

also politics. It was then a very short step for these right wingers to the disavow all legacy media as fake news and to establish an alternate reality in which they could claim a legitimate election had been stolen.

Pearce's work is a masterpiece of analysis and assessment of how play can easily be fused, mixed, and placed in the blender of both politics and culture to generate unexpected outcomes that leave everyone confused—if not angry. Playframes, as she demonstrates, are excellent tools for unpacking these cultural developments. I recommend this work, primarily for graduate students because it is so dense. But, game developers, researchers, and the general public would benefit from taking her work seriously, given our fraught political times.

—Talmadge Wright, *Loyola University, Chicago, IL*

Adventures in the Play-Ritual Continuum

Audun Kjus, Jakob Löfgren, Cliona O'Carroll, Simon Poole, and Ida Tolgensbakk, eds.

Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2025. List of figures, images, index, list of contributors. 236 pp. \$26.95 paper. ISBN: 9781646426744

Although part of a book series on Ritual, Festival, and Celebration, this volume (more so than previous volumes) connects these phenomena—usually defined by their emphasis on social practice—to play. It challenges the generic differentiation of play from ritual by pointing out

their structural similarities—and frequent integration in performance. After considering scholarship that addresses the problems the boundaries (or even classificatory opposition) between play and ritual have presented to interpretations relying on empirical observation, the editors argue the two constitute a continuum that needs examining in any analysis of the production of meaning.

For this reason, I might have called the book “questions of” rather than “adventures in” the play-ritual continuum. After digging into its pages, I sense a kind of adventurism regarding knotty examples from contemporary culture that appear novel or “discoverable” and that require forays into barely charted theoretical territory. On the play side, one finds no conventional studies of ludic children's games and, on the ritual side, no essays on serious religious or sacred rites. One reads here of inventive ash scatterings in the Swedish Archipelago after the death of a loved one, “profanation of the sacred” in Scottish hen parties prior to a wedding, performative dilemmas in public antiracist protests, rationales of ethnic food play during purportedly religious observances of Christmas, and the hybridization of play and ritual in high-stakes computer game contests and large-scale sports events. The international spread of the examples suggests that the attitudes toward play and ritual are not so much national concerns as they are broader social and psychological human issues. Given the absence of Asian, South American, and African examples, the editors concentrate their generalizations to the individualistic, secularized tendencies of “Western” (presumably European and North American) industrialized countries.

The theoretical territory the authors

explore in the volume concerns the concept of play and social framing associated with the work of twentieth-century anthropologists Gregory Bateson and Don Handelman, sociologist Erving Goffman, and psychological folklorists Brian Sutton-Smith and Jay Mechling. Lead editor Audun Kjus offers a cogent review of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque (spawning ideas of the "ritualesque" and "folkloresque") and of historian Johan Huizinga's definition of play as a "magic circle" applied to the continuum. The other editors join Kjus in a concluding essay to point to the future theoretical pathways conjured in the case studies for play and ritual. They raise other questions about the intersection of creativity and tradition and the problem of generic boundaries for behavioral rather than textual categories. The viewpoints especially draw out modern conditions for individuals needing to navigate situations in which frames are imagined, organized, and realized. In other words, prior assumptions of what constitutes play as unproductive activity and ritual as a serious outcome crumble in the twenty-first century with the blurring of communicative boundaries (such as the prior historiographical association of play with children's games and ritual with religion).

Contributors to the volume often struggle to find the most appropriate term for what they seem to be observing in situ. One reads of "custom," "ceremony," "sport," and "contest," all of which contain characteristics of play and ritual, as they have been previously defined. But having made a major contribution by showing the "many paradoxes of the play-ritual continuum," this volume lays down a gauntlet

to scholars who identify separately with play or ritual studies to reframe their work in integrative ways with attention to the problematics of "intensified engagements" that arise and depart from everyday life. Breaking away from the constraints, or imaginaries, of genre, the result might very well be a different continuum altogether that concentrates on cognition rather than category. For all that, the editors and contributors deserve credit for opening new ground worthy of further adventure—and thought.

—Simon J. Bronner, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI*

Doing Theological Double Dutch: A Womanist Pedagogy of Play

Lakisha R. Lockhart-Rusch

Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2025. Contents, foreword, introduction, conclusion, bibliography, and index. 198 pp. \$22.99 paper. ISBN: 9780802883735

Doing Theological Double Dutch: A Womanist Pedagogy of Play is a foundational work that employs the metaphor of double Dutch to critique the mind-body dualism in theological education and to foreground the epistemological significance of the body. Advocating for learning that embraces wholeness and flourishing, Lockhart-Rusch calls for the deconstruction of oppressive epistemologies and the recentering of marginalized voices, particularly those of Black women. Arguing that a womanist pedagogy of play affirms