
Before even starting to think about writing a review of Diana Hayes' book *Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made*, the book itself, and the oppressed tradition of black Catholicism it describes, force me to think about my own 'shoes'. Indeed, as a white feminist Catholic who has grown up and has been educated in Europe,
who is, as part of a Eurocentrist, colonial culture, complicit in the oppression Hayes writes about, but too often unaware of it, I have learned a lot from this book.

_Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made_ is a tribute to black Catholics in the United States, from a womanist (defined as an African American female Christian theologian) perspective. At the same time, it is the very intimate story of Hayes' life as a black attorney who later turned to Catholic theology and became a lay, celibate minister. Her aim with writing this book is to raise the awareness among Catholics of the black population that is, and always has been, part of their community. Convinced of their enriching presence within the Roman Catholic Church, she fights against the invisibility and the oppression of black Catholics in the American context. Interestingly, and I think this is the greatest merit of the book, Hayes turns to history, more than to critical theory, to fight against the exclusion of black people within Catholicism in the US. So instead of, or rather next to, critically describing the injustice of life on the margins, she puts black Catholicism right in the center by "claiming the Roman Catholic Church as black and African long before the existence of the English, Irish, Polish, Germans, or Italians as Catholic and catholic" (p. 2). African Americans have to "reclaim" their land, in which they are no longer sojourners or strangers, as well as their Church (p. 32), because they have always been a vital part of it. This is a truly empowering move, that provides the basis for the development of a black Catholic theology in the third and fourth part of the book. Although Hayes uses the word 'center' to indicate the rightful place of black Catholics within the Church, by no means does she wish to maintain the dualism between center and periphery. The book is focused on black Catholicism in the United States, but is eventually meant as a universal call for liberation. Indeed, Hayes often explicitly transcends her own context of black Catholicism to refer to the task of all Catholics beyond the categorizing constructions of race, gender, etc. Her attempt at moving beyond the particularities becomes somewhat less clear when she compares white and black forms of Protestantism with white and black forms of Catholicism in the third chapter, and when she describes the complexity and multi-layeredness of the oppression black Catholics undergo, but her references to a common 'Catholic' history and the message of Christ balance this. Hayes convincingly shows how liberation 'from within' works, how black Catholics can reclaim their place in the Church by referring to their history. The inspiration for this particular path of liberation also comes from within, namely from the hope, courage and strength she has experienced in her 'mothers', the women before her, who survived against all odds. Indeed, the realization that they were not 'meant to live', is present throughout the course of the whole book. At some points, one wonders whether Hayes' emphasis on the 'strong black woman' is not too much of a stereotype. As the recently published book of pastoral theologian Chanequa Walker-Barnes, _Too Heavy a Yoke: Black Women and the Burden of Strength_ (Cascade Books, 2014) demonstrates, it can also be a burden. But again, Hayes' attention for the community as a supportive whole outweighs this possible shortcoming.

When looking more closely at the way this historical analysis is conducted and the black Catholic liberation theology is constructed, one must admit that the book suffers from its genealogy: this is a collection of (mostly) lectures and articles. As a consequence, the style is very preachy, and sometimes, paragraphs are literally repeated in different chapters. Hayes' description of the richness of
black Catholicism also becomes dispersed throughout the chapters, and is therefore not always very well elaborated.

*Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made* is divided into four parts. The first part describes the history of black people (with special attention to women) within the Catholic Church. It starts from the oppression of African Americans within the American context of slavery and racism, but then goes back in history to the rediscovery of the central place of black people within the early Church. From this awareness, Hayes pleads for a unity without uniformity in the Catholic community. Within the Church, she claims (referring to the gospel), there is 'plenty good room' for all of us. Our liturgy expresses our unity, however diverse and context related it may be. Again, she refers to the early Church: one often forgets that Christianity was Jewish for its first one hundred years, then Greek, Roman, African, etc. Black Catholics, in other words, need not feel the need to 'defend' their black heritage within the Church. The second part of the book deals with the topic of ministry within the black Catholic Church. Hayes wants to rediscover the original meaning of ministry as a task of service and compassion, rather than one of power and privilege (p. 79). The Black Catholic community with its history and actuality of oppression and exclusion, could help the Church with this rediscovery. The third part of Hayes' book turns to the 'outside world', dealing with the problematic 'privatization' of religion within society, and the problems of society itself concerning social and economic inequalities. From the belief that God is everywhere and in everything, black Catholic theology wishes to move beyond the divide between the secular and the religious. Being a Christian means turning towards the world. The fourth and last part of this book is centered around the notion of hope within a context of oppression.

Kristien Jutsaert