Designed to justify slavery first, they were later used to separate racial groups and concentrate wealth and power among white people.

Without blame and with buckets of positivity, Dibinga exhorts his audience to work on understanding their own biases and to combat resurgent racism using his concrete strategies. He addresses his own education on certain racial and gender topics to demonstrate the need for continual learning. Thoughtful questions and sidebar activities challenge audiences to examine how they consider various issues, their racial empathy, and how they might act differently to challenge racism in the future. Summaries of interviews with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and ages make a variety of experiences with racism, hopes for the US future, and feelings of outrage and loss palpable.

The book is intriguing as it shows how Irish and Italian immigrants (who were once considered non-white) were also the subject of racist attacks. It details the different paths that these communities took to assimilate into "that magical, mythical neighborhood of Whiteness." And Dibinga's consideration of contemporary racial biases among Asian and Latino communities is noteworthy, showing how these intersect with people's desires for all the perks of white privilege at the expense of Black scapegoats.

Brimming with historical and contemporary examples, *Lies about Black People* is an illuminating, persuasive overview of the ways racism harms Black Americans and poisons the country's culture and economic health.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (July / August 2023)

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