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PRAGMATICS, (IM) POLITENESS, AND INTERGROUP COMMUNICATION

*A Multilayered, Discursive Analysis
of Cancel Culture*

Pilar Garcés-Conejos Blitvich

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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Pragmatics, (Im)politeness, and Intergroup Communication

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Abstract: This Element argues and presents the bases for pragmatics/ (im)politeness to become intergroup-oriented so as to be able to consider interactions in which social identities are salient or are essentially collective in nature, such as Cancel Culture (CC). CC is a form of ostracism involving the collective withdrawal of support and concomitant group exclusion of individuals perceived as having behaved in ways construed as immoral and thus displaying disdain for group normativity. To analyze this type of collective phenomenon, a three-layered model that tackles CC manifestations at the macro, meso, and micro levels is used. Results problematize extant conceptualizations of CC—mostly focused on the macro level—and describe it as a Big C Conversation, whose meso-level practices need to be understood as genre-ecology, and where identity reduction, im/politeness, and moral emotions synergies are key to understand group entitativity and agency.

Keywords: Im/politeness, Cancel Culture, Intergroup communication, Moral emotions, genres

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