UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

THE GROTESQUE IN SELECTED MODERN PERSIAN AND POST-WAR BRITISH SHORT STORIES

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FBMK 2013 62
THE GROTESQUE IN SELECTED MODERN PERSIAN AND POST-WAR BRITISH SHORT STORIES

By

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

June 2013
DEDICATION

To my Parents

For their Unfailing Love and Support throughout my Life
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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June 2013

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The grotesque enjoys a long history and a wide range of theoretical discussions which provide various, sometimes diverse, interpretations of this artistic and literary genre. While some scholars discuss the grotesque in association with related fields of study such as psychology or philosophy, some others basically focus on the grotesque itself. From a different perspective, the grotesque is also considered as a subject of study in terms of any or all the three levels of production; author (artistic mind), work (creation) and reader response (reception).

The present study concentrates on the theories of the grotesque per se, and it is basically involved with work and partly with reception, considering that some elements of the grotesque are related to the effects it produces. This research discusses the grotesque as a focal image and mode of representation, based on a pattern developed from its recurrent elements. Accordingly, the recurrent features of the grotesque are drawn from the scholarship and are then classified and developed into hallmarks constituting the framework presented by this study.
The grotesque, as a subcategory of Western aesthetics in art and literature, is also studied in this dissertation for its adaptability and extension to non-Western literature, namely short fiction. The study is thus devoted to a textual reading of selected Modern Persian as well as Post-war British short fiction. It is sought to trace the grotesque through its basic pattern in the interpretation of works from both literary traditions. In this regard, pairs of stories are thematically matched through motifs potentially associated with the grotesque. This is in line with the methodological approach to comparative studies, which requires a point of departure as the rationale for the comparison.

Four sections in two discussion chapters are devoted to textual analysis of four pairs of stories. Textual analysis for each section initiates with a discussion on the common motif and is followed by close readings of both stories in the pair, which are read and interpreted in their depiction of the grotesque. A final section on each story pair concludes on the commonalities due to grotesque representations and elaborates on the variations of grotesque fiction as portrayed. This implies that the classification of grotesque fiction and its interrelatedness with the fantastic and caricature are also elaborated on. This study suggests that common misunderstandings and interpretive contradictions surrounding the meaning and the structure of the grotesque have most to do with its variations and interrelatedness, which can be best explicated in terms of its comprising a basic pattern with flexibility for its merger with other terms and modes.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

ASPEK “GROTESQUE” DALAM CERITA PENDEK TERPILIH PARSI MODEN DAN INGGERIS SELEPAS PERANG

Oleh

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Aspek “grotesque” mendapat tempat meluas dalam sejarah dan perbincangan teori yang memberikan pelbagai tafsiran berbeza terhadap genre seni dan sastera. Walaupun sesetengah cendekiawan membincangkan aspek “grotesque” sebagai suatu cabang ilmu yang berkaitan dengan bidang psikologi atau falsafah, sesetengah mereka yang lain pula menumpukan kepada aspek “grotesque” itu sendiri. Daripada perspektif yang berbeza, aspek “grotesque” juga dianggap sebagai subjek kajian dari segi mana-mana atau semua tiga peringkat produksi; pengarang (minda seni), karya (penciptaan) dan sambutan pembaca (penerimaan).

dikelas dan dibangunkan menjadi tanda yang membentuk corak asas yang dibentangkan oleh kajian ini.

Aspek “grotesque” sebagai sebuah sub kategori estetika Barat dalam seni dan sastera, juga dikaji dalam disertasi ini untuk penyesuaian kepada kesusastraan bukan Barat, iaitu fiksyen pendek. Kajian ini dihaskan untuk teks bacaan terpilih fiksyen pendek Parsi Moden dan Inggeris selepas Perang. Ia berhasrat untuk memaparkan aspek “grotesque” melalui corak asas dalam tafsiran karya daripada kedua-dua tradisi sastera ini. Dalam hal ini, pasangan cerita dipadankan secara bertema melalui corak yang berpotensi untuk dikaitkan dengan aspek “grotesque.” Ia adalah selaras dengan pendekatan metodologi kepada kajian perbandingan yang memerlukan satu ciri asas sebagai rasional dalam membuat perbandingan.

Bagi setiap empat pasang cerita, perbincangan awal pada corak biasa diikuti oleh bacaan terperinci kedua-dua cerita dalam setiap pasangan, yang kemudiannya dibaca dan ditafsirkan menerusi aspek “grotesque” yang dipaparkan. Satu bahagian akhir setiap pasangan cerita menyimpulkan persamaan terhadap kewujudan aspek “grotesque” dan menghuraikan tentang variasi fiksyen aspek “grotesque” seperti yang ditonjolkan. Ia menunjukkan bahawa klasifikasi fiksyen aspek “grotesque” serta saling perkaitannya dengan kehebatan dan karikatur juga turut dihuraikan. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa kesalahfahaman biasa dan percanggahan tafsiran terhadap makna dan struktur aspek “grotesque” itu adalah disebabkan oleh variasi dan saling perkaitannya, yang sebaiknya boleh dihuraikan dari segi ia terdiri daripada corak asas yang fleksibel untuk penggabungannya dengan terma dan mod lain.

vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise God, the ever-shining light that illuminates the darkest and hardest paths. For completing this research, my heartfelt thanks go to Dr. Arbaayah Ali Termizi, whose invaluable insight and acute supervision were helpful beyond expression. I am also indebted to Associate Prof. Dr Rosli Talif and Dr Shivani Sivagurunathan for their helpful co-supervision of this dissertation. My thanks also go to Prof. Dr Bahram Meghdadi, my master’s supervisor at Tehran University, who first introduced me to the theories of the grotesque. Moreover, I would like to thank the staff at Faculty of Modern Languages and School of Graduate Studies for helping students, including me, at different stages of their study. I duly appreciate UPM School of Graduate Studies for granting me financial aid for an overseas conference, though I finally could not attend the occasion due to complications of annual student visa extension in Malaysia.

My appreciation and gratitude can find no proper way of expression when it comes to my parents. This is not just for the sincere parental sacrifice that parents make throughout our lives, but also for bringing themselves to accept my being away at a stage of their lives when they may need me the most. I owe a great deal to my caring siblings and the friends, beautifully colouring my memories at school, colleges and workplaces. Their love and encouragement has never failed to give me hope during the different phases of my academic and personal life. Among my friends, I would especially like to thank Farah, Nader, Mina, Faezeh and Parviz, who were always there to help me with every single piece of work.
I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 11 June 2013 to conduct the final examination of Nahid Shahbazi Moghadam on her thesis entitled “The Grotesque in Selected Modern Persian and Post-War British Short Stories” in accordance with the Universities and University College Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (PU. (A) 106) 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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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 any other institutions.

NAHID SHAHBAZI MOGHADAM

Date: 11 June 2013
# 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>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION
   1.1 Background Study                        | 1   |
   1.2 General Statement of the Problem       | 3   |
   1.3 Objectives                             | 5   |
   1.4 Conceptual Framework                   | 6   |
   1.5 Methodology                            | 7   |
   1.6 Scope and Limitations                  | 12  |
   1.7 Definition of Terms                    | 14  |
       1.7.1 Grotesque in Dictionary Entries   | 15  |
       1.7.2 Grotesque as Image, Mode, Genre and Category | 17  |
       1.7.3 Grotesque in Cultural and Cross-Cultural Contexts | 19  |
       1.7.4 Grotesque in relation to Parody, Satire and Macabre | 20  |
       1.7.5 Grotesque in association with Fantastic and Caricature | 22  |
   1.8 Significance of the Study              | 25  |
   1.9 Structure of the Thesis                | 27  |

2 THEORIES OF THE GROTESQUE
   2.1 Introduction                            | 30  |
   2.2 History at a Glance                     | 30  |
   2.3 The Grotesque in Literature             | 32  |
   2.4 Overview of Early Critical Studies      | 34  |
       2.4.1 Renaissance to Eighteenth Century  | 35  |
       2.4.2 Grotesque during European Romanticism | 37  |
       2.4.3 Nineteenth-Century Studies          | 39  |
   2.5 Review of Selected Twentieth-Century Studies to the Present | 43  |
   2.6 Summary                                 | 59  |

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
   3.1 Introduction                            | 61  |
   3.2 Discussion of Recurrent Elements        | 61  |
       3.2.1 Distortion and Exaggeration in Categorical Transgression | 62  |
       3.2.2 Material Body: Sexual and Scatological Imagery | 64  |
       3.2.3 Degradation                        | 67  |
       3.2.4 Deformity                          | 69  |
       3.2.5 Madness                            | 71  |
3.2.6 Aggression
3.2.7 Death
3.2.8 Alienation
3.2.9 Blur of Identity
3.2.10 Laughter versus Fear or Horror
3.2.11 Copresentation of Opposites or Clash of Incompatibles
3.2.12 Paradoxicality/Unresolvibility and Shock Effect
3.3 Conceptual Framework
3.4 Summary

4 MODERN PERSIAN & POST-WAR BRITISH SHORT FICTION
4.1 Introduction
4.2 Post-war British Fiction
4.3 Selected British Short Stories and their Authors
4.4 Modern Persian Fiction
4.5 Selected Persian Short Stories and their Authors
4.6 Summary

5 THE GROTESQUE, FANTASTIC AND CARICATURE
5.1 Introduction
5.2 Fantasy and Reality in “Danse Macabre” and “The Snake Stone”
5.3 Ideal and Real in “Dead as They Come” and “The Doll behind the Curtain”
5.4 Findings

6 THE GROTESQUE
6.1 Introduction
6.2 Real and Surreal in “The Rain Horse” and “The Wolf”
6.3 Repulsion and Attraction in “Butterflies” and “Davud the Hunchback” 176
  6.3.1 Deprivations of the Deformed Outcast 176
  6.3.2 “Butterflies” 180
  6.3.3 “Davud the Hunchback” 185
  6.3.4 Representational Grotesque 189
6.4 Findings 192

7 CONCLUSION
  7.1 Grotesque, its Definition and Basic Pattern 196
  7.2 Grotesque in a Non-Western Literary Tradition 197
  7.3 Variations of Grotesque Fiction 201
  7.4 Recommendations 203

WORKS CITED 205
APPENDIX 213
BIODATA OF STUDENT 220
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS 221