

Fred Dervin. The Paradoxes of Interculturality: A Toolbox of Out-of-the-box Ideas for Intercultural Communication Education. London and New York: Routledge, 2023. Pp. i-vi, 1-132. ISBN 978- 032-44215-0 (hbk) ISBN 978- 032-44216-7 (pbk) ISBN: 978-1-003-37105-2 (ebk) DOI: 10.4324/9781003371052

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Abstract:

Fred Dervin's The paradoxes of interculturality: A toolbox of out-of-the-box ideas for intercultural communication education is a book that challenges rather than reassures. It does not aim to simplify interculturality or offer neat frameworks for understanding it. Instead, it unsettles the reader, constantly questioning what seems obvious and exposing the complexity behind a concept that is often taken for granted in education and research.

From the outset, Dervin makes it clear that this is not a conventional academic book. Rather than building a linear argument, he constructs a "toolbox" made of fragments—short reflections, questions, and observations that can be read independently or in relation to one another. This unusual structure reflects the central argument of the book: interculturality is not stable, not singular, and not something that can be fully understood through a single perspective. It is constantly shifting, contradictory, and open to reinterpretation.

One of the greatest strengths of The paradoxes of interculturality is its ability to challenge deeply ingrained assumptions. Dervin does not allow the reader to remain comfortable; instead, he pushes them to think critically about concepts that are often treated as self-evident.

The book's fragmented structure may be difficult for some readers, especially those who prefer clear, linear arguments. At times, the lack of concrete answers can feel frustrating. However, this is also what makes the book unique. It does not aim to provide solutions but to provoke thought and reflection.

Another notable strength is the book's emphasis on self-reflexivity. Dervin consistently reminds the reader that they are part of the process they are analysing. This creates a more engaging and personal reading experience, as it encourages active participation rather than passive consumption.

At the same time, the book's abstract nature may limit its accessibility. Readers looking for practical guidance on intercultural communication may find it less useful. However, for those interested in exploring the theoretical and philosophical dimensions of the field, it offers valuable insights.

In the end, The paradoxes of interculturality is not a book that provides clear answers. Instead, it reshapes the way we think about interculturality itself. By highlighting its contradictions, questioning its assumptions, and encouraging continuous reflection, Dervin offers a fresh and challenging perspective on a concept that is often oversimplified.

It is a demanding read, but also a rewarding one. Rather than closing the discussion, it opens it up—leaving the reader with more questions than answers, and perhaps that is exactly what makes it so valuable.

Keywords: *Interculturality; Intercultural communication education; Self-reflexivity; Alternative knowledge; Critical thinking*