
As an instructor I find well-written introductory psychology textbooks, which include transpersonal psychology, elusive. Many introductory textbooks focus on biological, cognitive, and developmental aspects of psychology, but fail to include emphasis on specific diversity related perspectives, constructivist viewpoints, or transpersonal theory. Nor do many introductory textbooks bridge psychology and spirituality or transpersonal psychology and mainstream psychology. Iljas attempts to fill these gaps through her introductory psychology textbook *Introduction to Psychology: Inner Reality, Outer Reality in Diversity.*

I respect Jennifer Ilijas’ approach in *Inner Reality, Outer Reality in Diversity* as she attempted a genuine diversity-centered introductory textbook that is meant to have an additional appeal to transpersonal psychology oriented instructors. However, I would not recommend this edition of the textbook. I would love to see, and would more likely support, a revised edition as I believe Ilijas could fill the much-needed transpersonally inclusive introduction to the psyche.

There are a number of reasons I would not recommend this particular text. Numerous grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors make the text difficult to read. Additionally, the Table of Contents is uneven in its coverage of chapter contents (for example, the chapter on sensation and perception includes 46 sub-heading entries while the chapter on abnormal psychology a mere 7 entries and the chapter on sports psychology 1 entry). More importantly, though, is the lack of appropriate citations and references. A majority of citations are either not included in the reference section in the back or are seemingly cited with the incorrect year, including one of Ilijas’ own works. While citations that are correct tend to be transpersonally oriented texts and authors, I encountered numerous discussions of research (including discussion of statistical findings) within the textbook that did not include a citation at all. This presents a poor model for up and coming psychology students regarding ethical coverage of other’s work and proper citation and referencing. Had Ilijas a competent, responsible publication editor and publisher, many of these errors would have been corrected.

Along with the above, I noted a number of other oddities within the textbook. In one case Ilijas used an interview with a prominent transpersonal psychologist, David Lukoff, in order to discuss the case study research method. I was excited to read the section, labeled “Interview with David Lukoff on the Case Study Method,’” and learn Dr. Lukoff’s perspective. Unfortunately, the interview didn’t cover the case study method at all – it was focused only on transpersonal psychology and spiritual emergency. Admittedly the topics were of interest, but they had nothing to do with the section heading.
As a reader I felt a bit misled. On another occasion I was reading the unique chapter on psychotherapy, which starts with a discussion on shamanic counseling and then proceeds into various types of therapy including psychoanalysis and cognitive-behavioral therapies. However, by the end of the rather choppily written chapter I noted that a major transpersonal theorist was blatantly missing – Carl Jung. And finally, I found many statements such as “It is a well known fact that …”, “Most psychologists …”, and “It was discovered that …” which were followed by various text but no citations. This seemed indicative of Iljas’ style – informal, colloquial, with little support for some of her statements and conclusions.

On a positive note, I did enjoy Iljas’ integration of a number of interviews with transpersonal theorists and practitioners including the aforementioned David Lukoff, Stanley Krippner, and Leslie Gray. Iljas also included specific coverage of other transpersonal theorists including Abraham Maslow (which would be expected of any introductory text) and Ken Wilber (likely seen in very few traditional introductory texts). Overall, I would love to see Iljas’ revised edition including citations, references, better editing, and a digital component by the way of a CD of interactive material. With these revisions and inclusions she could provide a respectable introductory textbook that could be used by many transpersonal and non-transpersonal psychology instructors.

The Author

Jennifer Iljas completed her Master’s in College Teaching at San Francisco State University and her Ph.D. in East-West psychology at California Institute of Integral Studies. She has published two introductory textbooks, of which Inner Reality, Outer Reality in Diversity is her second, and she continues her interest in cross-cultural psychology through her current research in Japan.

The Reviewer

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