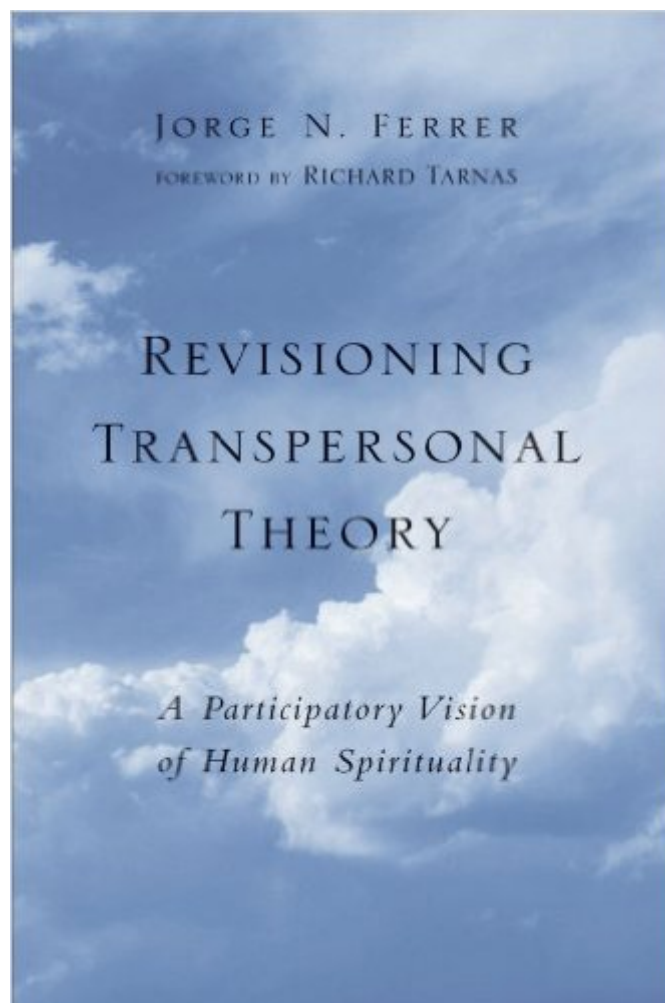


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Revisioning Transpersonal Theory : A Participatory Vision Of Human Spirituality (Suny Series In Transpersonal And Humanistic Psychology)



Synopsis

A participating alternative to the experimentalism and perennialism dominant in transpersonal psychology.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

this book is very helpful to help you to ask yourself some good questions regarding your inner journey. It highlights many potential pitfalls encountered in the transpersonal practices and anchors them in a tentative new encompassing approach. The most important point for me, after two years of practice of holotropic breathwork, was the dangers of an approach too exclusively experiential, which is common in the transpersonal field. That is the belief that experiences in themselves contain healing potential and spiritual progress. The emphasis on experience was necessary for a time for the transpersonal field to be accepted by the scientific community as the study of non-ordinary states of consciousness. But the quest for experience can easily turn into an addiction to temporary high spiritual states without being integrated into the daily life, but not without inflation of the ego... as in the case of many psychonauts exclusively using psychedelic substances. Traditionally, experiences are only one of the many ingredients necessary for a fruitful spiritual practice, which come along with intellectual studies, respect of ethical principles, relationships in a sangha or group of practitioners and with a teacher or master. Another interesting point is the new and refreshing ways to account for the diversity of spiritual systems. Contrary to Wilber who is caught in an objectivist view where he posits a hierarchy between the different systems, and hence a definite objective absolute truth about the

ultimate, Ferrer argue for a diversity of ways of unfolding the truth of the universe, which are neither hierarchically organised, neither reducible to each other.

Let me first say that Jorge F. Ferrer's book "Revisioning transpersonal theory" isn't bad. Quite the contrary. It's one of the more interesting and well-written books on spirituality I've come across. That being said, I nevertheless disagree with the author. Ferrer belongs to the current known as transpersonal psychology, a more explicitly spiritual version of humanistic psychology.

Transpersonal psychology is often considered a part of the New Age milieu. Ferrer's book is a criticism of both "official" transpersonal studies and Ken Wilber's more recent version (Integral Theory). By implication, Ferrer also criticizes the broader New Age scene. The author believes that transpersonal psychology has become too obsessed with subjective and ostensibly spiritual "experiences", a viewpoint he dubs "experientialism". This has led to a weird dualism between inner and outer worlds, where the inner experiences are seen as privileged. Downright narcissism in spiritual matters is another consequence. Ferrer also attacks something he calls "the empiricist colonization of spirituality", the attempt to "prove" spirituality in general and mysticism in particular by appeals to a methodology similar to that of science. In Ferrer's opinion, this is misguided. The spiritual sphere of existence cannot be accessed or judged by methods from a completely different and unrelated sphere. Finally, Ferrer criticizes perennialism. (He calls Wilber's opinions neo-perennial.) There are at least two problems with perennialism, according to Ferrer. First, it simply isn't true that all or most spiritual traditions are similar. Mystics don't have similar experiences, the author argues.

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