UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

ANTI-CAPITALIST SATIRICAL ATTITUDE IN NOVELS
BY SONALLAH IBRAHIM AND MARTIN AMIS

KHALED ABKAR ALKODIMI

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By

KHALED ABKAR ALKODIMI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of philosophy

February 2011
Dedication

To my Mother and the
Memory of my Father

To my Wife and Children
ABSTRACT OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE SENATE OF UNIVERSITI
PUTRA MALAYSIA IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ANTI-CAPITALIST SATIRICAL ATTITUDE IN NOVELS BY SONALLAH
IBRAHIM AND MARTIN AMIS

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February 2011

Chair: Associate Professor Noritah Omar, PhD
Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

This study examines the satirical attitude of Sonallah Ibrahim and Martin Amis in the
selected literary texts. Taking Ibrahim and Amis as authors who bitterly criticised the
established socioeconomic conditions of the late twentieth century society, the analysis
centers on two novels each, whose satirical tone, together with their subject matter and
wide spread popularity, make them essential reading in this context. The study argues
that Ibrahim and Amis have employed the mode of satire to mock the idea that
capitalism works for the welfare of societies and individuals.

The study relies on Leonard Feinberg and Gilbert Higet’s views of satire as well as on
the definitions of Northrop Frey and Mtumane among others to analyse Ibrahim and
Amis’ use of satiric devices such as exaggeration, irony and distortion to express their
anti-capitalist stance as presented in the selected novels. While Frey views satire as an
“attitude”, Mtumane stresses the significance of the literary devices used, such as above, to express such attitude.

The study shows that the two authors have used satire as a vehicle to expose the monstrous nature of the capitalist system that hides its hegemony and exploitation behind the mask of ideology. To this end, their satiric exposition grotesquely shows that consumerism is but a form of exploitation, promoted by capitalism for its own survival. Besides, the study also shows that Ibrahim and Amis have critically presented capitalist society as a class-ridden one that is characterised by inequality and oppression for poor people, and how those people are mechanically driven to search for false success in a free market economy. In this sense, the study makes use of Marxist perspectives on capitalism to further highlight Ibrahim and Amis’s satirical views on capitalism as an exploitative and oppressive social system.

Finally, this thesis stresses the power of satire as a subversive weapon against hegemonic culture and the power of global capitalism which Ibrahim, as a Third World writer in particular, has uniquely employed in his work. The concluding comments show that satirists almost emerge out of their social contexts. Ibrahim and Amis are but voices of resistance for the socioeconomic unjust embodied in the capitalist system that transformed societies into markets, individuals into consumers and workers into machines. They utilised certain satirical devices to ridicule the social unjust that appears to be a significant characteristic of both societies. This leads me to further conclude that Ibrahim and Amis’ novels are significant satiric fictions employed as a means to enlighten the public of the negative impact of capitalism on societies.
ABSTRAK TESIS YANG DIKEMUKAKAN KEPADA SENAT UNIVERITI
PUTRA MALAYSIA SEBAGAI MEMENUHI KEPERLUAN UNTUK IJAZAH
DOKTOR FALSAFAH

SIKAP SATIRA ANTI-KAPITALIS DALAM NOVEL-NOVEL SONALLAH
IBRAHIM DAN MARTIN AMIS

Oleh

KHALED ABKAR ALKODIMI

February 2011

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Noritah Omar, PhD

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Tambahan pula, kajian ini berteraskan definisi satira yang diberikan oleh Northrop Frey dan Mtumane, selain daripada idea-idea yang diketengahkan oleh Leonard Feinberg dan Gilberg Highet. Walaupun Frey menganggap satira sebagai sejenis “sikap”, Mtumane...
memberi penekanan kepada kaedah yang digunakan untuk menyatakan sikap ini melalui definisi satira sebagai “serangan berbentuk lisan atau bertulis terhadap sesuatu perkara dengan menggunakan tokok tambah, ironi, sindiran, jenaka dan ejekan…”. Analisis ini menunjukkan bagaimana Ibrahim dan Amis telah menggunakan pelbagai kaedah sastera seperti yang dibincangkan di atas untuk menyatakan pandangan anti-kapitalis mereka sepertimana yang terkandung dalam teks-teks terpilih.

Kajian menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua penulis ini telah menggunakan kaedah satira secara kritis untuk mendedahkan sifat-sifat hegemoni dan eksploitasi sistem kapitalis yang berselindung di sebalik samaran ideologi. Selain itu, mereka memberikan gambaran yang tidak menyenangkan tentang bagaimana kapitalisme mendorong kepenggunaan untuk menampung kemandiriannya. Kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa Ibrahim dan Amis mengetengahkan kritikan terhadap masyarakat kapitalis yang dikuasai oleh sistem pengelasan dimana ketidaksamaan dan penindasan terhadap golongan miskin menyebabkan mereka terpedaya dengan pencarian kejayaan yang palsu dalam pasaran ekonomi yang bebas. Oleh itu, kajian ini dilakukan dari sudut pandangan Marxisme bagi memberi penekanan kepada pandangan satira Ibrahim dan Amis terhadap eksploitasi dan penindasan yang berlaku dalam sistem sosial kapitalisme.

Akhir sekali, tesis ini memberi penegasan terhadap keberkesanan satira sebagai senjata yang mampu menentang budaya hegemoni dan kuasa kapitalisme sedunia. Kesimpulannya, ahli-ahli satira dianggap sebagai berada di luar konteks sosial mereka. Ibrahim dan Amis sekadar menjadi suara yang menentang ketidakadilan sistem
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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 09 February 2011 to conduct the final examination of Khaled Abkar Alkodimi on his thesis entitled “Anti-Capitalist Satirical attitude in Novels by Sonallah Ibrahim and Martin Amis” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This thesis was submitted to the senate of universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Date: 9 June 2011
Declaration

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

KHALED ABKAR ALKODIMI

Date: 9 February 2011
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preamble</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim and Amis: A Critical Overview</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Historical Period</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Problem</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives of the Study</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of the study</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Theory</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satire</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context and Significance of Satire</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Key Literary Terms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the Thesis</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Major Trends in the Modern Arabic Novel; Ibrahim and Amis: Voices of a Generation</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preamble</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rise and the Development of the Arabic Novel</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Novel as a Social Critique</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonallah Ibrahim and the Sixties Generation: The Search for a New Form</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonallah Ibrahim: the social critic</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonallah Ibrahim: The Marxist</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xiii
Ibrahim’s Selected Texts 80
Martin Amis: The Son of the Sixties 88
Amis the Satirist: Major Works 90
Amis’s Non-fiction 100

3 Ibrahim and Amis’ Satirical Devices to Ridicule Capitalism 105

Preamble 105
Allegory and Exaggeration to Condemn Capitalist Hegemony 106
John Self and Al-Lajna’s Narrator-protagonist: Unmasking Capitalism 115
Coca-Cola Culture and Capitalist Exploitation: Irony as the Driving Force of Ibrahim and Amis’s satire 121
Hypocrisy and Pretension: Paradox as a Tool of the Grotesque 144
Consumerism and Neo-Colonialism: Back to Allegory 158
Conclusion 171

4 Class in the Open Market Economy: Intertextuality and Symbolism as Methods of Ridicule 174

Preamble 174
Egypt and the Rise of Social Classes 176
Ibrahim: Intertextuality to Mock Class Inequality 180
Oppression and Resistance: Satiric Symbolism 193
Zaat and Terry: the Quest to Belong 213
Conclusion 223

5 Conclusion 226

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES 238

WORKS CITED 240
APPENDIX 251
BIODATA OF STUDENT 257
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS 258