

BOOK REVIEWS

***Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer Psychology: An Introduction* by V. Clarke, S. J. Ellis, E. Peel, and D. W. Riggs. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 348 pp.**

**Reviewed by Geneva Reynaga-Abiko
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I was very excited when I first perused *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer Psychology* because the authors promised an interdisciplinary, intersectional text. The authors share that they deliberately chose to call the book LGBTQ psychology as a demonstration of their inclusivity of a variety of sexual and gender identities. I do not necessarily agree with their decision to not include intersex/I in their acronym and focus, but they say it is because intersex is still only a “theoretical category” (p. 22). They honor their privilege in writing as “White” academics who are middle class and not transgendered. I appreciated their transparency in this regard and eagerly kept reading in hopes of feeling enlightened by a truly progressive text that would serve as a model for the field.

Everything started off well. Chapter 1 gives a history of LGBTQ psychology and I especially appreciated the authors’ interdisciplinary approach. I enjoyed reading the history of concepts such as sex, gender, and transgender, and appreciated that the authors did not shy away from controversial issues as how bisexuality is negatively treated in a heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy and the pathologization of homosexuality and transgendered identities in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000) that continue to influence “mainstream psychology” today.

Chapter 2 goes into some dense theoretical discussions about the debate between essentialism and social constructionism. The authors also discuss liberal and radical ideologies about sexuality. I enjoyed the discussion of feminism, queer theory, and critical psychology and the argument that research regarding the etiology of homosexuality is problematic because it is more important to understand “how individuals and groups of people come to identify with particular labels and conceptions of sexuality and gender, and how particular understandings of sexuality and gender come into being in particular moments in history” (p. 25). Chapter 3 focuses on research methodologies in LGBTQ psychology and how to do research that is nonheterosexist and nongenderist (see pp. 72–73, for specific recommendations).

If the rest of the book was written as the first section (chapters 1 through 3), I would give this text a glowing review. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The second section (chapters 4 through 6) starts with a focus on diversity. It seems as the authors threw every type of diversity into this one chapter. They talk about gender, bisexuality, trans and queer issues, social class, race, ability, organized religion/spirituality, and rural life. This is the only chapter in the book that does not have a “gaps and absences” section and, although it can be argued that the entire chapter

focuses on “gaps and absences,” surely the one to two pages devoted to each area does not reflect everything we wish we knew about how these issues affect the LGBTQ community.

Chapters 5 and 6 similarly exclude sufficient attention to certain issues; chapter 5 focuses on prejudice and discrimination and, although the authors do a decent job outlining types of experiences many LGBTQ folks go through, they never consider an intersection of other types of bias. The work of people such as Greene, Miville, and Ferguson (2008); Kertzner, Meyer, Frost, and Stirratt (2009); and Alimahomed (2010) would have been helpful here, as many LGBTQ people experience different types of treatment depending on the intersections of other parts of their identity (i.e., ethnicity, ability status, etc.). This is a palpable oversight, particularly because chapter 5 comes right after “the diversity chapter.”

Chapter 6 focuses on health, including the medicalization of “nonheterosexual” bodies, sexual, mental, and physical health. The health disparities literature is rife with examples of societally underprivileged people having poorer health outcomes than those with privilege (e.g., Sue & Chu, 2003), but only sexual identities of (White) gay men and LB women are discussed in the chapter. This is unfortunate given the incredible stress and negative physical and mental health outcomes for many transgendered individuals (Williamson, 2010).

The third part of the book discusses identity development and coming out (chapter 7), relationships (chapter 8), parenting and family (chapter 9), and aging (chapter 10). I appreciated the criticisms of identity models and a discussion of the concept that sexuality is fluid across the life span but chapter 7 missed an opportunity to discuss the identity challenges and contradictions for LGBTQ individuals from a variety of social locations. This also is true with chapter 8. The focus was on relationships but the authors only discuss laws regarding same sex relationships for (White) lesbian and gay couples. There is no mention of BTQ couples or any type of diversity related to nonsexual identities. Surely LGBTQ couples must contend with racism, classism, and other social forces in their relationships (see e.g., Cahill, 2009; Greene, 2009; Hall & Greene, 2002)?

Chapter 9 discusses parenting. Most of the research available focuses on lesbian parenting but the authors do what they can to discuss gay and transgender parenting research as well. I found it curious that bisexual parenting was not mentioned at all, not even in the “gaps and absences” section. Chapter 10 focuses on aging and old age. I appreciated the discussion of the “resolutely heterosexist” (p. 216) nature of gerontology and how much we do not know about LGBTQ individuals beyond middle age. This is the only chapter that takes an intersectional approach and does a decent job of discussing racial, ethnic, urban/rural, and other diversity considerations.

It is true that most of the research in LGBTQ psychology focuses on LG identities and it is also true that most of the research has occurred in the United States with ethnic-, class-, and ability-privileged participants. However, there is a growing body of research that is intersectional in nature. For example, at

the time of this writing, a PsycINFO search using keywords such as *gay* and *African American* yielded an outcome of 296 sources (of all publication types); *lesbian* and *Asian*, 88 sources; and *transgender* and *Latino*, 27 sources. Surely not all of these were published after *LGBTQ Psychology* was in press? Work that is truly intersectional (e.g., Acosta, 2008; Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002; Brooks, Bowleg & Quina, 2009; Greene, 1997; Greene & Croom, 2000; Loue, 2009; Parks, Hughes, & Matthews, 2004) is never mentioned, other than one box outlining the work of Beverly Greene (pp. 93–94). I find this disappointing in general, but particularly because the authors explicitly claim to have an intersectional perspective.

The title implies a lack of depth because it is called an introduction but I think this represents the humility of the authors and the fact that LGBTQ psychology is still relatively young. They did a good job representing mainstream LG psychology (if one can speak of such a thing) in theory and history (section 1), the heteronormativity of Western culture and how this affects (European American) “nonheterosexuals” (section 2), and LG issues across the life span (section 3). There are a variety of helpful pedagogical features of the book, including boxes of highlights in each chapter, a summary of main chapter points, questions for discussion, classroom exercises, and further reading. There is a glossary at the end of the book that gives the novice reader/researcher some grounding, and I like the “additional resources and websites” (documentaries, movies, and websites) that are provided (p. 272). Although the content is often complex, particularly in the chapters that are more theoretical, the text is manageable for upper division undergraduates as well as graduate students.

I appreciated the palpable feminist and critical psychology voice present throughout the work. If I only cared about LG psychology among so-called Whites, this would be one of the best books I have seen to date. Unfortunately, it seems that bisexuals, transgendered individuals, people of color, the poor, those living in rural areas, those who are not able-bodied, and everyone who does not live in the “West” remain marginalized, even in a text whose title promises to include them.

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***Culturally Responsive Counseling With Asian American Men* by William Ming Liu, Derek Kenji Iwamoto, and Mark H. Chae (Eds.). New York: Routledge, 2010, 1 pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-80007-5 (hardcover).**

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Culturally Responsive Counseling with Asian American Men provides an in-depth review of the historical, societal, and cultural contexts within which Asian American male clients might seek counseling. Although Asian Americans represent a fast growing population in the United States, research in counseling psychology has only recently begun to better understand this growing community. This edited volume provides cultural and historical context for psychologists who want to learn more about the unique challenges faced by Asian American men as they navigate and negotiate racialization, discrimination, and masculinity. Although gaps in the literature are still plenty, this edited volume provides practitioners with important historical and cultural context that may help facilitate the client–therapist relation.

One of the main strengths of this volume, which is the fifth in the series *Counseling and Psychotherapy With Boys and Men*, is the wide range of topics covered. A total of 16 chapters, including the Introduction by the editors, provide information on topics that elucidate historical and cultural contexts specific to Asian Americans, to being an Asian American male as well as specific topics of clinical concern. For example, several chapters tackle various societal stressors, such as immigration, acculturation, racism, whereas others tackle issues of interpersonal relations, such as intergenerational conflict and romantic relationships.