



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CHARACTER  
CONFLICTS IN SELECTED NOVELS OF IAN McEWAN***

**MINA ABBASIYANNEJAD**

**FBMK 2013 27**



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**By**

**MINA ABBASIYANNEJAD**

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**March 2013**

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## DEDICATIONS

*To my late father to whom I am much indebted  
And my dear mother who devoted her life to me  
And to my beloved husband, Dr Yadollah Abdollahi,  
For his everlasting support and encouragement*

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**March 2013**

**Chairman: Associate Prof. Rosli Talif, PhD**

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The present study examines and analyses the relationship between conflicts in the macrocosm (world and society) and conflicts in the microcosm (individuals). While exploring cultural and political conflicts, and pinpointing the major and influential causes of problems, it scrutinizes the individuals' lives to recognize the existing conflicts between characters through the identification and interpretation of signs, symbols and metaphors. The selected stories, for this study are *On Chesil Beach*, *Atonement*, *The Innocent* and *Black Dogs*. Using theories of social stratification and sexual politics as a framework, the study reveals the omnipresent effect of societal power on people's relationships. Semiotics as a tool assists the reader in identifying any signs related to the conflicts in order to recognize meanings hidden beyond words. The selected novels are tales of incompatibility, generated by economic inequality, sexual restrictions or political power. *On Chesil Beach* and *Atonement* are both stories marked by unequal

relationships both from class and sexuality. On the other hand, *The Innocent* and *Black Dogs* are riddled with party (political) domination and sexual conflicts in society. Moreover, political challenges to the power in society give rise to other diverse conflicts, e.g. the struggle among the victors of the Second World War during the Cold War that followed. In the same vein, sexual politics demonstrates that sex is not merely biological act but has political implications. The study shows the multi-dimensional aspects of sex, demonstrating how women can be oppressed in economic and political terms. The oppressive period before the sexual revolution, generates conflicts among people particularly the young, which is shown in various ways in the novels. McEwan demonstrates how conflicts between humans (microcosm) are metaphors for world and social turmoil (macrocosm). The study also shows McEwan's concern with issues such as war, class and sexual conflicts in his novels which mirror his personal life. The findings of this study indicate that economic inequalities and political conflicts along with sexual restrictions permeate the affluent and powerful who are in a position to dominate the impoverished and the powerless, who seem to be easy targets for oppression.

Abstrak tesis dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**HUBUNGAN ANTARA KONFLIK SOSIO-POLITIK DAN WATAK DI DALAM  
NOVEL TERPILIH IAN McEWAN**

Oleh

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**Mac 2013**

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Kajian ini meneliti dan menganalisis hubungan antara konflik *macrocosm* (dunia dan masyarakat) dan konflik *microcosm* (individu). Selain daripada melihat konflik budaya dan politik, dan mencari punca utama yang mempengaruhi masalah tersebut, penelitian terhadap kehidupan individu juga dilakukan untuk melihat kesahihan konflik antara watak-watak melalui identifikasi dan interpretasi terhadap tanda-tanda, simbol dan metafora. Novel yang dipilih, untuk kajian ini ialah *On Chesil Beach*, *Atonement*, *The Innocent*, dan *Black Dogs*. Rangka kerja kajian ini menggunakan teori stratifikasi sosial dan *politik seksual*, hasil kajian menunjukkan wujud kuasa terhadap hubungan dalam masyarakat. Semiotik digunakan sebagai alat bagi membantu pembaca mengenal pasti tanda-tanda yang berkaitan dengan konflik untuk mengetahui makna yang tersembunyi di sebalik kata-kata. Novel yang dipilih juga mengisahkan ketidakserasian, yang dihasilkan oleh ketidakseimbangan ekonomi, larangan seksual atau kuasa politik. Kedua-dua novel , *On Chesil Beach* dan *Atonement* menceritakan tentang hubungan yang tidak sama rata bagi kelas dan seksualiti. Sebaliknya, novel *The Innocent* dan

*Black Dogs* penuh dengan teka-teki dalam parti (politik) dominasi dan konflik seksual dalam masyarakat. Selain itu, cabaran politik untuk berkuasa menimbulkan pelbagai konflik lain, contohnya perjuangan antara yang menang dalam perang dunia kedua semasa berlakunya perang dingin selepas itu. Dalam nada yang sama, politik seksual menunjukkan bahawa seks bukan semata-mata perbuatan biologi tetapi mempunyai implikasi politik. Kajian menunjukkan pelbagai dimensi aspek seks, terhadap wanita diperlihatkan sebagai penindasan dari segi ekonomi dan politik. Novel yang dipilih juga memperlihatkan konflik dikalangan masyarakat terutama golongan muda semasa zaman penindasan sebelum revolusi seksual. McEwan menunjukkan bagaimana konflik antara manusia (microcosm) merupakan metafora untuk dunia dan kegawatan sosial (macrocosm), kajian itu juga menunjukkan keprihatinan mcewan dengan isu-isu seperti perang, kelas dan konflik seksual itu adalah mencerminkan kehidupan peribadinya. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa ketidaksamaan ekonomi dan konflik politik serta halangan seksual banyak meresapi golongan kaya dan berkuasa untuk menindas golongan miskin dan yang lemah, yang seolah-olah menjadi sasaran mudah untuk penindasan.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 15 March 2013. to conduct the final examination of Mina Abbasiyannejad on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Socio-Political and Character Conflicts in Ian McEwan’s Selected Novels” in accordance with the Universities and University College Act 1971 and the Constitution of Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106], 15 March 1998. The committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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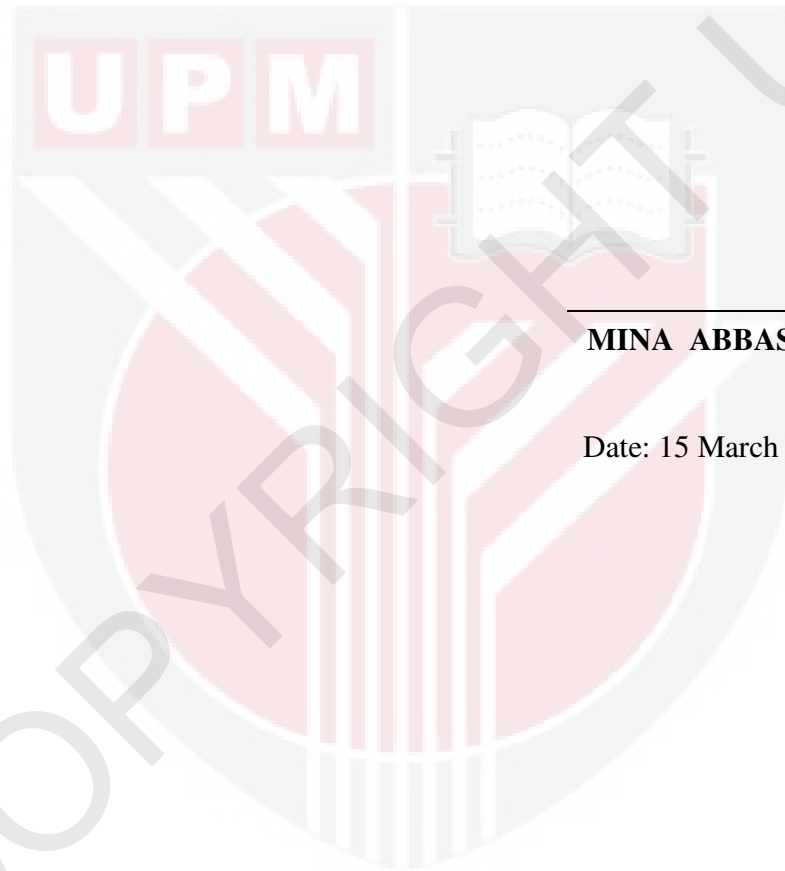
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## DECLARATION

I declare that this 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.



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**MINA ABBASIYANNEJAD**

Date: 15 March 2013

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