

ABU NAWAS SABAH FOLK VERSION: INTERTEXTUALITY AND CREATIVITY

(Abu Nawas Versi Rakyat Sabah: Intertekstualiti dan Kreativiti)

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Abstract

The tales of Abu Nawas, which originated in Arab-Persia are popular humorous stories told in the Malay world. Several written sources reveal that these tales spread to the Malay world between the 13th and 15th centuries, through the books *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Hikayat Abu Nawas*. Drawing from field trips conducted in a number of places in Sabah, a total of 13 tales, that had been transmitted orally among Sabah indigenous informants, have been collected. Upon comparison with *Hikayat Abu Nawas*, it was found that some of the Sabah folk version of Abu Nawas tales are similar to those published in *Hikayat Abu Nawas* while some are very different. This study attempts to compare the motifs of the original Abu Nawas tales with those of the Sabah folk version based on the principles of intertextuality. The intertextual comparison shows that early on, the indigenous people of Sabah had been exposed to the Abu Nawas stories. Later however, the stories were retold based on local elements. In the end, the indigenous storytellers of Sabah began to create their own version with motifs different from that of the original tales. These retold stories are rich in local color and motifs, highlighting the genius and creativity of local Sabah storytellers.

Keywords: Abu Nawas, humorous tale, intertextuality, motif comparison, local genius, creativity

Abstrak

Cerita Abu Nawas ialah cerita jenaka popular di alam Melayu yang berasal dari Arab-Parsi. Beberapa sumber tulisan melaporkan bahawa cerita ini telah disebarkan ke alam Melayu antara kurun ke-13 hingga kurun ke-15 melalui Hikayat Seribu Satu Malam dan Hikayat Abu Nawas. Dalam kerja lapangan yang dikendalikan di beberapa tempat di Sabah baru-baru ini, sejumlah tiga belas buah cerita Abu Nawas, yang tersebar secara lisan dalam kalangan informan pelbagai etnik peribumi Sabah telah dikumpul. Setelah diteliti, sesetengah daripada cerita Abu Nawas versi rakyat Sabah didapati mirip dengan cerita Abu Nawas yang diterbitkan dalam Hikayat Abu Nawas manakala sesetengah yang lain didapati jauh berbeza. Tulisan ini bertujuan membuat perbandingan antara motif cerita Abu Nawas versi rakyat Sabah dengan motif cerita Abu Nawas dalam Hikayat Abu Nawas berasaskan prinsip intertekstualiti. Hasil perbandingan intertekstual yang dilakukan mendapati bahawa, pada mulanya penduduk peribumi Sabah telah didedahkan dengan cerita Abu Nawas. Terdapat sesetengah cerita Abu Nawas kemudiannya telah diolah semula berasaskan unsur tempatan. Akhir sekali, pencerita peribumi Sabah telah mencipta sejumlah cerita Abu Nawas, yang motifnya berbeza sama sekali daripada motif cerita Abu Nawas asal. Cerita Abu Nawas versi rakyat Sabah seperti ini didapati kaya dengan motif dan unsur tempatan. Penghasilan cerita Abu Nawas versi rakyat Sabah turut menonjolkan kearifan dan kreativiti yang ada pada pencerita tempatan Sabah.

Kata kunci: Abu Nawas, cerita jenaka, intertekstualiti, perbandingan motif, kearifan tempatan, kreativiti

INTRODUCTION

The tales of Abu Nawas is categorized as a cycle of tales from Arab-Persia. Wan Shamsudin (1966:1), the compiler of *Hikayat Abu Nawas (HAN)*, stated that *HAN* was most probably brought into the Malay world in about the 13th century by merchants from Gujerat and Persia, together with other Islamic literature. Winstedt (1920b:119) and Emeis (1973:5) reported that *One Thousand and One Nights* was one of the popular Islamic literature read and told by merchants who gathered in Malacca, while waiting to go back to their homeland. If these reports by Wan Shamsudin (1966) and Emeis (1973) are valid we can assume that the stories of Abu Nawas were disseminated to the locals around 13th -15th centuries by those who had read *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Hikayat Abu Nawas*.

Winstedt (1966:18) in his famous book *A History of Classical Malay Literature* said that he was involved in the writing of the outline of the Arab-Persian and Indian versions of *Tjerita Aboe Nawas*, into English by providing interesting descriptions and comments about the origin of the tales of Abu Nawas:

There are only two tales in Malay, in a large unpublished manuscript of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, that exhibit Abu Nawas as he was at the court of Harun ar-Rashid, a great poet. Jokes are ascribed to him in the Arabian Nights. While in Madagascar and Malaya, among the Mehri of South Arabia and among the Swahili, he has become the hero of cycles of farcical tales, some of them at least of local origin. The Malay recensions lack the local colour which is the literary feature of older folktales.

In the field work collecting folk tales in several selected locations in Sabah, the tales of Abu Nawas are among those provided by some local informants. After a close study, several of the Sabah folk version of Abu Nawas tales are found to be rich in local colour. The discovery of these stories attracted the researcher's attention and curiosity, i.e are there Abu Nawas stories transmitted orally in Sabah that were created by locals based on local genius and creativity? To answer this research question an intertextual comparative analysis between the motifs of the original Abu Nawas stories and those of the Sabah version will be conducted. The purpose is to identify local genius and creativity in the Sabah version of Abu Nawas stories.

LOCAL GENIUS AND CREATIVITY

Part of the analysis in this article is closely related to the concept of local genius, which is linked to creativity. Therefore both concepts should be explained first. There were researchers who discussed traditional Malay literature in the context of external influences. Winstedt (1996) for example reported that all Malay folk tales originated from outside the Malay world, especially India, Arabia or Persia. This is because Winstedt was influenced by the theory of a higher culture dominating a lower culture (Noriah, 1993:16). As India, Arabia and Persia were of the higher culture it is easy to see why Winstedt (1996:x) in the preface of his book states: "Any one who surveys the field of Malay literature will be struck by the amazing abundance of its foreign flora and the rarity of indigenous growths".

In this regard, Sweeney (1976:16) was of the opinion that Winstedt had used the English yardstick to categorize humorous tales of old Malay (Pak Pandir, Lebai Malang and Pak Kadok) and humorous tales of non-Malay origin (Pak Belalang, Si Luncai and others). Sweeney (1976) went on to emphasize that the motif in Pak Pandir for instance was also found outside the Malay world. Therefore Sweeney regarded that any local tales that had similar motifs with foreign ones could not be used as a benchmark to determine if the story originated from outside. The stories of Pak Pandir whose naivety gave rise to comic situations and were narrated to serve as examples have a universal motif, not only in the oral tradition but in the written collections of various races of the world (Mohd Taib, 2007:315).

With regard to local genius, Mohd Taib (2007:320) stated that in the context of folk tales it is not only for the purpose of highlighting local colour but it also shows the locals' capability to extract, redo and adapt whatever is borrowed or copied into the local mould. Outside influence on local literature is a common occurrence. With local genius and creativity, external influences on the peoples' literature are counterbalanced until it becomes rich with local elements. The stories of Abu Nawas and Musang Berjanggut for example are borrowed tales from outside. Although the themes and motifs have many similarities with the original, these stories have been adapted until they become part and parcel of Malay literature (Mohd Taib, 2007:321). Regretfully Mohd Taib did not elaborate on this.

Harun (2003:115) in his study states that there are many similarities between the myths, legends and tales from different regions in the Malay world. At the same time, differing characteristics and aspects are also found. He also states that many of the basic structure of folk tales are shared by different societies, although the contents vary. Let's say, the basic structure of a folk tale is "the hero should fulfil society's values", therefore each society has its own way of showing how its hero fulfils the values demanded of them. The differences thus found, will show the local genius and creativity of a society.

The corpus of this study, i.e. the tales of Abu Nawas originally were humorous tales from Arab-Persia. However in the field works collecting humorous tales in Sabah recently, a number of Abu Nawas tales were discovered which had been transmitted orally among the local folks in Sabah. In the comparison of motifs between the stories, if there are motifs of Abu Nawas tales Sabah version that have been adapted and interspersed with local colour, we can say that the creation of a new Abu Nawas story is an example of local genius and creativity.

INTERTEXTUAL COMPARISON: AN EXPLANATION

In this work, the intertextual comparison approach is used for the purpose of motif comparison between Abu Nawas stories in *HAN* and the Sabah folk version of Abu Nawas tales. Intertextual comparison has been used by several traditional Malay literature researchers. Among them, Braginsky (2014) who did an intertextual comparison between *Hikayat Bakhtiar* originally from Persia and its translated version in Malay. Roland Barthes (1998), while presenting the principle of intertextuality, regards literary text as “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture”. (Braginsky, 2014:205). Barthes’ principle of intertextuality carries two important meanings regarding the influence of literature between cultures as quoted by Braginsky (2014:206):

Any piece of a particular literature can exist as a holistic entity, all the components of which (narrative units or “quanta”, of various kinds, deliberations of the author and his characters, aphoristic sayings, descriptive motifs and so forth) are arranged and interlinked with each other, so that they can bear a certain integral meaning. This is a “syntagmatic” existence of the literary work per se, its existence in the form of a tissue, that is, a certain structure. This is how it was intended by its author.

The literary text may exist as a destructuralised set of the same components isolated from each other - its “paradigmatic” existence as a sum total of quotations that contribute to the all-embracing repository of “quotations” which makes up the intertext of a particular literature. This intertext provides “building blocks” for the construction of new literary pieces.

The intertextual comparison conducted by Braginsky (2014) between the original *Hikayat Bakhtiar* and the Malay translation produced a number of interesting findings. First, Braginsky (2014:222) noted that the relationship between literatures-that-give and literatures-that-take was very complex. In the context of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (*HB*), Malay authors consciously chose literature from the more comprehensive foreign culture and then use their creativity to adapt, alter and make it a Malay work of art based on local characteristics thought to be suitable. In other words *HB* highlights how a foreign text can be reworked to become a Malay text based on local genius and creativity. This is achieved in three stages. First, the original text has been translated into Malay, and although there are differences, the translated text is quite close to the original. Second, the translation becomes an inspiration

to other creative authors, hence the creation of longer and shorter versions of *HB*, which differ in motif and local colours. Finally, the Malay version of *HB* is created as described by Braginsky:

Over the third stage covering the late seventeenth - the eighteenth century, the motifs from all the framing tales and inserted stories of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*'s recensions form together a specific segment within the intertext of traditional Malay literature, while still preserving a certain Persian aura. This segment is to provide later Malay writers with "building blocks" for the composition of new literary pieces, such as *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* and *Syair Bidasari*, which have even less to do with the original Bakhtiar tale than the recensions of "pseudo-*Hikayat Bakhtiar*". Yet, in their works, the later writers not only reproduce and recombine the narrative and descriptive motifs drawn from their constellation in *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (now destructuralized) but also enhance the message of their own pieces by making allusions to the ideas expressed through relevant motifs in this *hikayat*.

The concept of intertextuality such as this will be used in the comparison of texts between the original Abu Nawas stories and those of the Sabah folk version to identify the elements that influence the original text and the local genius in the context of local Sabah storytellers' creativity.

SUITABILITY OF *HIKAYAT ABU NAWAS* FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPARISON

When the Tales of Abu Nawas spread through India, Arabia and Persia to the Malay world in the beginning, they were already in written form. Among the Islamic works that carried the Abu Nawas tales were *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Hikayat Abu Nawas (HAN)*. The source of the Abu Nawas tales are regarded by the author as Islamic literature which coincided with the coming of Islam to this region. *HAN* was a well known old Islamic storybook in the Malay world. Part of the stories in *HAN* were added to reading books in Malay schools in the past. In addition, *HAN* was reprinted 13 times from 1929 till 1968 (Wan Shamsuddin, 1966:1; Shaiful Bahri, 2000:12). This shows how popular and widespread Abu Nawas stories in *HAN* were, having spread among the locals in the Malay world.

If looked at closely, all the characters in *HAN* such as Abu Nawas, Sultan Harun al-Rashid, Maulana, the *kadhi*, the Egyptian merchant, the Jew and many others indicate that the stories originate in the Middle East. The

backdrop is focused on Baghdad and the palace of Sultan Harun al-Rashid. The time is around the era of Sultan Harun al-Rashid's reign over Baghdad between 786 - 809 A.D. (Wan Shamsuddin, 1966:7). As the three Abu Nawas stories collected during field work are similar to the three stories in *HAN*, these texts are suitable prototype material for intertextual comparison with Abu Nawas tales Sabah folk version. All three will be discussed in the analysis segment. The Tales of Abu Nawas in *HAN* (1966) are listed in Table 1.

The tales of Abu Nawas Sabah folk version were told by ethnic Kimaragang, Murut, Rungus, Brunei Malay, Bajau and Bugis informants. The youngest informant in this study was 43 years old and the oldest 75 years old. There were informants who could only provide one story, others were able to provide more than one. All the informants in this study said that they

Table 1 List of tales of Abu Nawas in *Hikayat Abu Nawas*.

No.	Tales of Abu Nawas
1.	Abu Nawas Carries Out His Father's Will
2.	Abu Nawas Breaks <i>Kadhi's</i> House
3.	Six Talking Cows
4.	Abu Nawas Sells Sultan Harun al- Rashid
5.	Abu Nawas Conjures up Magic
6.	Abu Nawas is Ill about to Give Birth
7.	Abu Nawas Carries His Mother to the Palace
8.	Abu Nawas Becomes a Cockerel
9.	Gravy is Reciprocated with Filling
10.	Abu Nawas Will be Slaughtered
11.	Abu Nawas and a Stone mortar
12.	Abu Nawas Becomes King for a Second
13.	The Story of a Merchant and His Vow
14.	A Poor Man and a Cold Pool
15.	Abu Nawas Teaches a Cow to Read the Koran
16.	The Story of a Cruel Minister
17.	Abu Nawas and a Jew
18.	Harun al- Rashid is Slapped by a Jew
19.	Abu Nawas looks for a Bearded Tiger
20.	Abu Nawas and the <i>Kadhi</i>
21.	Abu Nawas Lifts a Mosque

were exposed to numerous stories of Abu Nawas when they were in their teens, but since a long time had lapsed since they told these stories, they could not remember them. Normally Abu Nawas tales were told in the late afternoon when the village folks gathered together and chatted as they rested.

Low Kok On (2014:156) reported that it is highly probable the stories of Abu Nawas were disseminated by Brunei Malays to the other Sabah indigenous people. This is because Brunei Malays were one of the indigenous groups of people in Sabah who embraced Islam since the 15th century. During interactions with other Sabah ethnic groups, through trading or social encounters, Abu Nawas stories spread to the indigenous ethnic Kadazandusun, Murut and many other ethnic groups. Other than Brunei Malays, the Bajaus, Suluk and Bugis who were Muslims also played a part in spreading Abu Nawas stories to the non-Muslim indigenous people of Sabah. It is difficult for us to find written proof in this matter because the Abu Nawas stories were transmitted orally. The informants in the present day who were interviewed said that Abu Nawas stories were passed on to them by their ancestors. They were not told who passed on the stories to their ancestors. Therefore we can assume that the Abu Nawas stories were introduced to the other indigenous people of Sabah by Brunei Malays, Bajaus, Suluk and Bugis who were Muslims in the first place. In Table 2 are listed the titles of Abu Nawas stories Sabah folk version that were collected during field works. Part of the verbatim text of Abu Nawas stories Sabah version are included in Low Kok On's research report *et al.* (2013:184-98) as text documentation only,

This selection of Abu Nawas tales from *HAN* (Table 1) to be compared intertextually with the verbatim texts of Abu Nawas Tales Sabah Folk version (Table 2) is also supported by other related local humorous stories. Synopses or motif details will be provided for the stories that have been selected from Tables 1 and 2, for the purpose of discussion.

MOTIF SIMILARITIES AND LOCAL CREATIVITY

The term “motif” refers to specific elements in folklore that enables it to function as tellable tales. *The Standard Dictionary of Folklore* explains the meaning of “motif” as follows:

The motif must be more than commonplace. A mother as such is not a motif. A cruel mother becomes one because she is at least thought to be unusual. The ordinary processes of life are not motifs. To say that “John dressed and walked to town” is not to give a single motif worth remembering; but

Table 2 List of Abu Nawas tales Sabah version.

No.	Title	Notes
1.	Abu Nawas Collects Rich Man's Plates	Informant: Kausal, 73, Murut Paluan, Village Chief, Kampung Dalit, Tenom, 16 July 2013 Verbatim text enclosed (Appendix: Text 1, pp. 24-25)
2.	Abu Nawas Borrows a Buffalo	Informant: Jonan bin Gaul, 52, Ethnic Kimaragang, Dusun, Native chief, Kota Marudu District, 13 May 2011 Verbatim text enclosed (Appendix: Text 2, pp. 25-27)
3.	Abu Nawas Challenges King in a Cockfight	Informant: Jonan bin Gaul
4.	Abu Nawas Buys a Pillar	Informant: Jonan bin Gaul Verbatim text enclosed (Appendix: Text 3, pp. 27-28)
5.	Abu Nawas Gets Fruits from King's Orchard	Informant: Jonan bin Gaul
6.	Abu Nawas 1 and Abu Nawas 2	Informant: Sudadong Yali, 75, ethnic Rungus, Petani, Kampung Mompilis, Kudat, 10 October 2011
7.	Abu Nawas sets up Toilet at Source of River	Informant: Haji Pangeran Abd. Rahman Hj. Pangeran Ali, 75, Brunei, Malay, retired goverment servant, Kampung Padang, Bogawan, Papar, 11 November 2012
8.	Abu Nawas Makes a Boat	Informant: Awang bin Haris, 67, Bajau, Kg. Sungai Atas, Kunak, 6 February 2012
9.	Abu Nawas Fools the Queen	Informant: Mojudin Gambus, 58, ethnic Kimaragang, hill padi planter, Kampung Togudon, Kota Marudu, 11 May 2011
10.	Abu Nawas is Exiled	Informant: Datuk Harun, 57, Suluk, retiree, Kampung Pangkalan, Kunak, 6 February 2012 Verbatim text enclosed (Appendix: Text 4, pp. 28-29)
11.	Abu Nawas Guesses Sex of Unborn Chicks	Informant: Datuk Harun Verbatim text enclosed (Appendix: Text 5, pp. 29-30)
12.	Abu Nawas and a Deer	Informant: Eni binti Pinda, 43, ethnic Murut Tahol, Housewife, Kampung Saliku, Pensiangan, Keningau, 30 August 2012
13.	Abu Nawas Traps Birds	Informant: Eni Pinda Verbatim text enclosed (Appendix: Text 6, pp. 30-31)

to say that the hero put on his cap of invisibility, mounted his magic carpet, and went to the land east of the sun and west of the moon is to include at least four motifs - "the cap". (Extracted from The British Columbia Folklore society in [http:// www.folklore.bc.ca/Motfindex.htm](http://www.folklore.bc.ca/Motfindex.htm)).

Stith Thompson (1955), a renowned researcher of motifs in oral narratives describes it as:

Any element in a tale that distinguishes it from other tales. It can be an unusual creature, a strange land or a significantly striking or amusing occurrence, i.e., any of the parts into which a tale can be analyzed (Kuehnel and Lencek in <http://aktuellum.com/slavic/folklore-motif/>).

In the following discussion, the tales of Abu Nawas in *HAN* (Table 1) and Abu Nawas tales Sabah folk version (Table 2) whose motifs have been found to be similar will be selected for comparison purposes. After close study, the motif of the oral narrative "*Abu Nawas Beli Tiang*" (Abu Nawas buys a Pillar), Table 2, text 4, is found to be similar to the tale "*Abu Nawas dengan Orang Yahudi*" (Abu Nawas and a Jew) (*HAN*, 100-01); the motif of the oral narrative "*Abu Nawas Dibuang Negeri*" (Abu Nawas is Exiled), Table 2, text 10, is found to be similar to "*Kuah Dibalas dengan Isi*" (Gravy Reciprocated by Filling), (*HAN*, 45-48) and the motif of the oral narrative "*Abu Nawas Meneka Jantina Telur Ayam*" (Abu Nawas Guesses the Sex of Unborn Chicks), Table 2, text 11, is found to be similar to "*Abu Nawas Menjadi Ayam Jantan*" (Abu Nawas Becomes a Cockerel) (*HAN*, 42-44).

Observe Table 3 for motif comparison between the tales "Abu Nawas buys a Pillar" (Table 2, text 4) and "Abu Nawas and a Jew" (*HAN* 100-01).

When compared intertextually, it is found that the tales "Abu Nawas buys a Pillar" (Table 2, Text 4) and "Abu Nawas and a Jew" (*HAN*, 100-02) have similarities and differences with regard to characters, content and motifs. The similarity of characters such as Abu Nawas and the sultan as well as the main motif, i.e. Abu Nawas has fooled the other party by hanging a foul-smelling carcass and therefore gained by it, highlight the principle of intertextuality, that the Sabah version of Abu Nawas tales is inspired by the original Abu Nawas story. As stated by Braginsky (2014), there is a connection between literatures-that-give and literatures-that-take. In the Sabah folk version, local storytellers consciously chose literature from outside, i.e. Abu Nawas stories originating from Arab-Persia to be retold.

Table 3 Motif details between “*Abu Nawas Beli Tiang*” (Abu Nawas Buys a Pillar) and “*Abu Nawas dengan Orang Yahudi*” (Abu Nawas and a Jew).

Original Abu Nawas Tale	Motif Details	Abu Nawas Folk Version	Motif Details
“ <i>Abu Nawas dengan Orang Yahudi</i> ” (Abu Nawas and a Jew)	i) Sultan auctions off house of a Jew who had absconded	<i>Abu Nawas Beli Tiang</i> (Abu Nawas Buys a Pillar)	i) Abu Nawas coaxes the King to sell one pillar of the house to him
	ii) Abu Nawas coaxes Sultan to not sell a piece of nail stuck in pillar of house		ii) Abu Nawas hangs a carcass on pillar of house
	iii) Abu Nawas hangs a carcass on pillar of house		iii) The foul smell forces the king to move to another place
	iv) New owner of house (a Jew) has to pay Abu Nawas 3000 dinars to remove carcass		iv) Abu Nawas gets the house

In another respect, we can detect many motif differences between the two versions of the Abu Nawas stories. In *HAN*, it is the Jewish host who is fooled whereas in the Sabah version it is the king who is the victim of the trickster. In *HAN* Abu Nawas coaxed the Sultan not to sell a piece of nail stuck in a pillar of the house whereas in the Sabah version, Abu Nawas bought the whole pillar from the Sultan’s house. Finally in *HAN*, Abu Nawas was paid 3000 dinars to remove the foul-smelling carcass whereas in the Sabah version, the king was forced to move out thus enabling Abu Nawas to take over his house. These variations in motif show that the locals after being exposed to the stories used their creativity to modify the original story to suit the local context. Outside elements such as the Jew and the dinar currency which are not found in Sabah have been put aside. It is generally known that Jews are the traditional enemy of Muslims in the Middle East. Therefore in *HAN*, the Jewish house owner becomes the victim. Such a motif will be a source of laughter to the listener, but at the same time it highlights the suppressed animosity among the Middle East people towards Jews at that time. The Jewish issue does not arise among the indigenous people of Sabah therefore the victim of the deceit is changed from the Jew to the king. In other words, the local Sabah storytellers modified the original Abu Nawas

story to suit the local social and political scenario. By doing so there emerges an Abu Nawas story Sabah folk version which is inspired by the original.

Another example is the content and motif of the story “Abu Nawas is Exiled” (Table 2, Text 10) which is found to be similar to the original story “Gravy is Reciprocated with Filling” (*HAN*, 45-48). In the story “Abu Nawas is Exiled,” the Sultan invited Abu Nawas to the palace and served him a dish of red pumpkin mixed with faeces. Abu Nawas ate it all up although he knew what the Sultan did. The next day Abu Nawas invited the Sultan to his house. He served a drink mixed with urine. After drinking it the king was furious and decreed that Abu Nawas be exiled. The Sabah folk version of this story is similar to the original Abu Nawas story “Gravy is Reciprocated with Filling” (*HAN*, 45-48). In the “Gravy is Reciprocated with Filling” story it is told that one day Sultan Harun al Rashid held a *Maulud* celebration (to commemorate Prophet Muhammad’s birthday). The Sultan took the opportunity to trick Abu Nawas by spraying urine on him while the others were sprayed with rose water. Abu Nawas patiently and silently endured it. After that Abu Nawas did not come to the palace for a long time. It was said that Abu Nawas fell ill, therefore the king went to pay him a visit. When the king came Abu Nawas suddenly became better. When he was asked, he said he had taken a potent medicine. The Sultan was impressed and wanted to try it. When the Sultan took the medicine, it smelled of faeces. The story ends with the Sultan giving 100 dinars to Abu Nawas to keep quiet about the incident so that it did not become public. Observe the motif details in Table 4 for the discussion that follows.

When compared intertextually, one can determine that “Abu Nawas is Exiled” (Sabah folk version) is a variation of the story “Gravy is Reciprocated with Filling” (original version). The motifs sprayed with urine and eat faeces are found in both versions. However, the character who was sprayed with urine and the character who ate the faeces are different in the two variations of the story. We can assume here that it is highly probable the indigenous Sabah storytellers who retold the original Abu Nawas story had forgotten who was sprayed with urine and who had to eat the faeces. This is common in the process of transmitting a story orally. Another difference in motif is that Abu Nawas benefitted at the end of the original story whereas in the Sabah version Abu Nawas is punished. In this context local storytellers through their creativity adapted the original Abu Nawas story with local elements, which is exiled by sailing away. The element of sailing is a local Sabah motif because Sabah is surrounded by the sea. In the whole of *HAN* which has as

Table 4 Motif details between “*Kuah Dibalas dengan Isi*” (Gravy is Reciprocated with Filling) and “*Abu Nawas Dibuang Negeri*” (Abu Nawas is Exiled).

Original Abu Nawas Tale	Motif Details	Abu Nawas Folk Version	Motif Details
“ <i>Kuah Dibalas dengan Isi</i> ” (Gravy is reciprocated with Filling)	i) Abu Nawas is sprayed with urine	Abu Nawas Dibuang Negeri (Abu Nawas is Exiled)	i) Abu Nawas is served red pumpkin mixed with faeces
	ii) Sultan is given potent medicine mixed with faeces		ii) Sultan is served a drink mixed with urine
	iii) Abu Nawas is given 100 dinars to conceal the matter		iii) Abu Nawas is punished by having to sail off with his possessions (exiled)
			iv) Abu Nawas hoists up the sail on his rooftop as a sign that he had gone sailing

its background the desert in the Middle East, the motif of being exiled by sailing away as a punishment by the Sultan is not found.

Another variation of an Abu Nawas story Sabah folk version that is similar to the original Abu Nawas in *HAN* is the tale “Abu Nawas Guesses the Sex of Unborn Chicks” (Table 2, Text 11). In this story, Abu Nawas entered a contest to guess the sex of unborn chicks. This is similar to the story “Abu Nawas Becomes a Cockerel” (*HAN*, 42-44). In *HAN*, Sultan Harun al-Rashid wanted to test how smart Abu Nawas was. The motifs of both variations of the story are summarized in Table 5.

The intertextual comparison shows that both variations of Abu Nawas stories in Table 5 have similar motifs, demonstrating that the Abu Nawas tale Sabah folk version is adapted from *HAN* (pp. 42-44). Motif similarities between the two versions are identified as jump into the pond to get the eggs and crowing like a cockerel. However, local Sabah storytellers who were creative reworked the original Abu Nawas story. The motifs of the original Abu Nawas such as sultan tests Abu Nawas’ shrewdness, sultan conspires with his ministers, sultan orders Abu Nawas and ten of his ministers to bring out an egg each from the pond, Abu Nawas escapes sultan’s punishment have been replaced with local Sabah storytellers’ versions. As a result of their creativity new motifs emerge such as Abu Nawas enters a contest to guess the sex of unborn chicks, participant fails to guess sex of unborn chick in

Table 5 Motif details between “*Abu Nawas Menjadi Ayam Jantan*” (Abu Nawas Becomes a Cockerel) and “*Abu Nawas Meneka Jantina Telur Ayam*” (Abu Nawas Guesses Sex of Unborn chicks).

Original Abu Nawas Tale	Motif Details	Abu Nawas Folk Version	Motif Details
“ <i>Abu Nawas Menjadi Ayam Jantan</i> ” (Abu Nawas Becomes a Cockerel)	i) Sultan wants to test how smart Abu Nawas is, so he conspires with his ministers	Abu Nawas Meneka Jantina Telur Ayam (Abu Nawas Guesses the Sex of Unborn Chicks)	i) Abu Nawas enters a contest to guess the sex of unborn chicks
	ii) Sultan orders Abu Nawas and ten ministers to jump into the pond to bring out an egg each		ii) Abu Nawas jumps into the pond to determine the sex of unborn chicks
	iii) Other ministers emerge from the pond with eggs		iii) When Abu Nawas emerges from the pond he crows to show that his egg contains a male chick
	iv) Abu Nawas emerge without an egg		
	v) Abu Nawas crows to show that he is a cockerel		
	v) Abu Nawas escapes sultan’s punishment		

egg that he holds, when he emerges to the surface of the pond, Abu Nawas crows like a cockerel showing that his egg contains a male chick.

The result of motif comparison between the three Abu Nawas stories Sabah folk version and those from *HAN* shows that in the early stage, the indigenous people of Sabah had been exposed to the original Abu Nawas stories. Much later they retold the original stories with new motifs. This occurrence supports Barthes’ view of literary text as a “tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (extracted from Braginsky, 2014:205). In addition, the emergence of Abu Nawas stories Sabah folk version highlights local genius among local storytellers. Based on their creativity, new motifs with local colour are created.

LOCAL GENIUS AND CREATIVITY IN ABU NAWAS SABAH FOLK VERSION

Apart from the three stories of Abu Nawas discussed earlier, the motifs of some other Abu Nawas stories Sabah version are found to be very different from the original. Compared to *HAN*, only the characters of Abu Nawas and the king and the motif Abu Nawas fools or deceives the king are preserved. Apart from presenting new motifs and local elements that highlight local genius and creativity, the discussion in this segment is linked to universal motifs contained in local Sabah tales and other humorous Malay stories. Observe Table 6: Motif details in “Abu Nawas Collects Rich Man’s Plates” (Appendix: text 1) for discussion that follows.

Compared intertextually, almost all the motifs in the story Abu Nawas Collects Rich man’s Plates” in Table 6 are not found in *HAN*. The only similarities are the character of Abu Nawas and the motif “the weak defeats the strong” which have been preserved by the local Sabah storytellers. In this context, it can be said that the indigenous people of Sabah have created new motifs based on their creativity. The result is a brand new Abu Nawas tale Sabah folk version with the motif “the Sultan who has absolute power” replaced with “a rich man”. The change of motif as such can be linked to the local Sabah political system, i.e. the ethnic Dusun, Kadazan and Murut

Table 6 Motif details in “*Abu Nawas Pungut Pinggan Orang Kaya*” (Abu Nawas Collects Rich Man’s Plates).

Motif in Sabah Folk Version	Motif Details
Poor man (Abu Nawas)	The motif of Abu Nawas as poor man is not found in <i>HAN</i>
Poor man eats rice on a leaf	Not found in <i>HAN</i>
Rich man eats rice on a plate	Not found in <i>HAN</i>
Rich man is fooled by poor man	In <i>HAN</i> , the upper class such as the sultan, <i>kadhi</i> , ministers are fooled by Abu Nawas
Rich man throws away his plates every time after he eats	Not found in <i>HAN</i>
Abu Nawas collects plates thrown away by rich man	Not found in <i>HAN</i>
Poor man (Abu Nawas) becomes rich	Not found in <i>HAN</i>
Rich man becomes poor	Not found in <i>HAN</i>

are not under the rule of a sultanate. Since this tale of Abu Nawas Sabah folk version was spread among ethnic Murut and another similar story was obtained from ethnic Dusun, it is not surprising that the Sultan's motif is replaced with the rich man's motif. Other than the absence of a "feudal motif", this version is interspersed with local elements such as "eating on a leaf" which is clearly not practiced in the Middle East.

The motif "the weak defeats or deceives the strong" in the context of this story as represented by the poor man deceiving the rich man, is a universal theme found in local folklore as well other folktales outside the Malay world. In the cycle of Abu Nawas tales found in *HAN*, the main motif is the weak, represented by Abu Nawas deceives or defeats the strong, such as Sultan Harun al-Rashid, the *kadhi* and ministers. On closer look, Sabah locals also possess other folk tales apart from Abu Nawas that emphasise the motif "the weak defeats the strong". In Abdul Halim Bandan's writing (2006:81) for example, is included the story Tajul Muluk which he obtained from Orang Sungai informants from eastern Sabah. In this story, Tajul Muluk is presented as a smart person whereas the king is of bad character and becomes Tajul's victim. It is narrated that the king borrowed money from Tajul Muluk but refused to pay him back. The king gave all sorts of excuses like giving absurd terms and conditions before he would settle his debt. Tajul Muluk was able to kill the king by tricking him. He said his clothes can tame the king's pet tiger. As a result the king was mauled to death by the tiger due to Tajul Muluk's deception.

Other than man in the motif of "the weak defeats the strong", there are also animal characters in the folklore of various races. The cycle of animal tales such as "the mouse-deer defeats other stronger animals" are well known in the Malay world. For example in *Hikayat Pelanduk Jenaka*, Pelanduk Jenaka represents "the weak" that uses its wits to overpower all the bigger animals. In this *hikayat*, the king of all animals such as the king of tigers, the king of goats, the king of lions and the king of elephants were fooled one by one until Pelanduk Jenaka is proclaimed the Emperor of the Jungle (Harun, 2003:66-70).

The stories that highlight the motif "the weak defeats the strong" discussed earlier demonstrate the universal characteristic present in local folklore as well other folk tales outside the Malay world. This is stated by Mohd Taib (2007:306) as the universal element which will be tested if similar motifs are found between folktales of different cultures. The discovery of such motifs shows how widespread folktales are all over the world. In terms of

function, Aripin (1996:54) in his writing emphasizes that humorous tales not only serve to amuse and entertain but also as a form of satire against particular groups.

Another motif in Abu Nawas tales Sabah folk version which is not found in the whole of *HAN* is that of Abu Nawas as foolish and greedy. The stories no. 11 and no. 12 in Table 2, i.e. “Abu Nawas Snares a Mousedeer” and “Abu Nawas Traps Birds” highlight Abu Nawas’ foolishness as its motif. Table 7 is provided below for further analysis.

The story “Abu Nawas Traps Birds” (Appendix: Text 6) tells about Abu Nawas trapping birds by using a piece of wood which had been smeared with a type of glue made from rubber. Since the wood was tied to a branch where only small birds alighted, Abu Nawas then tied the wood to his hand, instead. When big birds alighted on the wood tied to his hand the wood was also flown away by the birds and finally became stuck in a tree. After returning home, his wife asked him why it took so long for him to come home, Abu Nawas told her he was waiting for the roots to grow downwards only then he could return home. Abu Nawas returned home empty-handed. The motifs found in “Abu Nawas Traps Birds” are summarized in Table 7 below.

After making an intertextual comparison of the two, the motif “foolish and greedy” highlighted in the tale of Abu Nawas Sabah folk version is not found in the original Abu Nawas story. However, the foolish character motif is found in many humorous tales in the Malay world, for example the famous story of silly Pak Pandir. Many cycles of Pak Pandir stories with the motif of foolishness have been studied by early researchers such as Winstedt (1996:14). How silly Pak Pandir was can be seen when his wife asked him

Table 7 Motif of Abu Nawas’ foolishness and greed.

Title of the Story	Motif of Story
<p>“<i>Abu Nawas Menjerat Burung</i>” (Abu Nawas Traps Birds)</p>	<p>Abu Nawas is not satisfied with the small birds he caught and wanted the bigger.</p>
	<p>Abu Nawas is flown away by big birds and gets stuck in a tree.</p>
	<p>Abu Nawas acts foolishly by waiting for the roots on the branches to grow downwards to the ground.</p>
	<p>The foolish Abu Nawas returns home a week later empty-handed.</p>

to buy a buffalo that eats grass. He instead bought a scythe. The cycle of Pak Pandir stories tell many more silly acts by this character. Harun (2003:12) in his writing reported that Sweeney in his study found scores of versions of Pak Pandir stories which had spread widely in oral form.

In the context of local humorous tales in Borneo, many stories that highlight the motif of foolishness are found. Some of the famous ones are Si Paluian/Si Paloi, Si Awang and many other silly characters. Noriah (2007:255) in her studies found that there are many similarities in the motif of foolishness between Si Paloi (Kalimantan) and Pak Pandir. Humorous tales with foolishness as their motif are also numerous in Sabah. Nurdiana (2014) in her field study, found many cycles of the stories of Si Paluian/Si Paloi and Si Awang among Brunei Malays and they mostly contain the motif of foolishness. Mohd Mazudah (2015) also collected cycles of stories of foolish Si Pusung. Specifically, in an interview with Normadiyah Nassir, a Murut informant who still remembers the cycle of famous humorous tales of Murut, namely Si Alul told one of these stories whose motif of foolishness is similar to the tale, “Abu Nawas Traps Birds”. Below is Table 8 for a comparison with the story “Si Alul Traps a Bird”.

Compared intertextually, the details of “Abu Nawas Traps Birds” and “Si Alul Traps a Bird” have been found to be different, but the motif of foolishness in both versions are the same. The characters in both stories are shown to be very foolish for waiting so long before they went home. As both stories were spread among the ethnic Murut, the influence of the story of Si Alul over the story of Abu Nawas is evident. In other words, local Sabah storytellers have added another cycle of Abu Nawas stories Sabah

Table 8 The motif of foolishness in Si Alul.

Title of the Story	Motif of Story
<p><i>“Si Alul Menjerat Burung”</i> (Si Alul Traps Birds)</p>	<p>Pregnant wife of Si Alul asks him to trap a kingfisher.</p>
	<p>Si Alul is flown away by the bird and falls into a waterfall.</p>
	<p>Si Alul is foolish enough to wait for the swallows’ faeces to accumulate until it reaches the bottom.</p>
	<p>Foolish Si Alul returns home after a long time, empty-handed.</p>

folk version based on local colour in terms of creativity. Hence a new Abu Nawas story with local elements is created.

Chong (1993:20-23) in his collection of Sabah folklore included a story entitled “Karnak Karnak and Abu Nawas” which also highlighted the motifs of greed and foolishness of Abu Nawas in the Sabah folk version

Another interesting matter to be analyzed is why the Abu Nawas tales Sabah folk version contain the motif of Abu Nawas as smart and Abu Nawas as foolish? In the whole of *HAN*, the motif of Abu Nawas as smart and foolish is not found. Why was the motif of a smart Abu Nawas changed to a foolish and greedy Abu Nawas? When scrutinized, it is found that local Sabah stories are rich in humorous characters, who are sometimes smart and sometimes foolish.

In a study done by Nurdiyana (2014:96) for example, two collections of the oral narratives Si Aloi and Si Awang by Brunei Malay informants in Sabah, contain motifs of being smart and foolish. The motif of a foolish Si Aloi is evident through his foolishness in inviting a giant to dinner. The motif of being smart is shown through the method he used to fool and ultimately kill the giant. In the Si Aloi 2nd story, he is shown to be smart through the act of fooling his mother whereas his foolishness is shown through the way he used his faeces as gold.

In Noriah’s writing (2007:251), it is stated that both the motifs of being foolish and smart are present in the story of Si Paloi. One example of Si Paloi’s motif of being smart as mentioned by Noriah (2007:258) is when Si Paloi defeats Si Malihi, a strange five-headed creature. It is told that whoever meets this creature will be turned to stone. However Si Paloi cleverly shot the creature with a poisoned dart before it could utter the word “stone”.

Table 8 The motif of greed and foolishness in Abu Nawas.

Title of the Story	Motif of Story
“ <i>Karnak-Karnak and Abu Nawas</i> ” (Karnak-Karnak and Abu Nawas)	Greedy Abu Nawas is curious to know how Karnak Karnak became rich instantly.
	Karnak Karnak’s axe falls into the river.
	He meets with a nymph in the river, who presents him with gold.
	Abu Nawas deliberately throws an axe into the river.
	Abu Nawas is attacked by a swarm of fish.

Noriah's study shows that Borneo abounds in humorous tales that contain the motifs of being foolish as well as being smart.

Back to the story of Awang, it can be said that almost all Awang stories in Nurdiyana's collection (2014: 65-71) contain the motif of being foolish. Among them are "Awang mistakenly assumes that his father-in-law's bald head is a watermelon", "Awang keeps eggshells from eggs which he stole on top of his head in the hope that no one can see them" and many other motifs showing foolishness. Other than the motif of being foolish, that of being smart is also found in the Awang stories. For instance "Awang disguises himself as a fishmonger and calls out the names of all the fish in Arabic which was extraordinary, such as *mina iblis* and *mina pariyau*. This trick convinced his future father-in-law to invite him to his house whereby he was able at last to see his fiancée's face.

The story of Si Pusung which is well known among the Bajaus and Orang Sungai on the east coast of Sabah also contains motifs of being smart and being foolish. Datu Mohd Mazudah in his study collected Si Pusung stories which highlight the motif of foolishness. Among them are "*Si Pusung dan Si Buta Mencuri Ayam*" (Si Pusung and Si Buta Steal chickens), "*Si Pusung Bercakap dengan Burung Bangau*" (Si Pusung Talks to the Egret) and many others. In Abdul Halim Bandan's work (2006:88) is found a story of Si Pusung in which by using his wits he was able to fool and then marry seven princesses. It is told that Si Pusung tried to find a way to exact revenge on the king by adorning his genitals with birds' feathers. This attracted the seven princesses who then played with the "false bird" of Si Pusung. As a result, all seven princesses became pregnant and the king had to marry off his daughters to Si Pusung. In other words, the combination of foolishness and smartness in the humorous tales of Si Alooi, Si Awang and Si Pusung in Sabah such as these, is assumed to have influenced the creation of a combination of motifs between that of being foolish and being smart in the tales of Abu Nawas Sabah Folk version.

CONCLUSION

Based on intertextual comparison analysis between the tales of Abu Nawas Sabah Folk version and those of Abu Nawas in *HAN*, two types of Abu Nawas stories Sabah folk version have been found. The first type is the tales of Abu Nawas Sabah folk version that have been adapted from the original Abu Nawas stories. Although this first type is based on the original, after

comparison new motifs are found, that have been created by local storytellers based on local colour and situation.

Almost all of motifs in the second type of Abu Nawas stories Sabah folk version differ entirely from the original Abu Nawas stories. Apart from creating entirely new motifs, some local Sabah storytellers also altered the original character of Abu Nawas from that of a smart person to one who is foolish and greedy. This change in characterization is closely linked to local story characters such as Si Paluian, Si Awang and Si Pusung who are at times smart and at times foolish and greedy.

Intertextually, Abu Nawas tales Sabah folk version highlight the way foreign humorous tales can be created to become a local Sabah story, based on local creativity and genius. This process occurs in two stages. First, original Abu Nawas tales are adapted by local storytellers. Although motifs with local elements are found, the content of the stories are still closely similar to the original. Second, this version of Abu Nawas has inspired other creative storytellers thus giving rise to tales of Abu Nawas Sabah Folk version that contain many differences in terms of motif and are rich in local colour.

NOTES

1. Nurdyana (2014) in her master's thesis collected Awang stories from Brunei Malay informants who lived in Sabah. Awang stories, if looked at closely, are also well known in other places. Inon (1991) in his writing had studied the element of humour in Awang stories in the Malay Peninsula. Dissemination and influence of folk tales from one place to another was a common occurrence.
2. If looked at closely, Si Pusung's motif of being smart is interspersed with vulgar motifs which evoke humour. The vulgar motif is a common motif in Malay humorous tales. Harun (2003:12), as an example reported that in Sweeney's study on the cycle of Pak Pandir stories, several versions of Pak Pandir stories that contain vulgar motifs were found. The vulgar motif is also found in the famous cycle of Awang Melayu stories. In the story blind Awang climbs a coconut tree for example, it is told that he was climbing a tree that Awang Burut was also climbing. While his hands were fiddling for fruits, Awang Buta happened to "pluck" Awang Burut's genitals which he thought was a coconut (Inon, 1991:192).

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Verbatim Text of Selected Abu Nawas Stories Sabah version

Notes: Below are the verbatim text of six Abu Nawas stories for readers who are interested in the original story recorded during field studies.

Text 1: Table 2, Story No. 1: “Abu Nawas Pungut Piring Orang Kaya” (Abu Nawas Collects Rich Man’s Plates)

Informant: Kausal

Age: 73

Occupation: Village Chief

Ethnicity: Murut Paluan

Place: Kampung Dalit, Tenom

Date: 16 July 2013

Kalau si Abu Nawas ini, dia miskin keturunan miskin. Jadi ini ada satu orang kaya, ini orang kaya paling kayalah, apa-apapun ada, tapi ini si anu si Abu Nawas, dia orang tinggal berdekatan rumah.

Ini si Abu Nawas tiada anu, pabila dia makan, tiada piring; bukan macam ini orang kaya banyak piring. Dia pergi apa, pungut daun bungkus nasi pabila dia makan. Jadi dia sudah makan-makan sudah, dia buang, dia buang itu daun.

Itu orang kaya, dia sudah siap makan, dia cuci balik simpan. Jadi berjumpa dia orang. Ini si Abu Nawas, dia pergi tengok, tengok keadaan ini orang kaya. Dia punya anu piring, dia tidak mahu buang. “Eh...” dia bilang, kata Si Abu Nawas, “Kau bilang kau kaya, tapi saya tengok kau bukan kaya, itu saja piring kau tempat makan.” dia bilang. “Kalau saya, sungguh saya miskin, saya tidak ekonomi sama piring, siap makan buang, siap makan buang. Bagus lagi saya dari kau” dia bilang. “Iyakah?”, orang kaya bilang. “Iya, kau pergi tengok.” Bilang si Abu Nawas.

“Bah (penegas bunyi), kalau begitu, saya ikutlah ajaran kau,” dia bilang. Jadi, pabila ini orang kaya masak, dia punya bini sudah dia orang makan, dia makan-makan. “Anu... kita ikut ajaran si anu, si Abu Nawas, buang! Kalu tidak, bukan kita kaya. Kata dia kita bukan kaya, itu ekonomi, itu miskin, itu-itu saja piring.” “Iyakah?” kata bini dia. “Iya, kalau dia orang siap makan, terus buang, habis piring lagi. Tiap-tiap makan, tiap-tiap dia orang buang.

Ini si Abu Nawas, pabila dia orang sudah buang, malam dia pergi pungut, pergi pungut simpan, sampai kehabisan orang kaya itu dia punya piring. Jadi apa lagi, si Abu Nawas ini sudah bertimbun-timbun piring. Dia senang-senang, dia orang anu suami isteri makan. Jadi, hujung-hujung ini orang kaya miskin betul, tiada piring. Pasal ini si Abu Nawas, dia punya akal kasi apa, kasi bodoh ini orang kaya. Sudah dia bodoh, jadi miskin. Si Abu Nawas yang jadi kaya.

This Abu Nawas, he is poor and comes from a poor family. Then, there is this rich man, very rich, has everything, but this Abu Nawas and the rich man live close by.

This Abu Nawas is so poor, when he eats, no plate, not like the rich man, has many

plates. He finds leaves to wrap his food in, when he wants to eat. When he finishes, he throws it away, the leaf.

That rich man, when he finishes eating, he washes the plate and keeps it. So they meet. This Abu Nawas, he goes and have a look at the ways of the rich man. The rich man has plates, he doesn't want to throw them away. "Eh", Abu Nawas said, "you said you're rich but I see you're not rich, that is the plate you eat from. If it were me, although I am poor I don't economise on the same plate, when I finish eating I throw away, finish eating, I throw away. I'm better than you", he said. "Is that so?" the rich man asked. "Yes, . You go and look," Abu Nawas said.

"Bah (voice stressor), if so, I'll do what you say". So when the rich man cooks, his wife eats after the others have eaten. "Wife... We follow what Abu Nawas says, Abu Nawas throws away! If not, we are not rich. He said that is not rich, that is economy, that is poor, its always the same plate". His wife said, "Is that so?" Yes.. When they finish eating they throw away more plates . Everytime they eat, they throw away".

This Abu Nawas, when those people had thrown away their plates, at night he went to collect them, collect and keep until the rich man's plates were all finished. Abu Nawas now has heaps of plates. He is now comfortable, both the husband and wife can eat. So now the rich man is poor, has no plates. This Abu Nawas is very smart, he uses his wits to trick the rich man. Rich man was stupid and now becomes poor. Abu Nawas becomes rich.

Text 2: Table 2, Story no. 2: "Abu Nawas Pinjam Kerbau" (Abu Nawas Borrows a Buffalo)

Informant: Jonan bin K.K. Gaul

Age: 52

Ethnicity: Kimaragang

Occupation Chief of Dusun, Kota Marudu District

Place: Kota Marudu

Date: 13 May 2011

*KK - Village Chief

Ah, cerita si Abu Nawas. Jadi, ah... Abu Nawas. Ada orang ah... minta kerbau (kerbau) buat majlis. Minta kerbau sama Abu Nawas. Tapi ini, anulah, orang, orang yang minta sama si Abu Nawas kerbau. Jadi, malahan itu orang cakap, "Abu Nawas, kalau kau tidak dapat itu kerbau, hah, mungkin kau kena bunuh. Pasal kau ini," orang cakap, "orang pintar!"

Jadi Abu Nawas fikir-fikir, macam mana saya dapat kerbau, saya orang miskin? Jadi, kemudian, fikir si Abu Nawas, keluar satu idea si Abu Nawas. Kebetulan itu Raja, banyak kerbau. Yang ada, yang diikat-ikat, ada yang lepas.

"Saya pinjam kau punya kerbau. Satu malam saja. Ya, ya satu malam saja." Bilang Abu Nawas sama itu Raja. "Jadi, em... besok pagi," dia kata, "eh, petang besok, saya kasi hantar balik." "Jadi, seperti sekarang ini, kerbau Raja sedang mandi di lumpur, tak ada tali, saya kasi balik juga macam itu." Cakap Si Abu Nawas.

"Hah, saya tidak apa-apa tu." Raja, dia kata. "Kalau begitu, baguslah." Kata Abu Nawas. Dia pun pergi tarik sama itu kerbau. Dengan begitu, oleh kerana, dia ada orang yang dia bagikan, dia sembelih. Guna sembelih, potong itu kerbau sampai di, di sini leher.

Potong di sinilah. Potong terus. Terus potong. Itu telinga, kepala, dia tidak kasi siapa-siapa. Itu tali semua. Itu badan, dia ambillah.

Kemudian, sampai petang itu, petang ha, Raja, Abu Nawas cepat-cepat kasi balik di kolam itu, itu leher dia kasi masuk di air. Kepala keluar. Diikat itu lagi leher. Diikat pada pokok tu tali. "Tuan Raja, kerbou yang saya pinjam itu saya sudah kasi balik sana. Kau tengoklah." Bilang Abu Nawas. Raja pun tengoklah dari jauh, begini. Itu kerbou ada di sana. "Tengoklah Raja." Raja pun tengok. "Oklah." Abu Nawas kata. Tapi Tuan Raja sendiri sudah tengokkan kerbou ada di sana. Kalau boleh Tuan Raja pergilah situ periksa. Tapi sedangkan, Abu Nawas sebenarnya dia takut-takut juga dia tu. Sebab betul-betul dia kasi balik tu tinggal kepalalah dan leher saja. "Tidak perlulah Abu Nawas," bilang si Raja. "Kalau begitu, sudahlah," bilang Abu Nawas.

Jadi keesokkan hari, kerbou Raja masih juga begitu. Jadi, Tuan Raja pun suruh dia punya kuli-kuli tu tarik. Sekali tarik tu, tinggal kepala saja. Raja pun panggil Si Abu Nawas. "Abu Nawas, kenapa kau sembelih saya punya kerbou?" Abu Nawas kata, "Mana saya ada sembelih? Bukankah saya sudah kasi balik kelmarin dalam keadaan yang sempurna? Tapi Tuan Raja sendiri tak periksa. Jadi kelmarin kalau Tuan Raja ada periksa, dan tinggal kepala itu kerbou. Kau bolehlah persoalkan dengan saya. Ini jangan-jangan orang lain yang bikin ini." kata Abu Nawas. Habis, Raja tak cakap apa-apa. Kena tipu bah.

Ah, the story of Abu Nawas. So ah... Abu Nawas. Someone ah... asked for a buffalo for a feast. Asked for buffalo from Abu Nawas. This person asked Abu Nawas for a buffalo. In fact the person said, "Abu Nawas, if you dont get that buffalo, huh, you will be killed." The person said, "because you are a smart person."

So, Abu Nawas thought about it, how am I going to get a buffalo, I am a poor man? Then, abu Nawas got an idea. It happened that the king has many buffaloes. There were ones that were tied up, there were buffaloes that were left to roam.

"I borrow your buffalo. One night only. Yes one night only", said Abu Nawas to the king. "So em ... Tomorrow morning," he said, "Eh tomorrow afternoon, I send it back". "So, as it is now, the king's buffalo is wallowing in the mud, no ropes, I'll give it back in the same way", said Abu Nawas.

"Huh, it's all right with me," the king said. Abu Nawas said, "In that case, good" He then pulled the buffalo and had it slaughtered. Slaughtered up to here, the neck. Cut it off. But the ears, the head he didn't give to anyone. That is the rope. That is the body, he took it.

In the afternoon Abu Nawas quickly went back to the pond, the neck of the buffalo he put in the water. The head was outside the water. He tied the neck. And tied the rope to a tree. "King, sir, the buffalo I borrowed I have put it back there. Go and see it", said Abu Nawas. The king saw it from a distance, like this. The buffalo was over there. "King, go and see" The king looked. "Okaylah." Abu Nawas said, "You have seen it for yourself that the buffalo is there. If you can, please go and look closely. Actually Abu Nawas was scared too. Because what he returned were the head and neck of the buffalo only. The king said "No need, Abu Nawas". "In that case, never mind", said Abu Nawas

The next day, the king's buffalo was still like that. So the king asked his servants to pull it out. One pull and the head came out. The king called Abu Nawas. "Abu Nawas why did you slaughter my buffalo?" Abu Nawas said "When did I slaughter. Did I not return it to you yesterday in good condition? But you sir did not examine it. If you had examined it yesterday

and found only the head, then you can question me. Someone else must have done this”, said Abu Nawas. Finished. The king could not say anything. He had been tricked.

Text 3 Table 2, Story no. 4: “Abu Nawas Beli Tiang” (Abu Nawas Buys a Pillar)

Informant: Jonan bin K.K. Gaul

Age: 52

Ethnicity: Kimaragang

Occupation: Chief of Dusun Marudu District

Date: 13 May 2011

*KK - Village chief

Satu lagi, ada satu Raja begitu lawa dia punya rumah. Rumah yang bertianglah. Ya, besar. Abu Nawas berfikir, dia kata macam mana saya boleh dapat ini rumah Raja. Lalu Abu Nawas berfikir. Bagus siap aku buat begini, fikir Si Abu Nawas. Saya beli satu tiang di antara tiang rumah di atas tu, saya mahu beli satu tiang di tengah-tengah. Itu fikiran Si Abu Nawas.

Kemudian dia jumpa Raja. “Em... Tuan Raja, hari ini besar tujuan saya ini.” Bilang Abu Nawas. “Eh, apa tu?” kata Tuan Raja. Kau apa tujuan, Abu Nawas?” “Tidak, begini... di antara rumah-rumah di sini, Tuan punya Rajalah yang paling cantik. Jadi, bolehkah kalau saya beli satu batang saja tiang saja tu?”

“Eh, Abu Nawas, buat apa kau beli satu tiang? “Tidak, saya mahu beli, bukan saya ambil itu tiang. Saya tidak ambil, saya beli saja,” kata Si Abu Nawas. “Lepas beli, saya tidak kacau itu tiang, saya tidak kacau. Bunuh saja saya Tuan Raja kalau saya kacau.”

Jadi Tuan Raja tu pun berfikir. Kalau dia beli, tidak juga dia apa-apakan ni tiang. Boleh untung juga saya, fikir itu Raja. Malahan dia kata Si Abu Nawas saya tolong lagi kasi bersih. Jadi, Raja pun bersetujulah.

“Tapi sebelum saya bayar,” kata Si Abu Nawas, sebelum saya beli, kita buat perjanjian. Supaya jangan saja kasi saya potong ini tiang. Kalau tidak potong, kau tidak boleh tegur saya. Janji saya potong, atau saya ambil, tercabut, kalau saya cabut, kau bunuh saja saya. Tapi kalau saya tidak cabut, kau tidak boleh tegur apa yang saya buat ni. Raja pun berfikir-fikir, betul juga tu. Dia orang pun buat perjanjianlah.

Jadi sesudah itu, Abu Nawas kasi pasang paku di tiang. Kemudian dia kasi sangkut itu bangkai binatang di sana. Dia sangkut apa saja yang berbaulah, berbau busuk. Dia kasi sangkut. Raja pun tegur dia, “Abu Nawas kenapa kau sangkut itu? Itu berbau itu.” “Eh, kan saya sudah kasi tahu Tuan Raja dulukan? Apa juga yang saya simpan, Tuan tidak boleh tegur kecuali saya kasi tumbang ataupun saya kasi cabut tiang. Jadi ini hak saya. Kalau Tuan Raja bawa saya bicara mana-mana pun saya tak takut. Ini hak saya. Saya sudah beli. Ada perjanjian.” Habis itu Raja, dia susah hati, tak boleh buat apa-apa. Habis, dia terpaksa kasi tinggal itu rumah. Sudah bau busuk. Dan Abu Nawas dapat itu tempat.

One more, there was a king whose house was very beautiful. A house with pillars. Yes, big. Abu Nawas thought, how can I get the king's house. So he thought about it. Good if I do like this, thought Abu Nawas. I buy a pillar among all the house pillars there, I want to buy the pillar in the middle. That was Abu Nawas' idea.

The he met the king. "Em, Sir, I have a big favour to ask today", said Abu Nawas. "Eh, what is it,?" asked the king. "What do you want, Abu Nawas?". "Like this, among all the houses here, yours is the most beautiful. So can I buy just one of your pillars?"

"Eh Abu Nawas, what for?" " No, I just want to buy I'm not going to take it away. I'm not taking it, I just buy it," said Abu Nawas. After I buy it, I will not disturb the pillar. Kill me if I do".

The king thought about it. If he buys it and not disturb it. I'll make some money out of it, thought the king. In fact Abu Nawas said he will clean it. So the king agreed.

"But before I pay", said Abu Nawas, "let's make an agreement. So that I wont cut it off. If I don't cut it off, you cannot scold me. Promise if I cut it off, take or remove it you kill me. But if I don't remove it you cannot scold me whatever I do". The king thought about it and agreed. They made an agreement.

After that, Abu Nawas stuck a piece of nail on the pillar. And he hung a carcass on it. He hung whatever smelled foul. He hung it up. The king scolded him."Abu Nawas why do you hang this thing?. It smells horrible" " Eh, I already told you before. Whatever I keep, you cannot scold me except if I cause the pillar to collapse or I remove it. This is my right. If you bring me to justice anywhere I'm not scared . This is my right. I bought it. There's an agreement". The king was upset, but could not do anything. So he had to leave the house. Because of the foul smell. And Abu Nawas got the house.

Text 4: Table 2, Story No. 10: "Abu Nawas Dibuang Negeri" (Abu Nawas is Exiled)

Informant: Datuk Harun

Age: 52

Ethnicity: Suluk

Place: Kampung Pangkalan, Kunak, Sabah

Date: 6 February 2012

Occupation: Retiree

Sultan memanggil Abu Nawas ke istana dengan menghidang makanan, iaitu sayur labu merah yang dicampur dengan najis oleh Sultan. Abu Nawas menghabiskan semua makanan yang hidang oleh Sultan walaupun dia tahu makanan tersebut bercampur najis.

Sultan tanya Abu Nawas, "Abu Nawas macam mana rasanya, sedap?" Abu Nawas senyum dan jawab, "Sedap, tuanku."

Pada hari berikutnya, Abu Nawas menjemput Sultan ke rumahnya. Dia menghidang minuman yang bercampur dengan kencing pula. Sultan menghabiskan minuman tersebut dan murka dengan Abu Nawas. Sultan menitahkan untuk membuang negeri kepada Abu Nawas dengan belayar ke tempat lain. Abu Nawas mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Sultan. Sultan juga mengarahkan supaya segala harta benda Abu Nawas dibawa pindah bersama.

Abu Nawas membuat persiapan dengan membeli kain-kain yang boleh dibuat layar. Abu Nawas menjahit kain tersebut untuk dijadikan layar pada rumahnya. Segala keperluan telah disiapkan. Abu Nawas duduk di kaki lima dan mengucapkan selamat tinggal kepada Sultan.

Sultan bertanya kepada Abu Nawas, "Ke mana?" Abu Nawas berkata kepada Sultan, "Sultan suruh keluar dari daerah, jadi ini rumahku, kucingku, hartaku, layarkanlah ia seperti titah Tuanku."

“Mana boleh rumah belayar di darat?” Sultan tanya.

Bilang Abu Nawas, “Sultan suruh saya pindah, jadi ini rumahku, hartaku dan layarkanlah ia seperti perintah tuanku.”

(The Sultan called Abu Nawas to the palace by serving food, i.e. red pumpkin mixed with feces. Abu Nawas finished all the food served by the Sultan although he knew the food was mixed with feces.

The Sultan asked Abu Nawas, “Abu Nawas how does it taste, delicious?” Abu Nawas smiled and answered, “Delicious, your Majesty”

On the following day, Abu Nawas invited the Sultan to his house. He served a drink mixed with urine. The Sultan finished the drink and was furious with Abu Nawas. The Sultan decreed that Abu Nawas be exiled by having him sail away to a different place. Abu Nawas thanked the Sultan. The Sultan also ordered that Abu Nawas takes away all his possessions too.

Abu Nawas made preparations by buying cloth to make a sail. Abu Nawas sewed the cloth to make a sail for his house. All preparations have been completed. Abu Nawas sat in the alleyway and said goodbye to the Sultan.

The Sultan asked Abu Nawas: “Where to?” Abu Nawas replied “The Sultan asked me to leave the country, thus this is my house, my cat, my property, I’ll sail them away as you commanded.

“How can a house sail on land?” the Sultan asked.

Abu Nawas said, “The Sultan asked me to move, so this is my house, my property and I am sailing all these away as you commanded.

Text 5 Table 3, Story No. 13: “*Abu Nawas Meneka Jantina Telur Ayam*” (Abu Nawas Guesses Sex of Unborn Chicks)

Informant: Datuk Harun

Age: 52

Ethnicity: Suluk

Place: Kampung Pangkalan, Kunak, Sabah

Date: 6 February 2012

Occupation: Retiree

Abu Nawas disuruh untuk melihat acara pertandingan meneka telur jantan atau betina. “Manalah kita tahu telur tersebut jantan atau betina?” Tanya Abu Nawas kepada orang ramai. Akhirnya, Abu Nawas mengikuti pertandingan tersebut dan terjun ke dalam kolam. Sultan bertanya kepada Abu Nawas kenapa dia terjun ke dalam kolam. Abu Nawas menjawab untuk meneka telur jantan atau betina. Lima minit, Abu Nawas muncul dari kolam dan berkokok seperti ayam jantan. Sultan bertanya, “Mana telur jantan?” Abu Nawas menjawab dengan berkokok sahaja. Maksudnya, dia memegang telur jantan.

Abu Nawas is asked to witness a contest to guess the sex of unborn chicks. “How do we know if the egg contains a male or female chick?” Abu Nawas asked the crowd. Finally, Abu Nawas joined in the contest and jumped into the pond. The Sultan asked him why he jumped into the pond. Abu Nawas answered, to guess the sex of the unborn chick. Five minutes later

Abu Nawas emerged from the pond and crowed like a cockerel. The Sultan asked” Which one is the male one? Abu Nawas answered by crowing. Meaning he was holding the egg which contained a male chick.

Text 6: Table 2, Story no. 13: “Abu Nawas Menjerat Burung” (Abu Nawas Traps Birds)

Informant: Eni binti Pinda

Age: 43

Ethnicity: Murut Tahol

Occupation: Housewife

Place: Kampung Saliku, Pensiangan

Date: 30 August 2012

Hari ini saya mahu pergi menangkap burung, dia pun membuka kulit kayu untuk mencari getah kayu tersebut. Setelah itu dia pun mencari kayu di mana terdapat banyak burung yang hinggap. Hanya burung yang kecil sahaja yang tersangkut dalam jeratnya, yang menggunakan getah kayu yang dipanggil tohop (tarap hutan). Abu Nawas hanya mendapat burung yang kecil. “Oh...,” katanya dia mahu pergi ke atas pokok sebab di situ ada burung yang besar seperti sangang, lukap, tunturun dan bangaak (nama-nama burung dalam bahasa Murut).

“Oh, sekarang saya mahu buat begini.” katanya. Diambilnya kayu lalu diikat pada tanganya, setelah diikat dia pun memegang dengan kuat kayu tersebut. setelah burung-burung yang besar hinggap di jeratnya, Abu Nawas pun telah diterbangkan oleh burung besar tersebut. Sesudah itu Abu Nawas pun tersangkut ke atas pokok.

Tersangkutlah dia di atas pokok. Lalu dia pun membuka kayu di tangannya dan burung-burung tersebut pun terbang semula. Dia pun tidak ada lagi cara untuk turun ke bawah. Terdapat akar kayu yang tumbuh turun ke bawah. Isterinya yang di rumah sedang menunggu, hari semakin gelap, isterinya pun masih menunggu, dan hari esoknya lagi isterinya masih menunggu. Isterinya pun bertanya pada dirinya, mengapa suaminya, Abu Nawas ini belum lagi pulang-pulang? Padahal Abu Nawas sedang menunggu akar kayu tersebut tumbuh baru dia dapat turun ke bawah.

Dengan menunggu akar tersebut tumbuh barulah Abu Nawas dapat turun. Abu Nawas kemudiannya dapat turun ke bawah. Dia pulang ke rumah dengan dirinya yang sangat kurus sebab sudah satu minggu di atas pokok. Air hujan sahaja dia minum. “Bagaimana, kamu dapatkah burung?” Tanya isterinya. “Terlepas sudah burung yang saya dapat.” katanya, “saya ikat di tangan dan saya pula yang diterbangkan oleh burung tersebut dan selama itulah saya tersangkut di atas pokok dan hanya menunggu akar kayu turun ke bawah barulah saya dapat turun.” katanya. Sekali lagi Abu Nawas tidak dapat menangkap burung.

Today I want to trap birds, he then opened the bark of a tree to get the gum out. Then he searched for a piece of wood where many birds alight. Only small birds got stuck in his trap, which uses a gum called *tohop* (from the tree *tahap hutan*). Abu Nawas only got the

small birds .”Oh..” he said he wanted to go to the treetop to trap bigger birds such as sangang, lukap, tunturun and bangkaak (names of birds in Murut)

“Now I want to do like this”, he said.He took a piece of wood and strapped it onto his hand. After tying it he held on to it tightly when the big birds came. Abu Nawas was then flown off by the big birds. And he got stuck in a tree.

Stuck in a tree, he then took off the wood from his hand and the birds flew off. He had no way of going down. There were roots growing downwards, His wife at home was waiting for him, it was getting dark, his wife was still waiting and the next day she still waited. She asked herself: Why is my husband Abu Nawas not home yet? In fact Abu Nawas was waiting for the roots to grow downwards.

When the roots had grown he was able to come down. Abu Nawas got down. He went home, very thin because he he had been up on the tree for a week.. He only drank rain water. His wife asked “so, did you get the birds?” “The birds I caught escaped”, he said. “I tied wood to my hand and I was flown off by the birds and all this while I was stuck on a tree and waited for the roots to grow downwards only then I could come down” he said. Once again Abu Nawas could not get the birds.

(Translated by Shah Rezad Ibrahim)