

The religious educator as cultural spec-actor: Researching self in intercultural pedagogy

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Précis

This paper seeks to explore notions regarding the conceptualization of culture in the field of Christian religious education. These conceptualizations are central to understanding the social nature of faith communities and the role of religious educators as they respond to this nature. I propose that the faith community is *intercultural* in that people with distinct cultural perspectives come together to forge a shared religious identity. Consequently, the vocation of the religious educator is presented as a call to be a *spec-actor*, a practitioner who constantly assesses his/her own cultural orientations in relation to those of the learners. I will conclude the paper with some suggestions on how to develop a *contrastive pedagogy* that takes into account both the intercultural dynamics of the Christian educational experience and the vocation of the intercultural religious educator.

Culture as a nuclear concept of religious education

Every now and then a concept emerges within scholarly discourse that stirs up the academic *imaginary* within the interdisciplinary praxis. To validate this statement, the latter sentence suffices: discourse, imaginary, and praxis are among those concepts that, lacking semantic precision, allow diverse usage across disciplines. For the methodical scholar, these concepts allow enough flexibility to incorporate a constructivist approach to inquiry, where the conceptual framework of research develops as research evolves. For the apologetic scholar, trying to build a conceptual framework around already defined research outcomes, the imprecise nature of the concepts offer a way out of theoretical concreteness.

Much of the literature today has seen both uses in relation to the concept of *culture*. While the word *culture* is not a new fad within academic vogue, it has been rejuvenated as cultural studies, cultural criticism, cultural history and even “cultural wars” gain prominence in academic, public, and religious life. A review of literature in which the subject of culture is addressed would demonstrate how the concept has been interpreted in vastly different ways to refer to distinct and dissimilar phenomena, even within a singular discipline.¹ The very polysemy of the concept has allowed researchers to address the issue of culture without being determined by the contentious currents of anthropological research and social theory.² In religious education, and especially in research dealing with multiculturalism, the concept of culture has been central in framing theoretical claims while keeping its semantic referents more or less elusive. In keeping with the judgement on secular multicultural education made by F. Javier García Castaño, I will maintain that the concept of *culture* has not played a central role in the construction of religious education theory and practice.³ Moreover, when the concept of culture is used in religious education research its treatment remains considerably separated from anthropological and ethno-social analysis which accounts for a narrow usage of an otherwise complex and dynamic concept.

Before engaging any discussion about the place of *culture* in religious education theory and practice a delimitation of the concept is required. To be sure, within Christian theological discourse the concept of *culture* has had three major connotations.⁴ The first connotation can be called *synchronic*, since it refers to culture as a structured system of epistemological trends and social practices which are shared by humans *in time* regardless of their diverse geographical, social and “representational” locations.⁵ In this case “Culture” is the overarching social and material conventions of an era that influence human groups directly or indirectly in the way they engage subjective formation and objective reality. This is the concept of “Culture” which today is defined by totalizing themes like information technology, economic globalization, neocolonial politics, environmental consciousness, modernity crisis, and post-secularism among other themes. This use of the term “Culture,” always in the singular, is embraced by social ethicists who in a Niebuhrian fashion refer to *culture* as an encompassing reality, the given-world that confronts the individual as an ethical dilemma. It is the same “Culture” that philosophical phenomenologists, after Edmund Husserl, will identify as “life-world” a universally shared life of meaning and experience.⁶

Another connotation of *culture* can be called *diachronic*, since it refers to human collectivities which have developed a shared sense of identity out of historical processes of self definition, social assignation, and resilience *over time*. In this sense *culture* is always used in the plural to refer to racial, ethnic, gender, generational, class and other forms of diversity which “represent various societies successful experiments in living, which have been built

over time.⁷ This is the connotation of *culture* to which anthropologists and ethnographers turn for their hermeneutical task. What is interpreted within these cultures is the distinctiveness of behaviors, beliefs, values, norms, languages, symbols, practices and material products of collectivities which allow them to function as a coherent unit and govern the rhythms of daily life.

A third connotation of *culture* is closer to the historical origin of the term in Cicero's principle of *cultura animi*. While it follows an ancient philosophical tradition that, since Plato in the West and Confucius in the East, considered the rational world to be the possession of gifted individuals, the idea still has profound implications for the contemporary sociology of knowledge.⁸ Culture becomes the intellectual production of an educated sector of society which *pro mundi beneficio* becomes the sentinel of civilization. Those who by education and spiritual cultivation carry within themselves humanity's *civilité* will produce culture and, in turn, will participate in it. This hierarchal understanding of *culture* represented by the term "high culture" is contrasted with the elementary costumes and traditions of the largest sector of society which possesses either "no-culture" or what has been named a "popular culture." The elitist connotation of culture dominated the religious education efforts of the missionary enterprise both during the Christian(ized) conquest of America and the period of Americani(zed) imperialist expansionism.⁹ Both the rhetoric and practice of clergy and educators posited culture as the possession of a privileged missionary church entrusted with carrying the products of Christian rationality in order to civilize the non-Protestant world.

This paper will focus solely on the diachronic connotation of culture. My objective is to address the way in which an educational situation is defined by the interaction of individual learners and educators who enact, within the pedagogical context, the cultural orientation of the collective groups that formed their identities. However, the reader should keep in mind that the other two connotations of culture are of crucial pertinence to the task of religious education. Referring to the synchronic interpretation of culture, religious educator Charles Foster has called our attention to the effects of the "cultural captivity of the Church education" as a flaw in our educational endeavor.¹⁰ Critical histories of missionary Christian education should be undertaken to uncover the real effects of a hierarchical interpretation of culture. After all, a survey of the history of religious education will easily demonstrate that behind every model of religious education there was an operative concept of culture. The fact that in many instances the concept is not made explicit requires us to create research agendas that will surface the power of cultural definitions on educational subjects as well as pedagogical processes.

The faith community as religious culture

When divested of all theological meaning and symbolic representations the faith community remains at its core an association of people who have gathered through deliberate affiliation around a common religious purpose.¹¹ While attempting to fulfill the religious yearning common to all human creatures, these people establish ways of organizing their life together, of incorporating others into the group, and socializing its members. Within these communities educational practices have been established in order to shape behavior, habit, world views, lifestyles, symbolic systems, and material objects. When those aspects are conformed into a system of regularity (rituals), accepted by the members as true expressions of their common life (creedal affirmations), and incorporated into shared perceptions and actions (beliefs and commitments) we can say a religious culture has been created. The culture that is created within the religious community is sustained by a faith that "manifests both public dimensions of worship, creed and ethical directives."¹² From a cultural perspective then, "faith" is the "culturizing" agent of a religious community.

From this understanding, however, we cannot immediately derive that a faith community is a society nor that it constitutes a separate culture in itself. Both from a sociological and a theological perspective the Constantinian ideal of a church-society has proven unsustainable. In her book *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*, Kathryn Tanner affirms that understanding the church as a society in itself or as conforming to a particular culture defies the sociological distinction between a religious lifestyle and a structured social group. More significantly she states that in Christian theology the Church's identity does not depend on a new social distinction but rather on an attempt "to blur the difference...in the interest of Christian fellowship among those whom social divisions usually keep apart."¹³

While Tanner's admonition is highly pertinent, her stress on the non essential component of social identification in the Church can overlook the complex ways in which culture operates within the life of diverse faith communities.¹⁴ Perhaps, it is Tanner's own cultural identity that leads her to claim that the Church is a "voluntary association" to which we bring other standards and values from external engagements with social life. The Church, which has defined itself ethnocentrically throughout centuries, should be reminded that for an increasing number of non-Western faith communities the Church is not perceived as a voluntary association and does not operate as a

secondary collectivity within a broader social engagement but as the center of social life and daily living. What seems to be clear is that the faith community distinguishes itself clearly, within the standards of difference, from other collectives in society where the individual participates. On the other hand, we bring into the faith community a cultural identity that we have acquired in social interaction, and this identity is pivotal in forming the distinctive character that each faith community will acquire.

One of the characteristics of cultural identity is that it is as fluid and vital as the social life from which it originates. In his ethnographic study of youth and identity formation Daniel A. Yon identifies how this fluidity is observed:

A view of culture as elusive and fluid, rather than rigid and determining, helps us to understand the multiple strategies and shifting positions that youth take up in these different and shifting positions. It also helps us to understand how they live their lives and construct identities in relation, and often in opposition, to the constraints imposed by gender, race, and culture.¹⁵

Yon's assessment about youth culture's identity is not dissimilar from any other cultural group although the degree of intensity in which the fluidity of cultural identity is expressed may vary. Due to that fluidity of identity we do not remain the same cultural "self" when we move into new groups of identification. Belonging to a community of faith means that part of the cultural identities we bring into this collective configuration would be challenged and changed through community processes of mediation and negotiation, relation and opposition. The community of faith becomes what Madan Sarup has defined as "a new community of interest and identification" requiring "new forms of subjectivity" as it engages in what has been termed "identity politics."¹⁶ An ethnographer can perceive this phenomenon with more clarity by studying cultures where the Christian community establishes a strong differentiation between the social experience lived within the Church and the cultural identities of believers as it is the case in a large number of non-Western churches. In other words, by observing a community where the cultural values of individuals strongly contrast with the values of the faith community and are not reproduced within that community, we can appreciate the dynamics of identity (re)formation. At a very basic level, though implicit, every faith community is constituted by a number of individuals who are re-cultured and each individual brings a cultural perspective to bear in the formation and overall identity of the community.

A term that can express the dynamic interaction of cultural identities brought by individuals into the communal life of the church is *interculturality*. The term intercultural refers to a process by which culturally bounded selves share a common social space in order to forge a shared identity.¹⁷ In the case of Christian religious education, classrooms, worship contexts, and other locations for community formation become such spaces. In these spaces cultural diversity is expressed as well as cultural interaction. The intercultural experience refers then to an inherent process of shared-identity-formation which exists within faith communities whether observable cultural diversity could be identified or not. While multicultural education focuses on the differentiation of groups according to observed "cultural" traits and the pedagogical adaptations undertaken to accommodate that diversity into a standardized form of education (in which institutional identity is pre-established), intercultural education assumes that diversity is the constitutive nature of the pedagogical task as well as its objective (it constructs the identity of the learning community).¹⁸ Saying this, I will affirm that although not every religious education experience is multicultural, all religious education experience, by its socializing nature and its shared-identity-formation objective, is inherently intercultural.

The consequence of this understanding of the religious education task presents great challenges to pedagogies that are developed to approach and attend to the intercultural experience. The context for religious education places teachers and learners in the equalized position of being cultural selves sharing the responsibility, through multi-directional learning (learner from teacher, teacher from learner, learner from learner, teacher and learner from subject matter and context) of shaping a shared Christian identity. While many multicultural approaches to religious education make the teacher the sole possessor of a pragmatic individuality responsible for reflecting, managing, and responding sensitively to cultural diversity within the classroom, the intercultural approach suggests that the teacher is engaged in a common task of formation and that she is positioned in this process just as one cultural self among others.¹⁹ At the time that multicultural education positions the teacher as an ethnographer of cultural diversity as a given data (strictly defined in terms of race, nationality, and ethnicity), intercultural education positions the educator as ethnographer of an always emerging process of cultural formation where he and learners are subjects of study. In the words of Renato Rosaldo this ethnographer is a "positioned subject," occupying a cultural location as she observes with "a particular angle of vision."²⁰

The intercultural religious educator does not attempt to understand the learners as subjects imposing cultural identities upon a neutral pedagogy but to understand the unique identity of the learning community where a

number of cultural influences, never defined *a priori*, contribute to give shape to context and pedagogy. Those of us who have been attentive to cultural dynamics in the classroom can attest, for example, that the learner of “color” will not bring only his racial identity to contribute to the formation of the classroom culture, but other cultural influences, not determined by race nor previously expected, will be her contribution to the intercultural experience. In fact, in the context of the classroom the learner of “color” may decide to keep his racial identity out of the negotiations that the intercultural community engages to shape a shared identity. Teachers who develop their pedagogy around understandings of how students of color learn and behave may impose a way of learning that is not necessarily effective for the learner who has adapted a more intercultural way of learning. Much cultural challenge can be presented to religious pedagogy by a “white” learner who is unable to negotiate his class, gender, and ideological identity within the intercultural experience. In the intercultural experience all participants are bearers of cultural differentiation.

The primary role of the intercultural religious educator is to be an observer of the cultural dynamics emerging in the classroom, a dynamic that includes her own participation in the process. In taking this role as a genuine expression of her vocation she becomes a spec-actor- one who sees (*spec*) herself as a bearer of culture in the process of acting and reflecting (*actor*) about cultural diversity. I have found the concept of spec-actor, introduced by Brazilian dramatist Augusto Boal to describe the human capacity to create theater, to be also a significant metaphor for the human capacity to educate religiously. Boal suggests that

Only the human being is tri-dimensional (the I who observes, the I in situ and the not-I) because it alone is capable of dychotomy (seeing itself seeing). And as it places itself inside and outside its situation, actually there, potentially here, it needs to symbolize that distance which separates space and divides time, the distance from the ‘I am’ to ‘I can be’, and from present to future; it needs to symbolize this potential, to create symbols which occupy the space of what is, but does not exist concretely, or what is possible and could one day exist.²¹

This “seeing himself in the act of seeing” is the deliberate skill that religious ethnographers should develop within their methods to understand the dynamics of the intercultural experience. It allows the ethnographer to see himself as a cultural subject and the particular effects of his cultural identity in the interpretation of the faith community. In turn, the religious educator, as practitioner, should add to the ethnographic task of seeing the ability to make real through a pedagogical process within the faith community the potential for becoming a new social configuration of shared religious values and dispositions. Boal’s metaphor of spec-actor fits well the theological language of transcendence, as the capacity of the religious person to go beyond the limits imposed upon the self in order to move into a distinctive and sometimes unfamiliar “being”.²² If the religious educator incorporates the idea of transcendence as a pedagogical imperative he will engage a process of acting out the limits of his own cultural identification, moving and inviting others into a shared intercultural identity. The intercultural religious educator introduces individual cultural selves to a communal being that although sometimes unfamiliar signals the potential of the group to become a new “one,” an alternative community that distinguishes itself from others- a glimpse of God’s reign.

The Christian religious educator engaged in the task of intercultural education as spec-actor may discover her participation to be a significant experimentation of God’s reign in the life of the community. But the educator who acts out this vocation can only engage it faithfully when she is able to see herself as a cultural self trying to assist in the formation of a shared identity. Therefore, the way of transcendence into a new shared identity is not to move out of our cultural identities but deeper into the cultural consciousness of the educator. As anthropologist Edward T. Hall stated in his classic *Beyond Culture*, “it is therefore necessary for a [man] to transcend his own culture, and this can be done only by making explicit the rules by which it operates.”²³ I always wonder how much of the learner’s ability to learn and to be formed religiously has to do not with their individual capacities or qualities, but with the way they respond both positively and negatively to the educator’s cultural self; the taken for granted “naturalness” of the educator’s pedagogical values, behavior, expectations and beliefs. If this is the case the term *intercultural* is illustrative since it evokes not only relationships among individuals who bring subjective cultural identities to *interact* in the formation of the community but also the fact that such a process requires *interiorization*. Religious educators, heirs of a long tradition of contemplative and confessional practices have to systematize the observation of the self in their teaching and research.

Scriptural witness attests to the fact that God’s call is inclusive of the individual and the individual’s situation in life. God calls people *out of a place* so that their social and cultural experience can enhance the future

meanings of communal faith. When God called Israel, the divine voice declared “I am the Lord your God who called you out of land of Egypt.”²⁴ The “Egypt experience” was going to define both the emerging Jewish and Christian biblical traditions from then on. In the same manner, the religious educator is called by vocation *out of a place* into the Christian community. As a bearer of such vocation the religious educator becomes the ethnographer of his own culture, the place he was called out from. He relates to other humans effectively not necessarily by trying to comprehend fully the others but by been highly aware of the nature of his participation in that relation. By virtue of his vocation he becomes the spec-actor of the religious intercultural that emerges before his eyes.

Contrastive pedagogy in self-research

Having established some arguments for considering religious education an intercultural practice and the need for the religious educator to assess her own cultural identity within it, some suggestions of how to go about this task are in order. If we observe a religious educator in practice and take note of the theological language and religious beliefs she shares with the learning community, we can promptly identify the cultural identity that defines her. When the educator herself is not aware of that cultural identity defining her action, she comes to think of what she does as some sort of universally held rationality for the pedagogical practice. In her credo for pedagogical action Marva Collins creates an image of educational excellence with the following language:

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I bear the flame that enlightens the world. I fire the imagination. I give might to dreams and wings to the aspirations of men. I create all that is good, stalwart, and long-lasting. I build for the future by making my every effort superior today. I am the parent of progress, the creator of creativity, the designer of opportunity, and the molder of human destiny. I wear the wisdom and contributions of all ages. I dispel yesterday’s myths and find today’s facts. I am ageless and timeless. I banish mediocrity and discourage being average. I stir ambition, forge ideals, and create keys that open the door to worlds never dreamed. I am the source of creation, the outlet of inspiration, the dream of aspiration.²⁵

A first reading of this credo may find the words poetic and inspirational. For sure, the educator has produced such a language out of a deep and authentic reflection on her own practice. The power of the language makes other educators claim that “this credo should inspire all teachers” and that it can serve “as the anchor and torchlight for their pedagogical practices.”²⁶ As a credo, it has been enunciated out of the experience of an individual sense of being and commitment. However, the intercultural spec-actor should ask how much of the creedal statement represents the cultural perspective of the practitioner being translated into a pedagogical practice that will be carried on comprehensively. The religious spec-actor, as well as the cultural “other,” will point out to the emphasis on “enlightened” rationality, idealistic perspective, progressivist outlook, social opportunism and meritocracy, and historical presentism and find an educator very well rooted on her cultural identity. Is the educator aware of the explicit and implicit responses of learners who are cultural “others” to the practice informed by this creedal statement? In religious education, some prominent themes such as safe spaces, dialogical teaching, faith development, democratic processes, and learner centered education carry also the mark of Western American and European cultural identity. In what ways can the educator become aware on the impinging of her cultural identity upon her practice?

Much literature on education is aware of the need for practitioners to reflect on their practice.²⁷ Terms such as self-reflection and self-assessment have yielded practices like journal writing, personal credos, evaluation of video recorded practices, personal profile inventories, and even spiritual exercises. These practices, useful as they are for the personal development of educators, do not suffice for developing an intercultural pedagogy. As constituted, these practices return to the educator only the image the educator creates about himself. If culture is not a central component of the educator’s self-image it will remain out of the picture of self reflection. For this reason the suggestion of engaging on *self-research* is more intentional than a simple selection of a construct. By emphasizing research vis a vis reflection, I am suggesting that in the process of spec-action the researcher should be able to separate herself from the practice to become also an object of research to whom some systematized criteria of analysis should be applied. This is not to suggest that personal assessment is an exact science as many educational professionals may seem to suggest. Fortunately, Christian religious educators are more aware than their secular counterparts that the nature self-assessment is an educational model and not a scientific one.

It is my contention that in order for the religious educator to see himself as a cultural “other,” his research and practice should apply a contrastive pedagogy.²⁸ Contrastive pedagogy is a deliberate practice whereby the educator is continuously contrasting his behaviors, values, and motivations with those of the learners in the

intercultural experience. The image of self that will be seen by the educator is the image of an “other” among the many participants of the educational event. The practitioner should research her cultural self by orienting her practice in light of a series of well defined questions which will render differentiation between her teaching-learning dispositions and those of the learners. Those questions should be motivated by the interest for encouraging an intercultural experience in the religious education context and should follow some basic orientations informed by the theological tradition.

One of the orientations is readiness to know the culture of learners from the perspective of learners and by close observation rather than out of a “pre-packaged” definitions of their culture. Cultural definitions are social constructions produced for public consumption, political accountability, and social labeling. Aware of this, the religious educator should keep in mind Jesus’ bi-fold question to his disciple Peter :Who do they say I am? and Who do you say I am? When we, as religious educators, build an idea of the cultural identity of a learner we should ask: From where do we acquire this idea? From the daily life experience with the learner or from a publicly consumed social label? As an experiment the educator may try to write a brief “cultural profile” of her assumptions about the cultural identity of her learners and then write down, in two separate columns, those ideas from the profile which are directly related to popular conceptions and those based on teaching-learning interaction. If the majority of ideas are based on broader popular conceptions rather than teaching learning interaction, the educator may want to question her own cultural position as a member of a dominant society that tends to objectify the “other” vis a vis her position as a member of a Christian community where different paradigms of relating to the “stranger” are sustained.²⁹

A second orientation is the willingness to yield to ideas and experiences that best fit the learning situation rather than imposing the educator’s stance as the primary and the opinion of cultural “others” as complimentary. A learner from a “lower” class culture can have more insight into the interpretation of some biblical texts due to the closeness of her experience to the cultural reality of the text.³⁰ This is commonly referred to in liberation theologies as the preferential location of the poor for the hermeneutical task. Based on the written record of students work you can test your positions on various subject matters with the positions offered by learners to see which one provides a better fit for generating knowledge in the subject matter. The academically articulated position is not necessarily the better fit to explain a particular subject matter in religious education.

Another orientation is the ability to take affection into account when communication with learners is not producing expected results. The religious educator may acknowledge that an opinion shared by a learner and experienced by the educator as conflictive, erroneous, or misinformed may be in reality the affective outcome of “culture shock” by the educator. This “culture shock” should be expected in the recognition that educators bring into the intercultural experience “a cultural representation that mirrors their own backgrounds and biases.”³¹ The educator may take note in retrospect of occasions where she was enthusiastically engaged in the educational process and those occasions when she is experiencing frustration. Is there a regular pattern of interaction or dialogue with learners on the occasions where the educator is more enthusiastic? Is there a pattern of interaction or dialogue on the occasions where the educator is experiencing frustration? If such patterns can be found, the educator may consider them to be expressive of cultural perspectives, ones with which the educator identifies and others which, by being the expression of otherness, produces a cultural shock. Becoming aware of the cultural origins of affections will allow the educator to face the challenges of intercultural experience in a constructive manner.

A final orientation is the ability to identify and question the taken for granted values of the pedagogical practice. Attending to regularities in practices, language and preferences for interaction, the educator can define a teaching profile that can be presented to learners who co-participate in the intercultural experience. Learners can be trained to construct a similar profile on learning and then compare it. The purpose is not to adapt the learning profile to the educator’s but to negotiate cultural differences on educational expectations and be ready to understand and create an atmosphere of respectful tolerance and fair critique. Cultural differences should not and can not be diluted by a “political consensus” on how learners and teachers will behave in educational experiences. Cultural identity is too ingrained in individuals to achieve such level of homogeneity, even within the unifying rhetoric of the Christian community. However, teacher and learners can be prepared to deal with difference once the contours of that difference are made explicit as well as the commonly accepted rules to address it.

Although the previous orientations and practical suggestions for self-research represent a structured but simple way to start looking at the educator as a cultural self and as a practitioner capable of transcending self to engage such research (spec-actor), we cannot deny the fact that human subjects cannot become objects of study in a positivist sense. The point to be made is that something can be learned about the cultural identity of the educator and its influence on pedagogy but that such research cannot ultimately define or make totally transparent the cultural complexity that the educator exists in. The pedagogical implications of this research are much less pretentious. The purpose is for the educator to practice self-disclosure as part of his pedagogy within the context of intercultural

education. This pedagogical strategy, in the words of Peter Karlin, is intended so teachers not “be afraid of letting students know that you are a person and that you have a life outside the classroom,” in this case a life modeled by the representations of the educator’s cultural identity. The important point is for religious educators to be aware of their own cultural assumptions as they develop a language of self-disclosure.

¹ See Roop Rekha Verma, “The concept of progress and cultural identity,” in *Culture and Modernity: East-West Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Eliot Deutsch (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 526-534.

² For a comprehensive study of the rationality debate around anthropological and sociological theories of culture refer to Robert C. Ulin, *Understanding Cultures: Perspectives in Anthropology and Social Theory*, 2nd Ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

³ See F. Javier García Castaño et. al. *Lecturas para la Educación Intercultural* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1999).

⁴ The different connotations of the term culture are concisely outlined in the work of Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

⁵ By “representational locations” I mean the collective configurations where personal identity is defined such as ethnic, racial, gender, and generational groups.

⁶ See H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1951), and Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, W.R. Boyce Gibson, trans. (New York: Collier/Macmillan, 1962).

⁷ Young Pai, *Cultural Foundations of Education* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1990), 24.

⁸ Refer to Berger’s and Luckmann discussion on civilized societies in Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1966).

⁹ For examples of how this missional practice was envisioned and carried out see Luis Rivera Pagán, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992). See also George E. Tinker, *The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993).

¹⁰ See Charles R. Foster, *Educating Congregations: The Future of Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

¹¹ The social formation process of religious groups is clearly outlined in Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1997).

¹² Clarke E. Cochran, *Religion in Public and Private Life* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 16.

¹³ Tanner, *ibid.* 100.

¹⁴ To observe the social role of the church from the perspective of various cultural communities refer to Justo L. González, *Out of Every Tribe and Nation: Christian Theology at the Ethnic Roundtable* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

¹⁵Daniel A. Yon, *Elusive Culture: Schooling, Race, and Identity in Global Times* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 122.

¹⁶ See Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Post-modern World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996).

¹⁷ See *Overview of Intercultural Education, Training and Research*, David S. Hoopes, et.al. (LaGrange Park, IL: Intercultural Network Inc., 1977). A more critical approach to intercultural education is taken by García Castaño, *ibid.*

¹⁸ See Joe L. Kincheloe and Shirley R. Steinberg, *Changing Multiculturalism: New Times, New Curriculum* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1997).

¹⁹ See C.A. Bowers and David J. Flinders, *Responsive Teaching: An Ecological Approach to Classroom Patterns of Language, Culture and Thought* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990).

²⁰ Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

²¹ Augusto Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 14.

²² Although this understanding of transcendence has been used in more popular texts on spirituality like Barbara Kyme Myers, *Young Children and Spirituality* (New York: Routledge, 1997), it has its roots in the theological tradition of Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism and Edmund Husserl's transcendental subjectivity.

²³ Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1976), 55.

²⁴ Exodus 20:2

²⁵ Cited in Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000), xx.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ See Richard Parsons and Kimberly S. Brown, *Teacher as Reflective Practitioner and Action Researcher* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001).

²⁸ I am borrowing the term "contrastive" from the educational field that studies rhetorical diversity among learners of English spoken language and written composition. The term illustrates the deliberate exercise, in education, of comparing competing behavior within participants in the teaching-learning experience. See *Contrastive Rhetoric Revisited and Redefined*, ed., Clayann Gilliam Panetta (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001) and Ulla Connor, *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural Aspects of Second-Language Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁹ A creative study that interfaces faith notions of the "stranger", educational practices and cross-cultural experiences is found in David I. Smith and Barbara Carvill, *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000).

³⁰ This idea is explored with more detail by Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).

³¹ Mary Lynn Hamilton, "Tacit messages: Teacher's cultural models of the classroom," in ed., Francisco A. Rios, *Teacher Thinking in Cultural Contexts* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 208-209.