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A Critical Pragmatic Study of Aggression in Moriarty's Big Little Lies

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Abstract

People are supposed to use language harmoniously and compatibly. However, aggression may characterize much of human communication. Aggression has long been recognized as a negative anti-social issue that prevails in most personal interactions. If it abounds in familial communication, it is more dangerous due to its harmful effects on individuals and societies. Aggression refers to all the instances in which we try to get our way without any consideration for others. Moriarty's novel (2014), *Big Little Lies*, is argued to represent patterns of aggressive communication. This study aims to identify the motivations behind aggressive language in familial communication in this best-seller novel. It endeavors to identify the pragmatic strategies that

are utilized to convey aggression in the data under scrutiny. As aggression is a critical social issue, it is studied in terms of the critical pragmatic paradigm. This study is qualitative and descriptive. The analytical framework is interwoven out of the speech act theory of Searle (1969) and Culpeper's theory of impoliteness (1996). The analysis shows that negative speech acts like criticizing and complaining abound and negative impoliteness strategies are highly used in this novel.

1. Introduction

Usually, aggression is studied in terms of the psychological perspective. In literary works, it is investigated as a theme in a novel or play. Rare research works have been conducted to study this phenomenon in terms of the linguistic paradigm. As a negative social issue, aggression lends itself to the critical approach. This study endeavors to investigate aggression in Moriarty's novel, *Big Little Lies* (2014). It is a bestseller and sensational novel. It is argued that it is one of the best novels written by a woman in recent years. One notable theme in this novel is aggression that characterizes familial communication. This research attempts to answer the following questions: what are the motivations of aggression in personal communication in the data under scrutiny? What are the pragmatic strategies utilized in achieving aggressive communications? Frustration and argumentative skill deficiency are expected to be the most common motivation behind aggression in social communication. Negative speech acts and negative impoliteness strategies are utilized to issue aggression in familial contexts. An analytical framework is devised to analyze the data. The rationale for conducting such research work is to highlight how aggressive language is used in personal communication to be aware of it. This work is hoped to be beneficial for psychological and linguistic studies, alike.

2. Aggressive Communications

People have various styles of communication with each other and they behave differently to carry out and express their desires, wants, feelings and needs. Aggression is a common phenomenon in personal communication in almost all speech events in all societies. Its seeds grow at home in verbal or non-verbal acts causing physical or psychological harm. Colman (2003) avers that aggression is the behavior whose main purpose is to injure another

person whether physically or psychologically due to a specific motivation whether it is intentional or not. Aggression can have serious consequences in personal and social life like maiming, sexual assaults, property damage, suicide, murder, and psychological traumas.

Aggression has been studied in the fields of psychology, cognitive sciences, and social psychology, among others. The behaviorist approach views aggression as a response that simply inflicts harm toward others; a response that involves a noxious stimulus to another organism (Buss, 1961). In the social-psychological field, aggression refers to any behavior that is achieved to harm another individual intentionally (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). From the psychologist's point of view, aggression is only a temporary behavior that is not related to permanent emotional or mental features (Warburton & Anderson, 2015). Put differently, feelings of anger, wishing something bad for others, or striving to be higher than someone are not considered aggression in themselves. Similarly, hurting that is accidental or with an unavoidable aspect, as in washing a wound that needs to be cleaned, is excluded from being aggressive (de Rivera, 2003).

According to Myers (2010), aggression has verbal and non-verbal forms. Both are understood as attacking the self-concept of another person implying refuting his position in communication (Infante & Wigley, 1986). Non-verbal aggression might be achieved by yelling or shouting at someone. It involves physical harm such as hitting, slapping the face, stabbing, biting, clubbing or kicking a person, breaking, or throwing things around (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Moreover, the non-verbal form of aggression includes all uses of gestures that appear as symbols, facial expressions, or body gestures, such as rolling eyes, gazing, ignoring, disregarding, tossing hair, and the like (Ramirez & Andreu, 2003). The verbal form is usually carried out via words (Allen & Anderson, 2017). At the least, verbally aggressive messages can cause embarrassment, anger, irritation, or hurt feelings. At worst, aggression may escalate to physical violence that may reach up to suicide or murder (Bayer & Cegala, 1992). This research work, however, is concerned with verbal aggression.

2.1 Motivations of Aggression

In interpersonal communications, aggression can be motivated by several factors. Here are the most famous ones. The first is frustration which

is the external stimulation that includes anger as the main variable which leads to aggression (Infante et al., 1984). It appears when a goal is denied or controlled by someone else. The second is social learning which is closely related to observing a particularly aggressive action whether verbal or non-verbal. For instance, following a character in a T.V. program that is characterized by aggression may lead one to be such. The third is argumentative skill deficiency which refers to the lack of verbal skills of individuals so they cannot deal with some issues and this leads them to social conflicts in any argumentation. These social conflicts are characterized by aggression (Chester & DeWall, 2013). The fourth is psychopathology which is the relatedness to abnormal mental states (Heckers, 2014).

Based on what has been presented above, this study adopts the following definition for aggression: it is the verbal unpleasant disharmonious communication between individuals which is motivated by a specific factor such as frustration, social learning, or argumentative skill deficiency causing psychological discomfort or hurt of feelings between interlocutors. Such a negative phenomenon can be studied in terms of critical studies. This research adopts the critical pragmatic approach.

3. Critical Pragmatics

Van Dijk (2008) argues that critical studies focus mainly on negative social issues like racism, sexism, and the like. Critical discourse analysis, critical stylistics (Jeffries, 2010), and critical pragmatics (Mey, 2001; Muhammed, 2018) try to delve into such negative issues. Mey (2001) suggests the term critical pragmatics in his essay entitled "*Towards a critical philosophy of language*". He attempts to explore the formulation of linguistic emancipation. Verschueren (1999) explains that critical pragmatics is a critical reflection that is based on dissatisfaction with a certain state of affairs. Pragmatics lends itself to critical investigations as it studies language use, its users, and related contextual factors (Mehdi, 2020). Critical pragmatics views aggression as a critical issue that needs to be securitized in terms of the pragmatic theories to understand how language abuse is manifested (Nashmi & Mehdi, 2022).

To work within the critical pragmatic paradigm, three concepts are essential. These are stance, critique, and reproduction (Mehdi, 2018). Stance is the "public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt

communicative means of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, concerning any salient dimension of the sociocultural field” (DuBois, 2007, p. 163). One’s stance reflects the sociocultural value system of her/his community. It may reflect the individual’s value system. Critique, on the other hand, refers to the evaluation of issues, especially negative ones (Eemeren, 2010). Critiques concerned with assessing issues like conflicts, inconsistencies, and contradictions within a text when the focus is on the formal aspects of the text. It aims to identify problematic social and political goals that are driven by discursive practices. Reisigl & Wodak (2001) state that it tries to uncover speakers’ disguised or hidden intentions, aims, interests, and claims. Reproduction refers to a procedure that has the potential to offer alternatives to replace expressions or statements that are negatively perceived (Muhammed, 2018). A set of alternatives can be provided to minimize or avoid negative expressions. These include using a hedge, adding a word or a phrase, modifying a word or a phrase, deleting a word or a phrase, asking a question, or total avoidance. These mechanisms are built on the linguistic theory of optimality (McCarthy, 2008). They are invited from a previous study by Muhammed (2018).

4. Pragmatic Manifestations of Aggression

Since verbal aggression can be conveyed via language use, two pragmatic theories have been selected to scrutinize this phenomenon in terms of linguistics. These are speech act theory (Searle, 1969) and impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996).

4.1 Speech Acts

All kinds of communications are composed of various speech acts. Saying is doing is the basic claim of Austin’s (1962) theory of speech acts. Searle (1969 and 1979) contributes to elaborating Austin’s work. Speech acts are defined as actions performed via utterances under different labels like complaints, requests, promises, blames, insults, and so on (Searle, 1969). These actions depend on the speaker’s intention and the receiver’s interpretation. Thus, those labels can be represented in different kinds of discourse and speech events and they comprise a variety of speech acts (Wales, 2011).

Searle's work (1969) specifies five macro classifications of speech acts. Representatives make the speaker believes in something as true as in assertions and claims. For example:*It is a warm sunny day*. Directives make the hearer does something like requests, warnings, and commands as in *You have to leave*. Commissives are those acts that commit the speaker himself to the future course of action like swears, threats, promises, and vows, as in *I will punish you*. Expressives are those acts that show the speaker's state or attitude like thanking, complaining, welcoming, insulting, or criticizing, as in saying:*Congratulation*. Declaratives are those acts in which the speaker's words change decisions or judgments toward the hearer like blessings or marrying as in: *The war has started*.

4.2 Impoliteness

Impoliteness is inherent to aggressive language. No case of aggression can escape impolite expressions. Culpeper (2005, p. 38) defines impoliteness as a "situation in which a speaker communicates a face-attack intentionally, and/or the hearer perceives the face-attack as intentional" Five strategies for impoliteness are designed to attack the face (Culpeper,1996), the most relevant strategies are:

1. **Bald on-record:** It is performed in a direct, concise, clear, and unambiguous way. It aims to threaten the face of the addressee without attempting to minimize the damage.
2. **Positive impoliteness:** It makes the addressee feel ignored or excluded from a certain activity. It is less direct than that of a bald-on record, and therefore less hostile. It includes using taboo words, inappropriate identity markers, being unsympathetic, and seeking disagreement.
3. **Negative impoliteness:**It is performed by attacking the addressee's negative face wants. This includes ridiculing, frightening, belittling, or excluding others from an activity.
4. **Sarcasm:**It is conducted with the use of politeness strategies that are clearly insincere and thus remain surface realizations. It is not direct, because it does not have an overt abusive or hostile quality.

5. The Analytical Framework

The model of analysis developed by this study focuses on the three mechanisms of critical pragmatics: stance, critique, and reproduction. This study adheres to anti-aggressive communications. It is assumed that all

human communications are harmonious and peaceful. Thus, it presents a critique for the instances of aggressive communication. These two mechanisms of stance and critique work throughout the entire process of analysis. Then, a reproduced element is suggested out of the following alternatives (using a hedge, adding a word or a phrase, modifying a word or a phrase, deleting a word or a phrase, asking a question, or total avoidance). This set of alternatives is borrowed from a previous study by Muhammed (2018). The pragmatic paradigm makes use of the speech act theory (Searle, 1969) and the impoliteness theory of Culpeper (1996). Speech acts are divided into commissives, expressives, directives, and representatives. Declaratives are excluded as they are not expected to be found in the data. Impoliteness houses on-record, positive and negative impoliteness as well as sarcasm.

6. Data and Analysis

This section introduces the data under analysis. It is Moriarty's novel (2014), *Big Little Lies*. Some aggressive extracts are presented in the analysis of data.

6.1 Data Description

Big Little Lies addresses the subjects of domestic abuse, the nature and nurture aspects of aggression, the psychological damage caused by rape or betrayal, the burdens of motherhood, and the disconnection between family members (Chaney, 2017). It describes the disharmonious and conflictive relationships of some people who lived bitter reality. It tells the story of five women living in one town with their families. Madeline is a close-minded independent woman and her efforts are not admired by her family. She suffers from the fact of her divorce from her ex-husband (Nathan). Madeline's new husband (Ed) and their daughter (Chloe) live together. Abigail is her teenage daughter who moved to live with her father (Nathan) and her stepmother (Bonnie) and their daughter (Skye). Celeste is the kindest and most tender one but she is the most tortured woman. Celeste and her husband (Perry) have the most aggressive relationship. He used to beat her even in their intimate moments. They have a twin (Max and Josh). Jane is a new resident in the town with her boy (Ziggy). He was born due to a raping accident by an unknown person who is discovered to be Perry later on. Renata is a strong authoritative woman. She has a daughter (Amabella) from her husband (Gorden). They have a good relationship at first but when

he is bankrupt, their relationship collapses and changes. She dismisses him from the house when she knows that he made her lose all her money. He was put in prison due to illegal businesses. Bonnie is a stable strong, and calm woman. She keeps a good relationship with her husband, daughter, and Abigail. When the accident that led to Perry's death occurred, Bonnie suffered from a change in her personality. She was unable to deal properly with people around her or be natural. The turning point in the story was the murder of Perry who died accidentally in front of the five women's eyes.

6.2 Data Analysis

This section presents some illustrative examples by choosing six extracts from the novel where aggression is detected. The unit of analysis is the utterances said by the characters. The aggressive examples are underlined in each extract.

Extract (1):

Madeline: "Silly little idiots,"

Chloe: "Who is an idiot?"

Madeline: "The girl driving the car in front of me is an idiot because she's driving her car and using her phone at the same time,"

Chloe: "Like when you need to call Daddy when we're running late?"

Madeline: "I only did that one time!" "And I was very careful and very quick! And I'm forty years old! "

Chloe: "Today". "You're forty years old today."

Madeline: "Yes! Also, [...]. Texting while driving is illegal and naughty, and you must promise to never ever do it when you're a teenager. "

Chloe: "But you're allowed to make a quick phone call?"

Madeline: "No! That's illegal too".

Chloe: "So that means you broke the law," "Like a robber."

Madeline: "Stick with nice boys, Chloe!"

Chloe: "Like Daddy? Bad boys don't bring you coffee in bed, I'll tell you that for free." (p. 15-16).

Context: This extract is between Madeline and her little daughter, Chloe. They are in the car going to Chloe's school. It is an origination

day. Madeline hits a car in front of hers. She is angry when she sees some teenagers in that car texting as they are driving their car. She says 'idiots' referring to those teenagers in the car. Chloe rejects her mother's behavior because she did the same action, i.e., texting when she was driving her car. Madeline confesses she did that once in an urgent case. Chloe tells her mother that she is just like a robber. She thinks texting while driving is an illegal behavior. Madeline tries to change the topic by asking her daughter to be with nice boys. Chloe mentions her father who used to bring coffee to Madeline in her bed. Chloe thinks her father is a nice boy for doing such an act.

Pragmatic Analysis: Madeline utters the abusive word 'idiots' to refer to the teenagers in the car. An expressive speech act of insulting is realized here. According to Meibauer (2016), this is a speech act of insulting. Madeline indirectly insults the teenagers calling them idiots. Chloe says who is 'idiot?' She refers to her mother that she is an idiot as well because she did the same act of texting once. When Chloe uses the singular form of the word 'idiot' she insults her mother. When Chloe says "Like when you need to call Daddy when we're running late?", she criticizes her mother. According to Nguyen (2005), this expressive speech act is that of criticizing. Chloe finds her mother's act of texting inappropriate and it may have unfavorable consequences. Chloe insults her mother when she says that she is just like a robber when she texted her husband while driving.

In terms of impoliteness, the daughter is impolite when she refers to her mother as 'idiot' or 'robber'. She addresses the positive face of the mother. Moreover, Chloe is impolite in her confrontation with her mother when she says "Today, you are forty". The mother wants to justify her act of texting that she is old enough to do such an act. This confrontation addresses the negative face of Madeline. The daughter uses sarcasm, another impoliteness strategy with her mother when she answers her mother: "Like Daddy? Bad boys don't bring you coffee in bed, I'll tell you that for free." In terms of the critical pragmatic approach, the daughter should not utter the word 'idiot' nor the word 'robber', referring to her mother, let alone that she should not utter it in the presence of her mother. Moreover, daughters should not confront mothers.

Extract (2):

Madeline: "Is your brother up yet?"

Chloe: "I'll wake him!"

Ed (stirred): "It's not morning time, is it? It couldn't be morning time."

Madeline(singing): "Deck the halls with something and holly!"

Madeline (sing). "Tra la la la la, la la la la!"

Ed: "I'll pay you a thousand dollars if you stop that sound right now,"

Madeline: "You don't have a thousand dollars." (p. 53-54).

Context: This extract is between Madeline and her husband; Ed. Madeline works at home and she sings loudly. She asks Chloe to wake up her brother (Fred). They shout and they do not care about Ed who was sleeping. She keeps on singing until he is awake.

Pragmatic analysis: In this extract, an expressive speech act of insulting is issued by Madeline toward her husband. She says: "You don't have a thousand dollars". Madeline disparages her husband's financial ability saying that he is poor. This injures the husband because he is supposed to be the one responsible for bringing money to his family. She uses a direct bald-on-record impoliteness strategy. In terms of critical pragmatics, she could have said that she 'I will stop singing' or 'sorry to awaking you'. Such alternative sentences are devoid from aggressive language.

Extract (3):

Madeline: "So just imagine how Jane feels when her child is the only one not invited to a party. Imagine it." [...]

Ed: "Every mother knows that. It's a law of the land." "I could talk about this subject all day long," "I really could. There is nothing else I want to talk about today other than Amabella's fifth-birthday party."

Madeline: "Shut up"

Ed: "I thought we didn't say 'shut up' in our house."

Madeline: "Fuck off, then,"

Ed: "You'll feel better tomorrow. You always feel better tomorrow." (p. 114).

Context: The conversation is between Madeline and her husband, Ed. There is a problem that is related to Jane's family regarding their invitation to Amabella's birthday party. Ed discusses this issue with his wife in a good way and he tries to calm her down. She gets more nervous. She wants her friend, Jane, to attend the party with her son but she is not invited due to a previous misunderstanding with Amabella's parents.

Pragmatic Analysis: Madeline uses insults in her talk with her husband. Although she uses abusive words while she is talking with him. She utters words like "Shut up" and "fuck off". In terms of impoliteness, she uses bald-on-record impoliteness toward the husband showing her anger at the state of affairs. In terms of critical pragmatics, such words should not be uttered in familial communication or in the house where children may hear or learn these words.

Extract (4):

Abigail: "Dad is picking me up,"

Madeline: "What? No, he's not,"

Abigail: "Yeah, because I've got ... Louisa ..., and it's closer from Dad's place."

Madeline: "It's ten minutes closer at the most,"

Abigail: "But it's just easier going from Dad and Bonnie's place. [...] We won't be sitting waiting in the car while Fred looks for his shoes or Chloe runs back inside to get a different Barbie doll or whatever."

Madeline: "I suppose Skye never has to go back inside for her Barbie doll,"

Abigail: "Bonnie would never let Skye play with Barbie dolls in a million years," [...] Mum; they're, like, badly unfeminist, [...]"

Madeline: "Yes, well, the ship has sailed when it comes to Chloe and Barbie."

Abigail: "That's him,"

Madeline: "You already called him? You arranged this without asking me?"

Abigail: "I asked Dad, Bye, Mum." (p. 90-91).

Context: This extract is between Madeline (the mother) and Abigail (her older daughter). She tells her mother that she is going to live with her father and her stepmother. She decided to leave without notifying her mother. Madeline gets nervous because Abigail is a teenager and she starts to make a comparison between her life with her mother and her life with her father. She prefers to leave her mother and move to her father's house. The conversation lacks harmony. They are talking stubbornly.

Pragmatic Analysis: Abigail confronts her mother that she is leaving her house. She issues a representative speech act of affirming, as Searle (1969) claims. She decides to leave for her father's house and she arranged to do so. Abigail shows disrespect and carelessness for her mother's feelings. Then Abigail issues a speech act of complaining as Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) state. She complains about her brother's and sister's behaviors. The family needs to wait in the car "while Fred looks for his shoes or Chloe runs back inside to get a different Barbie doll". She does not like these behaviors. She feels she has grown up and she cannot stand them. Abigail criticizes her mother when she says that Bonnie, her stepmother, would never let her daughter (Skye) play with Barbie dolls. She believes that her mother does not know how to raise her children, unlike her stepmother. This is why she decides to leave her mother's house. In terms of impoliteness, Abigail uses positive politeness strategies when she complains or criticizes her mother. She attacks her mother's face and her desire to be respected and admired.

As far as critical pragmatics is concerned, the daughter needs to show respect and care for her mother and her feelings. Complaints or criticism should be avoided when talking with parents.

Extract (5):

Perry: "They get tired after school." "I don't want to live in a pigsty."

Celeste: "So pick them up yourself,"

Perry: It's pretty simple. Either get the kids to pick it up, or pick it up yourself, or pay for a fucking housekeeper."

Context: This extract illustrates the harsh relationship between Celeste (the wife) and Perry (the husband). Their children were

playing and they left the Lego pieces on the carpet. This makes Perry upset and he blames Celeste for this chaos. He does not want to help her with the housework. Then, he tells Celeste to find a solution by bringing a housekeeper.

Pragmatic Analysis: In this extract, Perry complains about the mess his children made while playing. He wants his wife to clean this mess quickly though she is busy doing other housework. He issues an expressive speech act of complaining. He complains saying that he is living in a 'pigsty'. Perry refers to their home as a pigsty. In terms of impoliteness, he uses a negative impoliteness strategy. He utters the taboo word 'fucking' in front of his wife and his kids. This led the wife to issue a directive speech act of ordering "So pick them up yourself". Critical pragmatics finds this unsuitable in familial communication.

Extract (6):

Jane: "I'll do it!" "I gave you enough chances". "It's time to get out. Don't make a fuss."

Ziggy: (*He roared*) "Mean Mummy! I do it! You let me do it! No, no."

Jane: "We don't have time for that!"

Ziggy: "You hurt me!" *screamed Ziggy.*

Jane: "Quit.... Quit (yelling!)"

Ziggy: "I hate you!"

Jane: "Stop it," "You are behaving like a baby."

Ziggy: "I want a different Mummy!"

Jane: "Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!" (p. 177-178)

Context: this extract occurs between Jane and her young boy, Ziggy. There is a school project that Ziggy has to do for his teacher at school. It is about a tree family diagram. The context demonstrates that Jane is angry about how to make the project because she does not know Ziggy's father. She is frustrated and does not know how to behave with her son. Her suffering from the accident of raping appears now and then in her interaction with her son.

Pragmatic Analysis: There is a direct speech act of insulting from the son against his mother. He says "mean mum". He sees his mother

as a mean person. Then he continues saying that he wants another mother instead of her. He expresses his hatred towards her. All his words with his mother are impolite. He addresses her positive face using the positive impoliteness strategy of using swearing.

7. Conclusions

The analysis comes up with the following conclusions

1. Aggression is manifested verbally in the novel. Then it is developed to non-verbal acts like dismissing from the house, hitting, putting into prison, or murdering.
2. Aggressive behaviors in the novel are motivated by frustration, misunderstanding, and argumentative skill deficiency.
3. Speech acts are utilized to express aggression. Hence, the expressive ones are used because aggression is a feeling that is created inside the aggressor and it is expressed via language.
4. Negative speech acts like criticizing, insulting, or belittling abound in the novel.
5. All instances of aggressive communication are inherently impolite. However, positive and negative impoliteness strategies appear in the data. Family members are supposed to have polite and harmonious communication and smooth exchanges.

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دراسة تداولية نقدية للعدوانية في رواية موريارتي "اكاذيب صغيرة"

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المستخلص

مِنَ الْمُفْتَرَضِ أَنْ تَتَسَمَّ لُغَةُ الْإِفْرَادِ مَعَ بَعْضِهِمُ الْبَعْضَ بِالتَّوَافُقِ وَالْإِنْسِجَامِ، يَبْدُو أَنَّ الْكَثِيرَ مِنْ حَالَاتِ التَّوَاصُلِ تَسْوُدُهَا الْعُدْوَانِيَّةُ وَالتِّي تُعْرَفُ بِأَنَّهَا مَسْأَلَةٌ سَلْبِيَّةٌ وَاجْتِمَاعِيَّةٌ يُمْكِنُ أَنْ تَسْوَدَ أَغْلِبَ الْمَحَاوِرَاتِ الشَّخْصِيَّةِ. أَمَّا أَنْ كَثُرَتْ فِي الْحَوَارَاتِ الْعَائِلِيَّةِ فَتَكُونُ أَكْثَرَ خَطُورَةً لِأَثَرِهَا الْمُؤْذِي عَلَى الْإِفْرَادِ وَالْمَجْتَمَعَاتِ. وَتُشِيرُ الْعُدْوَانِيَّةُ إِلَى كُلِّ الْحَالَاتِ الَّتِي تُمَرُّ فِيهَا مَأْتَرِيدٌ دُونَ مُرَاعَاةِ الْآخَرِينَ. يَجْرِي الْجَدَلُ إِنَّ رِوَايَةَ مَوْرِيَارْتِي "أَكَاذِيبَ صَغِيرَةً" تَحْتَوِي عَلَى أَنْمَاطٍ مِنَ التَّوَاصُلِ الْعُدْوَانِيِّ. تَهْدَفُ هَذِهِ الدِّرَاسَةُ إِلَى تَحْدِيدِ الدَّوَاغِ الَّتِي تَكْمُنُ خَلْفَ لُغَةِ الْعُدْوَانِيَّةِ فِي تَوَاصُلَاتِ عَائِلَاتِ هَذِهِ الرِّوَايَةِ الْآكْثَرَ مَبِيعًا، كَمَا تَحَاوَلُ تَعْيِينَ السِّتْرَاتِيَجِيَّاتِ التَّدَاوِلِيَّةِ الْمُسْتَعْمَلَةِ فِي التَّعْبِيرِ عَنِ الْعُدْوَانِيَّةِ فِيهَا. وَلِكُونَ الْعُدْوَانِيَّةُ قَضِيَّةً اجْتِمَاعِيَّةً حَرَجَةً فَانْ مِنَ الْمُنَاسِبِ دِرَاسَتَهَا ضَمَّنَ الْمَنْهَجِ التَّدَاوِلِيِّ النَّقْدِيِّ. هَذِهِ الدِّرَاسَةُ هِيَ وَصْفِيَّةٌ نَوْعِيَّةٌ يَتَكُونُ أَطَارُهَا التَّحْلِيلِيُّ مِنَ نَظَرِيَّةِ الْفِعْلِ الْكَلَامِيِّ لِسِيرَل (1969) وَنَظَرِيَّةِ اللَّاتَادِبِ لِكَلِبِر (1996). أَظْهَرَ التَّحْلِيلُ أَنَّ الْإِفْعَالَ الْكَلَامِيَّةَ السَّلْبِيَّةَ مِثْلَ النَّقْدِ وَالتَّشْكِكِ وَكَذَلِكَ السِّتْرَاتِيَجِيَّاتِ السَّلْبِيَّةِ لِنَظَرِيَّةِ اللَّاتَادِبِ تَسْوَدُ فِي حَوَارَاتِ هَذِهِ الرِّوَايَةِ

كلمات مفتاحية: العدوانية، نظرية الفعل الكلامي، نظرية اللاتأدب، رواية اكاذيب صغيرة