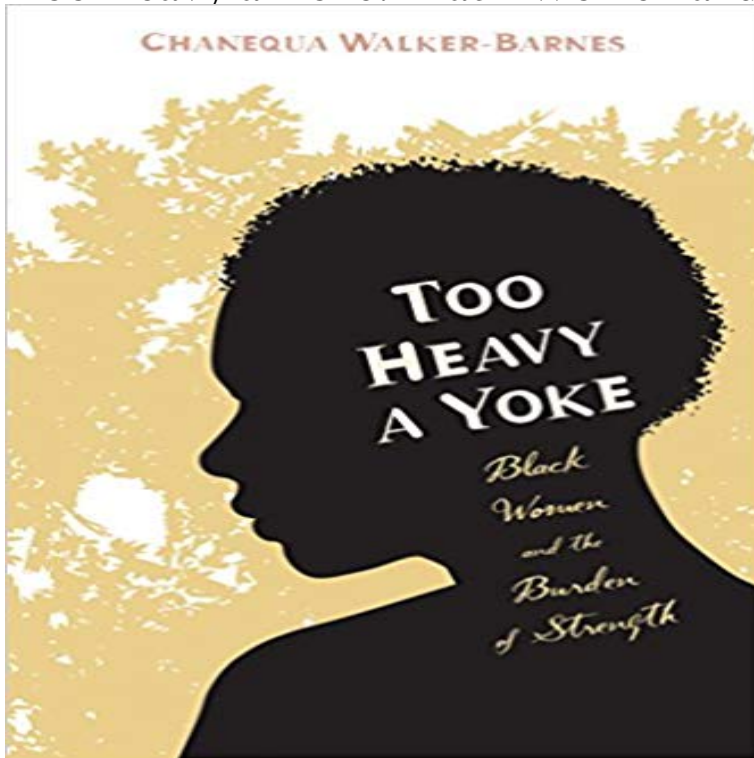


Too Heavy a Yoke: Black Women and the Burden of Strength



Black women are strong. At least that's what everyone says and how they are constantly depicted. But what, exactly, does this strength entail? And what price do Black women pay for it? In this book, the author, a psychologist and pastoral theologian, examines the burdensome yoke that the ideology of the Strong Black Woman places upon African American women. She demonstrates how the three core features of the ideology--emotional strength, caregiving, and independence--constrain the lives of African American women and predispose them to physical and emotional health problems, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and anxiety. She traces the historical, social, and theological influences that resulted in the evolution and maintenance of the Strong Black Woman, including the Christian church, R & B and hip-hop artists, and popular television and film. Drawing upon womanist pastoral theology and twelve-step philosophy, she calls upon pastoral caregivers to aid in the healing of African American women's identities and crafts a twelve-step program for Strong Black Women in recovery. *Too Heavy a Yoke* is a much-needed, thoughtful, and nuanced examination of the Strong Black Woman stereotype--a significant new contribution to multiple disciplines of pastoral care and counseling, psychology, sociology, African American and womanist-feminist studies, and constructive theology. Walker Barnes draws on both womanist and Trinitarian theologies to examine how the church can play a part in healing and liberating black women from the burden of strength. Meticulously researched and beautifully written, this book belongs on the shelf of every minister and pastoral counselor, and indeed every woman who knows in her soul the burdens of being a StrongBlackWoman. --Pamela Cooper-White, Ben G. and Nancye Clapp

Gautier Professor of Pastoral Theology, Care, and Counseling, Columbia Theological Seminary Well done! This book is a much-needed gift to the field of pastoral theology. It is a well nuanced and explicated research volume and a practical guide for caregivers, pastors, those who love women struggling with the ideology of the StrongBlackWoman, as well as those in recovery. --Marsha Foster Boyd, President Emerita, Ecumenical Theological Seminary A prayerful, prophetic, poetic, pastoral, powerful womanist analysis of the StrongBlackWoman, from an interdisciplinary, experiential perspective names the context, content, complexities, and pathology of many Black womens embodied archetypal, systemic oppression and posits hopeful options for a paradigmatic shift of recovery. Woven with artistry and passion, Too Heavy a Yoke is a must-read for clergy, therapists, caregivers, and any persons or groups committed to the liberation of black women, ultimately the liberation of all society. --Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, Professor of Religion, Shaw University Divinity School Chanequa Walker-Barnes is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia. She is a licensed psychologist and a candidate for ordination in the United Methodist Church. Her articles have been published in a wide range of scholarly journals, including Journal of Pastoral Theology, Child Development, and American Journal of Community Psychology.

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