Intercultural Politeness: Managing Relations across Cultures, written by Helen Spencer-Oatey and Daniel Z Kadar is a much-needed book. While its primary focus is on intercultural research on 'politeness', this book unpacks a number of characteristics that make it stand out. First, it has drawn on the two authors' many years of extensive research, first-hand experience and in-depth reflection resulting in a credible, vivid and engaging reading experience. Second, this book is firmly grounded in a wealth of interdisciplinary knowledge, including intercultural communication, applied linguistics and intercultural/cross-cultural psychology that the authors harnessed, 'connected the dots', and in so doing, generated holistic frameworks for extending current understanding, and improving and enriching intercultural encounters. Through the authors' approach, they demonstrate their authority and illustrate with great clarity the broader implications and potential contributions of this book to academics, researchers, students, professionals and others whose interest and practice involve managing interpersonal relationships. In our current globalised world, it could be argued that anyone could benefit from this book!

The overall structure affirms the embedded interdisciplinary approach that divides the book into four complementary parts. Part 1: Conceptual Foundations is a stimulating discussion of theories and conceptualisations of interlinked concepts under the umbrella of 'intercultural politeness', conveying the authors' clear stance over definitions. As a case in point, the authors made a clear assertion that while culture might 'influence' or 'frame' the behaviour, it neither determines nor predicts behaviour. The authors' elucidation of how 'politeness' may simultaneously encompass both polite and impolite behaviours, since 'intended polite behaviour can have an impolite effect, and the other way around' (p. 2) is both interesting and crucial. Such multiplicity of meanings, depicted in the well-known Rubin vase in Psychology in which one either sees the vase or two people facing each other, is crucial in highlighting entailed challenges that multiple, even opposing meanings pose. The authors' comprehensive examination of theories, concepts and research generated a 'road map' or a 'functional' framework that is valuable not only for its conceptual expediency but for its practical utility. This framework then led to a model of the politeness evaluation process in Part 2, which explains in detail various key components (e.g. normalcy zone, agent and behaviour, etc.) and steps representing a range of evaluation criteria underpinning judgements during intercultural interaction. Part 3 proceeds with conceptual and practical examples of managing 'politeness' in action, differentiating proactive and reactive forms, responding to offences and restoring relations, managing intercultural relations smoothly as well as building and fostering positive intercultural relations. Finally, Part 4 highlights the crucial implications of the frameworks and holistic insights in understanding interactional discourse and in turn, promoting intercultural relations. Equally, ways forward for politeness theory and the wider intercultural field are raised while building on the new insights offered in this book.

By seeking a holistic perspective of the cultural mosaic, this book has tackled a complex field in a highly sensitive way, addressed contested issues associated with studies of 'culture' by moving away from a focus on cultural values and towards actual interactions where culture largely affects the dynamics of the interaction. This book has successfully reintroduced culture with fresh insights and research-grounded theorisation of a number of concepts with accompanying visual illustrations of conceptual frameworks. For example, it could be the comprehensive diagrammatic representation of what constitutes intercultural encounters, taking into account social group membership (ethnic, lingua-culture, professional, religious, etc.), decoding of cultural meaning as informed by ingroup/outgroup affinity, and cultural patterning influenced by accepted norms, contexts and schemas, and group perspectives (see Figure 3.3). Likewise, Figure 4.1 offers a theorised broken-down understanding comprising a range of components behind judgements on what politeness entails – looking beyond words and rather paying closer attention to individuals' evaluative processes that are generally informed by multiple factors (e.g. behaviour, situational contexts, interpretation). Such detailed discussion of each component offers a scrutiny of these interactions – albeit brief incidents in reality. Figure 11.1 offers an overview of the interlinked facets on reactive and proactive politeness that is depicted in detail in the diagram. Recognising such links brings to light new, deeper and more nuanced understanding of specific concepts, e.g. offence and disagreement. More importantly, it also extends current knowledge, particularly since previous studies merely focused on the reactive but not on the proactive politeness component. It is worth noting that although the book's primary focus is on intercultural research on 'politeness', it explores in-depth numerous concepts that will be of interest to psychologists, especially to social psychologists, e.g. social factors in evaluating politeness, socio-cultural interactions affecting behaviour, or the impact of social group memberships.

Taken together, a unique strength of this book conveyed through a number of the theorised concepts, is that the authors have carefully drawn from previous work in the area (including their own), which they then employed either to extend knowledge by highlighting new and crucial research areas for exploration or by connecting the dots, allowing them to offer holistic and comprehensive pictures in understanding intercultural relations and interpersonal relationships. On the theoretical aspect, this also enabled the authors to bring previously separately-researched concepts into a single framework. These advancements in the field of intercultural research in politeness can encourage researchers across disciplines, e.g those engaged in cross-cultural research, social psychology, intercultural communication and competence, or internationalisation in higher education among others, to explore further how people from different cultures relate and interact with each other. The authors' contribution cannot be underestimated; their proposed models and frameworks for deeper understanding of intercultural encounters and modelling the use of interdisciplinary lenses are likely to kindle fresh interest and perspectives.

I look forward to seeing more research studies inspired by this book, even more collaboration across disciplinary boundaries, particularly in psychology, with a shared view of unveiling fascinating insights into intercultural encounters.

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