

University of Redlands
InSPIRe @ Redlands

Our House Articles, Posters, and Presentations


Our House

2003

Cultural Context and the Definition of Religion: Seeing with Confucian Eyes

James V. Spickard
University of Redlands

Follow this and additional works at: https://inspire.redlands.edu/oh_articles

 Part of the [Comparative Philosophy Commons](#), [East Asian Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Religion Commons](#), [Sociology of Religion Commons](#), and the [Theory, Knowledge and Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Spickard, James V., "Cultural Context and the Definition of Religion: Seeing with Confucian Eyes" (2003). *Our House Articles, Posters, and Presentations*. 183.
https://inspire.redlands.edu/oh_articles/183

This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code).
This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Our House at InSPIRe @ Redlands. It has been accepted for inclusion in Our House Articles, Posters, and Presentations by an authorized administrator of InSPIRe @ Redlands. For more information, please contact inspire@redlands.edu.

Cultural Context and the Definition of Religion: Seeing with Confucian Eyes

James V. Spickard*

REVISED 10 AUGUST, 2001

* James V. Spickard is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Redlands, Redlands, California 92373, and a Research Consulting Professor at the Fielding Graduate Institute, Santa Barbara, California 93105

Cultural Context and the Definition of Religion: Seeing with Confucian Eyes

by

James V. Spickard

Much has been written in recent years of “the clash of civilizations.” Samuel Huntington’s seminal article (later book: 1993; 1996) of that name refocused political and scholarly attention on key cultural differences between the West and “the rest” – differences in outlook and philosophy that provide fundamentally different grasps of the world. Earlier, Edward Said (1978; 1985) had criticized Western scholars’ Orientalist image of “the rest”, noting that Western pretensions to comprehend “the Other” not only bifurcate a rather complex reality but are written from a hegemonic point of view. Yet, the rest of the world is not the West, and the conceptual categories developed in Euro-America for understanding social processes do not always translate well to other circumstances.

This is especially true of “religion.” Sociology’s famous fights about what is and what is not “religious” presuppose the existence of an object – religion – that exists independently of human investigation: the tree in the forest that makes a sound whether or not anyone is there to hear it. There has been considerable scholarly work done on the intellectual construction of this concept, most famously by Wilfred C. Smith (1964) but also by his successors (see McCutcheon, 1997). There has been less work done on its social construction, by which I mean the ways in which Western social patterns have constructed (and constricted) religion as an intellectual artifact. The present essay seeks to explore this social construction by contrasting Western and Confucian religious practices, showing (in brief outline) how these practices have shaped definitions. By putting practices before

definition, we open the social study of religion to a broader group of phenomena than would otherwise be the case. We also – ideally – learn something about our own cultural blinders and how they have shaped what we think it appropriate to investigate. Put otherwise: each set of practices shapes a sociology of religion that places different phenomena at its core.

Whether or not “religion” is becoming a universal category in a time of social globalization (Lechner, *this volume*; Beyer, *this volume*), any premature attempt to force such categorization threatens to raise the hegemonic forces that Said opposed. *Contra* Huntington, the clash of civilizations does not necessarily result in chaos and confusion. Rightly understood, it promises to open us to a wider world.

Western Religion

At least since the Council of Nicaea (325 CE), Christianity has cared about both orthodox belief and church governance. The controversies between the *homoousians* and the *homoiousians*, which at times amounted to riots over a diphthong, set the pattern for later disputes. Once established by the Empire, church officials adjudicated conflicts over heresies from monophysitism to pelagianism and beyond, at the same time that they suppressed splinter groups. Excommunication and anathema enforced creedal and organizational orthodoxy – though the Roman Church’s use of monastic orders as a way of embracing organizational diversity is well-known, as are the limits that such diversity allowed. As McGuire (1998) showed, post-Tridentine Catholicism was especially severe in limiting popular religious practices, but no more so than was the Protestantism of the same period. For the leaders of both, orthodox belief and good church order went hand in hand.

Contemporary sociological definitions of religion reflect these practices. Substantive definitions treat religion as distinguished primarily by belief and by group membership. Thus one recent definitional effort claims that

religion consists of very general explanations of existence, including the terms of exchange with a god or gods

and that

religious organizations are social enterprises whose primary purpose is to create, maintain, and supply religion to some set of individuals and to support and supervise their exchanges with a god or gods. (Stark & Finke, 2000, pp. 278, 279)

These authors proceed to limit religious commitment to activities oriented toward such organizations, both objective behavior and subjective belief. They measure organizational strength by church attendance, contributions, and exclusivity, and they measure belief by the agreement with doctrines on national questionnaires. Not that such a substantivist approach is necessarily wrong or useless. It is merely culturally dependent on 1700 years of Christian history, so ingrained as to be invisible.

Functional definitions are broader, but still revolve around “meaning and belonging”, to use a prominent textbook’s formulation (McGuire, 1997a). As strategies, they draw us beyond our accustomed churches, to search for things that act like the religions that we ordinarily identify. Clifford Geertz’s (1966, p. 4) famous identification of religion as “a system of symbols ... formulating conceptions of a general order of existence” does indeed move us beyond Christian supernaturalism. Yet it, like most of his work, is shot through with a Tillichian sensibility that sees religion as the individual’s subjective connection to the

Ground of Being. Andrew Greeley (1989) argued that Catholics have a more social, analogical imagination, but even a more socialized version of Geertzian functionalism would not drop the apple far from the Christian tree. It still directs the investigator toward cognitive systems, particularly those that try to encompass entire lives.

Other functionalist approaches direct us toward organizations that act like churches: either by forming communities of “saints” in a hostile world (e.g.: Trotskyites) or by knitting together the wider social order (e.g.: civil religion). These, too, follow Christian models: in these cases sectarian and churchly.

My point is not that either kind of definition is useless. The problem is that both definitional strategies direct us toward phenomena that our civilization’s Christian heritage has trained us to see as the core of religion. Things that we can identify as “beliefs” and “churches” exist in all -- or nearly all -- civilizations, so we think that we can identify our subject matter in them. But have we missed the boat? Do our very definitions of religion keep us from seeing indigenous religiosity in other modes? Only a closer look at a different tradition can suggest an answer for these questions.

Chinese Confucianism

I have elsewhere argued that Chinese Confucianism¹ begins with a distinctive notion of the self, which generates a different vision of the social than is found in the modern West (Spickard, 1998; 2000). Its chief insight is that individuals do not exist apart from their social relationships; instead those relationships shape them, creating both their identities and their behaviors. Unlike Western views, in which preexisting individuals play social roles, for Confucians one is one’s roles (Rosemont, 1991, p. 73). One’s web of relationships creates a self, which changes as one’s relationships grow and fade. As my father’s son, I have different

responsibilities in his old age than I had previously; this changes me, as does my changing relationship with my own son as he approaches adulthood. Western social thought recognizes this, but does not make it primary; Confucianism does.

Central to this relational self is the notion of *li*, or ritual propriety. For classical Confucians, each role-relationship is governed by ritual, which has two facets. On the one side, ritualized relationships maintain social harmony and order, fostering right conduct and mutual respect. Following the rules produces a harmonious society, which benefits all. On the other side, this harmony seeps into each individual, producing *te*, or virtue. For Confucians, virtue is not found on one's own, but is produced when people act harmoniously together. The virtuous person is one whose relationships are ordered rightly; rightly ordered relationships produce a rightly ordered self. Thus, the everyday rituals by which people show respect for each other result in both social and personal happiness. As Confucius put it, a man of *jen* (benevolence, humanity), "wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others" (Analects VI, 30). The collective practice of *li* creates an interconnected social world that manifests *te*: a good society and good people go hand in hand.

The two elements of early Confucianism that look the most like religion to Westerners – “ancestor worship” and the Mandate of Heaven – exhibit this same relationality. Despite the translation, classic Confucianists did not exactly “worship” their ancestors. Family shrines were not places at which to charm supernatural spirits, but altars to memory: reminders that the individual was merely the present link in a family chain that stretched from the past into the future. “The ancestors” collectively located one both socially and temporally. Being of “reputable ancestry” both determined one's character and obligated one to carry on the family honor.² It started the one on the path to virtue (*te*) – a virtue that one

tried to maintain for one’s family to come. One’s relationship with the ancestors was not an exchange, but a personal and social testimony. The family altar recalled to one one’s place in the world.

The Mandate of Heaven (*t’ien-ming*) was similarly relational, though on a political level. From the earliest dynasties, the authority of China’s rulers depended on their relationships with the *min*, their laboring but non-slave subjects. The ruler was supposed to care for the *min*; as long as he did so, *t’ien-ming* would remain with his family. The best route was to maintain *te*, not because the common people had any right to it but because Heaven smiled on the virtuous ruler. “*T’ien-ming* is not the will of God but the ability to hold onto rule by following the advice of one’s ancestors” (Cheng, 1979, p. 4). As one of the ancient texts put it, “Heaven sees through the seeing of people, Heaven hears through the hearing of people.”³ The ruler actualized *te* by practicing *li* – the rules of ritual propriety that governed people’s roles. *I* (righteousness) is not the result of adherence to a set of rules but of the ruler’s exercise of *te* through *li*; it is a substantive, not a procedural outcome – a further manifestation of the Chinese tendency to emphasize ordered relationships over abstract principles.

Just as the Mandate of Heaven is meaningless outside the communal context, so “ancestor worship” is meaningless outside the family lineage. Neither makes any sense for isolated individuals. This contrasts with Christianity, for no Christian would say that God is meaningless outside of the community of believers. But Confucianism focuses on right action and on the maintenance of relationships, which simultaneously shape the self toward virtue. Ideally, these relationships stretch from Heaven to earth, tying all together in a harmonious whole. Protestant Christianity, on the contrary, posits a preexisting self for whom salvation is

individual and is largely brought about by right belief. Though Catholic Christianity is more communal (Greeley, 1990), recent Vatican pronouncements remind us that salvation comes only “through Christ” (*Dominus Iesus*, 2000). Belief and extra-familial organizations – the heart of Western religion – scarcely appear on the Confucian stage.

One can, of course, end matters here by denying that classical Confucianism is a religion, because of its relative lack of the beliefs and church organizations that typify religion in the Western mold. That is a common move, and one that Chinese authorities have often taken (see Beyer, *this volume*).⁴ However, if we take seriously Herbrechtsmeier’s (*this volume*) analysis of “religion’s” relationship with empire and Beyer’s (1999) account of the Chinese appropriation of zongjiao (“group-teaching”), we can refuse to be bound by such political machinations. We can ask ourselves what the social study of religion would look like if it started from the standpoint of Confucian rather than Western patterns. What kind of sociology might emerge from Confucian reflections on religion in social life? How might that sociology complement the sociology of religion as it is currently practiced?

A Confucian Sociology of Religion

We can begin with the fact that in Confucian eyes, *li* and *te* are not just – or even mainly – the results of church religion. The Chinese did not originally have a term corresponding to Western “religion” and so invented the neologism *zongjiao* when their 19th century interaction with the West required them to label such phenomena. Though this term is most often applied to Buddhist, Taoist, and Christian cult activities, these are not the primary loci of ritual relatedness. *Li* and *te* infuse both private and public life: not just family relations, but all of China’s myriad hierarchies depend on them. By taking the good of the less powerful into account, the more powerful, whether parents, bosses, or rulers, maintain a society grounded in

an ethic of unequal interconnectedness. And that ethic is a virtue-ethic (MacIntyre, 1984), one that links individual right action to the workings of the universe (*t'ien-ming*).

Chinese intellectuals often refer to their civilization as “spiritual,” contrasting it with what they perceive as Western materialism. Though this term is rather vague, their use of it recalls the recent trend in American popular culture of distinguishing between “religion” and “spirituality”: the I’m-not-religious-but-I-am-a-very-spiritual-person phenomenon described by McGuire (1997b) and others. From the Confucian perspective, this cannot be reduced to “the new voluntarism” (Roof, 1993) nor to “Sheilatism” (Bellah et al., 1985), for these are too individualistic. Western sociologists have overlooked the degree to which “spirituality” can be conceived as beginning with precisely the personal ethical relatedness that the Chinese capture with *li* and *te*. “I am a spiritual person” is usually more than a statement about one’s individuality, and it certainly does not just mean that one belongs to a spiritual group nor that one believes in specific higher powers. Instead, it (often) images a generalized virtue nested in a global interconnectedness reaching beyond secular life. A Confucian sociology of religion would highlight precisely this sense of connection, seeking its social correlates, just as Western sociologies seek the social correlates of various beliefs and forms of church life. But for Confucianists, such spirituality would not be “new”. It would instead be one of the highest ideals of human functioning.

A similar logic stands behind the Confucian notion of ritual. Western sociologists acknowledge ritual’s role in religion, but they have typically focused on ritual symbols and texts, which are mined for their meaning (Douglas, 1966; Turner, 1967; 1969; cf Spickard, 1991). For Confucians, *li* creates meaning, but it does so by creating social relationships, not just ideas. Rituals are like manners, because of their relationality, and like ethics, because of

their effect on character. Unlike the Western reading of these concepts, though, for Confucians rituals are neither just rules nor are they “empty”. Instead, ritual piety (*li*) connects individuals to each other as part of a long chain connecting Heaven and Earth. It also creates virtuous individuals who take their place in that chain precisely because it helps them realize their interconnectedness. Most of these “individuals” are human; others are semi-divine and often collective (“the ancestors”); still others are the “gods” who meddle little in human affairs. Confucians do not focus much on the latter, so limiting “religion” to humans’ relations to gods masks the larger picture. These gods are continuous with human society, and it is the pattern of that society makes the gods “religious” rather than the other way around.

What does this mean in practice for sociologists of religion? Where – beyond the generalities of *li* and *te* – do we look for the Confucian forms of the religious life? The key, I think, is to find the situations in which people ground their actions in relationships that extend beyond the personal, even beyond human society. One such locus, in traditional Chinese society, was family life, with its norms of group-oriented conduct and its home altars that enshrined a family’s collective memories. As the title of Danièle Hervieu-Léger’s Religion as a Chain of Memory (2000) reminds us, Western religions also weave a collective connection with the past. Can sociologists of religion move from studying “the memorial aspect of religions” to studying “the religious aspects of memory”? Doing so would be consonant with the Confucian view.

Besides families, traditional Chinese society had its assorted healers, geomancers, and so on, all of whom located their work in the continuum between Heaven and Earth, yet none of whom established public cults or churches in the Western mode. Like contemporary

“spiritual healers” (McGuire, 1988), these practitioners helped clients align their private goals with the cosmos. Neither cultic nor dogmatic, they did not so much broker “exchanges” with the “gods” (Stark & Finke, 2000) as they steered clients through a sea of relationships that encompassed both human and supra-human forces. A Confucian sociology would see this as deeper than supernatural exchange-relations, if only because of its impact on personal character. It would also see it as more than just quasi-religious, which is the closest that Western sociologists of religion have come to conceptualize such matters (Greil & Robbins, 1994).

At a third level stands church life, which is generally well encompassed by the Western focus on believing and belonging. A Confucian view would neither use group membership as a measurement of religious “strength” nor confuse traditional supernatural beliefs with religious intensity. Instead, it would emphasize the development of character. Strong churches would be those that create honest, moderate people. These people would realize their interconnections with and responsibilities toward others; they would embody benevolence (*jen*). Such character would not just be individual, but would have a collective component, in keeping with Confucius’ previously quoted aphorism. The *jen* of one would resonate with the *jen* of all, spreading ripples of right relationship without drawing undue attention to itself. As Confucius put it, “When those who are in high stations perform well all their duties to their relations, the people are aroused to virtue” (Analects VIII, 2).

“Religion”, Colonization, and the Not-Said

Several scholars have recently argued that the term “religion” is part of a Western project, designed for – among other things – the mental colonization of the non-Western world (Chidester, 1996; Fitzgerald, 1997; see Beyer, *this volume*; see McCutcheon, *this volume*).

Whether or not this term was at one time a colonial imposition, it is no longer: it is now a key term in global society. Thus, though originally reified, “religion” has taken on a life of its own.

Yet, this debate arises, among other things, from a sense that the currently existing concept misses important parts of the religious picture, both in the West and elsewhere. There is a growing realization that scholarship has been ill served by identifying phenomena according to their traditional Western versions. Not only is there the equity issue: that current definitional practice is like identifying bird species by just their European varieties, then imposing those species on the rest of the planet. There is also the sense that Western religious reality has changed in late modernity, so that beliefs and organizations are no longer as central as they once were. Some of the most interesting new work in the sociology of religion explores this vein (Beckford, 1989; Davie, 2000; Hervieu-Léger, 2000). Current Western definitional strategies rule such phenomena out of court (e.g.: Stark and Finke 2000).

It is thus appropriate to ask what sociology has lost by taking Western religion as normative, or, more positively, what taking a wider view might gain. Given the interminable tangles that definitional strategies have brought us, I think it much more fruitful to start by analyzing practices. The concepts arising from various society’s practices, I contend, may well prove to be applicable far beyond their original bounds.

It is important, however, to highlight what I have not said.

First, I have not said that Chinese and Western views of religion are opposites, nor have I said that either is univocal. We cannot dichotomize civilizations, for, as Bernhard Faure (Faure, 1993, p. 274) observes, “cultures and traditions are multiple and contain in themselves

their own negation.” China has Legalists and Taoists as well as Confucians, just as the West has popular spiritualities long suppressed by ecclesiastical authorities.

Second, I have not said that either Western or Chinese views are more “authentic”, a claim that one periodically hears in anti-colonial circles. Indeed, I am not even sure what this might mean, for all civilizations are melanges and “authenticity” – a result of social contestation – is always a tentative accomplishment.

Third, I have not said that Western and Chinese views are incommensurable, nor that Confucian analogues cannot be found in the West. H. Richard Niebuhr (1963) puts forward a rather nice relational ethic, for example, which I have elsewhere likened to the Confucian (Spickard, 1998). James McClendon (1986) starts his systematic theology with ethics, just as ethics lie at the core of the Confucian system. Both of these scholars are Christian theologians, neither of whose work has shaken sociologists of religion from their definitional pedestals.

Definition is often a strategy to limit debate, and this has been its effect in the social study of religion, just as it was for Christianity in the 16th century (McGuire, 1998). True, this applies to political Confucianism (Chew, 1994) as much as it does to the standard Western identification of religion with church and supernaturalist doctrine. “Manufactured Confucianism” (Jensen, 1997) is every bit as apt a target for deconstruction as is the Western definitional project. Yet, this does not negate the importance of deconstructing the latter. “Religion”, Western-style, is not the only fit topic for sociologists of religion, nor is it even necessarily the most important one.

NOTES

¹ I recognize that one cannot summarize centuries of Confucian thought in a few hundred words – not the least because Confucianism appears in at least three major manifestations: the classical Confucianism of the Han period, the neo-Confucianism of the 11th century C.E., and the neo-neo-Confucianism of the late 19th century. Even less appropriate is the supposition that Confucianism is the only religio-philosophical tradition in China. Yet, there are core principles in the classical formulation that suggest a different basis for sociological reflection than do the religious traditions of the West. It is on these rough concepts that I base my remarks. See Ames (1991), de Bary (1988, 1998), Fairbank (1957), Fingarette (1972), Hall and Ames (1987, 1998), Rosemont (1991), and Tu (1979, 1984a, 1984b). Cf. Jensen (1997).

² Japanese Shinto is built on a similar relationalism. Matt Hamabata (1990) shows how ancestor reverence still guides the modern Japanese business family, unifying it against outside threat.

³ *Chou Shu, Tai-Shih*, quoted by Cheng (1979:4).

⁴ Beyer (1999) locates the contest over whether Confucianism is a religion in a debate over which Western concepts China should embrace to maintain its status as the Middle Kingdom in a multi-polar international state system. As Michael Ng-Quinn remarked in another context, this state system is an intervening variable in any cross-civilizational calculations (2001: 2).

REFERENCES

- Ames, R. T. (1988). Confucius and the ontology of meaning. In G. J. Larson & E. Deutsch (Eds.), Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy (pp. 265-279). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. (1991). Reflections on the Confucian self: A response to Fingarette. In M. I. Bockover (Ed.), Rules, Rituals, and Responsibility: Essays Dedicated to Herbert Fingarette (pp. 103-114). La Salle, IL: Open Court.
- Beckford, J.S. (1989). Religion and Advanced Industrial Society. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Beyer, P. (1999, December 14-17). The modern construction of religions in the context of world society: A contested category in light of modern Chinese history. *Chinesische Historiographie und Geshichtskultur in vergleichender Perspektive*. Wolfenbüttel, Germany.
- _____. (*this volume*). Defining religion in cross-national perspective: Identity and Difference in Official Conceptions. In Greil, A.L.
- Cheng, C.-y. (1979). Human rights in Chinese history and Chinese philosophy. Comparative Civilizations Review, 1, 1-19.
- Chew, M. (1994). Human rights in Singapore. Asian Survey, 34(11), 933-948.
- Chidester, D. (1996). Savage systems: Colonialism and comparative religion in southern Africa. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia.

- Davie, G. (2000). Religion in modern Britain: Changing sociological assumptions. Sociology, 34(1), 113-128.
- De Bary, W. T. (1988). Neoconfucianism as traditional and modern. In G. J. Larson & E. Deutsch (Eds.), Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy (pp. 294-310). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. (1998). Asian values and human rights: A Confucian communitarian perspective. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dominus Iesus (On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church). (September 5, 2000). Vatican: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.
- Douglas, M. (1966). Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo. New York: Praeger.
- Fairbank, J. K. (Ed.). (1957). Chinese Thought and Institutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Faure, B. (1993). Chan insights and oversights: An epistemological critique of the Chan tradition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Fingarette, H. (1972). Confucius: The Secular as Sacred. New York: Harper & Row.
- Fitzgerald, T. (1997). A critique of 'religion' as a cross-cultural category. Method and theory in the study of religion, 9, 91-110.
- Geertz, C. (1966). Religion as a cultural system. In M. Banton (Ed.), Anthropological approaches to the study of religion (pp. 1-46). London: Tavistock.
- Greeley, A.M. (1989, August). Protestant and Catholic: Is the analogical imagination extinct? American Sociological Review, 54, 485-502.

- _____. (1990). The Catholic Myth: The Behavior and Beliefs of American Catholics.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Greil, A. L., & Robbins, T. (Eds). (1994). Between sacred and secular: Research and theory
on quasi-religion. Religion and the social order. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Hall, D. L., & Ames, R. T. (1987). Thinking Through Confucius. Albany: State University of
New York Press.
- _____. (1998). Thinking from the Han: Self, truth, and transcendence in Chinese and
Western culture. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hamabata, M. M. (1990). Crested Kimono: Power and Love in the Japanese Business Family.
Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Herbrechtsmeier, W. (*this volume*). The burden of the axial age: Transcendentalism in
religion as a function of empire. In Greil, A. L.
- Hervieu-Léger, D. (2000). Religion as a chain of memory (S. Lee, Trans.). New Brunswick,
NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Huntington, S. P. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? Foreign Affairs, 72(3), 22-49.
- _____. (1996). The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York:
Simon & Schuster.
- Jensen, L. M. (1997). Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese traditions and universal
civilization. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Lechner, F. J. (*this volume*). Defining religion: A pluralistic approach for the global age.
Greil, A. L.
- MacIntyre, A. (1984). After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory (2nd edition). Notre Dame, IN:
University of Notre Dame Press.

- McClendon, J. W., Jr. (1986). Systematic Theology -- Volume 1: Ethics. Nashville: Abingdon.
- McCutcheon, R. T. (1997). Manufacturing religion: The discourse on sui generis religion and the politics of nostalgia. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____. (*this volume*). The category “religion” and the politics of tolerance. Greil, A. L. ...
- McGuire, M. B. (1988). Ritual healing in suburban America. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- _____. (1997a). Religion: The social context (4th edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- _____. (1997b). Mapping contemporary American spirituality: A sociological perspective. Christian Spirituality Bulletin: Journal of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality, 5(1), 1-8.
- _____. (1998, June). The people's religion: A sociological perspective on late medieval and modern non-official religiosity. Public lecture. University of Aarhus, Denmark.
- Ng-Quinn, M. (2001, March 5). Comparative political theories and the clash of American and Chinese civilizations. University of Redlands Asian Studies Colloquium. Redlands.
- Niebuhr, H. R. (1963). The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy. New York: Harper & Row.
- Roof, W. C. (1993, June). Religion and narrative (the 1992 Presidential Address to the Religious Research Association). Review of Religious Research, 34(4), 297-310.
- Rosemont, H., Jr. (1991). A Chinese Mirror: Moral Reflections on Political Economy and Society. La Salle, IL: Open Court.
- Said, E. W. (1978). Orientalism. New York: Pantheon Books.

- _____. (1985). Orientalism reconsidered. In F. Barker, P. Hulme, M. Iversen & D. Loxley (Eds.), Europe and its Others, Vol I. (pp. 14-27). Colchester: University of Essex.
- Smith, W. C. (1964). The meaning and end of religion: A new approach to the religious traditions of mankind. New York: Mentor.
- Spickard, J. V. (1991). Experiencing religious rituals: A Schutzian analysis of Navajo ceremonies. Sociological Analysis, 52(2), 191-204.
- _____. (1998). Ethnocentrism, social theory, and non-Western sociologies of religion. International Sociology, 13(2), 173-194.
- _____. (2000). Fashioning a post-colonial sociology of religion. Tidsskrift for Kirke, Religion og Samfunn, 2000(2), 113-127.
- Stark, R., & Finke, R. (2000). Acts of faith: Explaining the human side of religion. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tu Wei-ming. (1979). Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought. Berkeley: Berkeley Asian Humanities Press.
- _____. (1984a). Core values in Confucian thought. In Tu Wei-ming (Ed.), Confucian Ethics Today: The Singapore Challenge (pp. 2-15). Singapore: Federal Publications.
- _____. (1984b). The modern significance of Confucian ethics. In Tu Wei-ming (Ed.), Confucian Ethics Today: The Singapore Challenge (pp. 100-129). Singapore: Federal Publications.
- Turner, V. W. (1967). The Forest of Symbols. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- _____. (1969). The Ritual Process. Chicago: Aldine.