

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

the personhood, experience, and culture of Black women, Lockhart-Rusch presents the theological classroom as a potential site of liberation and transformation. Structured around the four tenets of womanism, reframed as embracing self, engaging community and culture, embodying God's love, and enkindling the world, the book presents a four-part framework that bridges theory and practice, concluding each section with practical examples of womanish play for use in theological classrooms.

In part 1, aptly titled "Two Truths and a Lie: A Rope History," Lockhart-Rusch critiques the dominant epistemologies that have historically marginalized Black women in theological education. Drawing on womanist ethicist Emilie Townes's concept of the fantastic hegemonic imagination, Lockhart-Rusch names the first truth as a dominant worldview shaped by white, cisgender, heteronormative, male Christians, a tightrope that demands conformity to a rhythm indifferent to the embodied realities of those outside the dominant group. To counter this, she argues for the introduction of a second rope, the womanist rope, which centers the voices and experiences of Black women and opens the theological classroom to broader, more equitable participation. The second truth highlights theological education's fragmentation and linguistic exclusion, because the lie is the claim that true Christianity condones the oppression of marginalized people. Rejecting this lie, Lockhart-Rusch calls for a recentring of Black women's stories and concludes part 1 by offering four womanish modes of play as pedagogical tools for identity formation and self-reclamation in the classroom.

In part 2, titled "Mother May I? The Jumpers and Turners," Lockhart-Rusch defines play as a form of cultural expression central to making meaning, distinguishing it from traditional models. Drawing on theologian Kathryn Tanner's postmodern definition of culture, Lockhart-Rusch emphasizes that her conception of play allows individuals to discern how cultural groups borrow and repurpose elements, cultivating flexibility and adaptability across diverse contexts. Although Lockhart-Rusch admits that play may not solve all the challenges Black women face, she presents it as a powerful, embodied tool for reclamation. Womanish play, which encourages participants to consider what is happening in and to the body, can help Black women reclaim their bodies from society's oppressive claims of ownership. Through womanish modes of play, Lockhart-Rusch argues, such as shared meals, hand games, and card playing, educators can foster engagement with culture and community and cultivate spaces of God-given creativity and collaborative imagination in the classroom.

In part 3, "Weaving: Spinning the Fibers," Lockhart-Rusch further expands her conception of play as an embodied aesthetic experience. Engaging scholars such as Jerry Berryman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and D. W. Winnicott, she critiques the dominant conceptions of play that privilege cognition over embodiment. In contrast, her framework affirms the equal partnership of mind and body as essential to knowing, being, communicating, and making meaning, offering a more robust and inclusive vision of play. Challenging the academy's historical prioritization of the mind over the body, Lockhart-Rusch

draws on Marilyn Patterson's concept of the "bodymind" to propose a more integrated paradigm that recognizes both agency and liberation. By framing play as an embodied aesthetic experience that engages the senses, she suggests, it opens transformative possibilities for individuals and communities, echoing the rhythmic and communal act of double Dutch. Through a womanist theological anthropology, Lockhart-Rusch underscores how play can aid Black women in reclaiming their identities as image bearers of God. Furthermore, womanish modes of play—such as affirmations and the creation of vision boards—that center embodied expressions of God's love encourage participants to regard their bodies as sacred, fostering a deeper awareness of the divine both within themselves and in others.

In part 4, "Twenty Questions: Are We Doing Double Dutch Yet?," Lockhart-Rusch concludes her work by introducing the concept of a clearing space as essential to womanish play. Distinct from safe spaces or brave spaces, clearing spaces invite participants to show up authentically and unapologetically, engaging in laughter, dance, lament, and imaginative possibility. Drawing on the pedagogical legacies of Olivia Pearl Stokes, Anne Streaty Wimberly, bell hooks, and Katie Geneva Cannon, Lockhart-Rusch argues for the necessity of a womanist pedagogy of play as vital to educating in faith. Such spaces foster cognitive and affective growth and well-being and facilitate learning across difference. She concludes with four examples of womanish play, framed as enkindling the world, which call participants to collectively resist injustice and promote communal flourishing.

Doing Theological Double Dutch is a significant contribution that deserves the attention of educators, theologians, play scientists and experts, and scholars in many disciplines. Lockhart-Rusch masterfully weaves together play theory, theology, and womanist thought to offer a compelling model that not only bridges theory and practice but also includes accessible examples easily adaptable for the classroom. Although further research is warranted, her work offers a pivotal foundation for a pedagogy of play that honors culture, embodiment, and the equal partnership of mind and body. In a field where theological institutions have long marginalized Black women and other minority groups, this book offers a liberating pedagogical vision, one that attends to the body, affirms the sacred worth of all of God's children, and reimagines the theological classroom as a clearing space for creative and imaginative play capable of cultivating healing, inclusion, and transformative community.

—Deja Wilson, *Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ*

I'm Not Getting Them Ready for Kindergarten: Breaking Tradition in Early Childhood Education

Kristen Day

New York: Routledge, 2024. Contents, meet the author, introduction. 168 pp. \$29.99 paper. ISBN: 9781032754147

In I'm Not Getting Them Ready for Kindergarten: Breaking Tradition in Early Child-