

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH FICTION IN NORTH BORNEO: AN ANALYSIS OF SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH NEWS DAILIES FROM 1949 TO 1963

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Received: 12 October 2023 | Revised: 29 November 2023
Accepted: 10 December 2023 / Published: 20 December 2023
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51200/ga.v13i2.4746>

ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is the role of English news dailies published from 1949-1963 in North Borneo during the British North Borneo Company (BNBC) administration which began its operations in Sandakan from 1881 to 1941. This paper aims to uncover the cultural expression, social commentary, and political discourse, offering a glimpse into the concerns, and aspirations of the local community through an analysis of short stories published in two particular English News dailies which is '*Anak Sabah*' and '*North Borneo News*,' A mixed-methods approach that utilizes Stephen Greenblatt's (2000),(2005) New Historicism and archival analysis, textual analysis, and content analysis is employed to achieve the objectives of this research. Because historicism, history, and literature are intertwined (Bakar et al., 2022) it is and short stories have a rich and enduring history, akin to a perennial river that flows with renewed vigour and an ever-expanding array of variations (Thambi Jose, 2019), the findings will unravel the connections between the fiction in the non-fiction world that influenced the social cultural contexts that shaped the literary heritage of Sabah.

Keywords: Short stories, English News Dailies, British North Borneo Company, new historicism.

INTRODUCTION

This research delves into the role played by short stories published in English news dailies in North Borneo during the British North Borneo company's administration from 1949-1963. The analysis is important as it will unveil the methods or rather the tool used by the returning British colonial to ensure an acceptance of the change in political leadership, culture and society after the Japanese occupation. This leads us to the subjects of discourse which is related to the cultural, social, and political development of the region. The shorts stories that were selected as subjects of analysis are found in English news dailies, namely *Anak Sabah* and *North Borneo News* that were both published within the period of 1949 just after the end of World War II and the formation of Malaysia in 1963. This paper is part of a wider research that touches on the influence of literary device in the formation of the national identity of North Borneo.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the significant role of English fiction in shaping literature and reflecting the political socio-cultural landscape of North Borneo, there remains a gap in understanding the specific influence of short stories published in English News Dailies from 1949 to 1963, especially in the role it played in Sabah history. This research hopes to capture the interplay between literature and historical contexts using a new New Historicism approach to uncover the socio-political and cultural impact of British North Borneo company's administration after World War 2. This research hopes to address the lack of political, social, and cultural information in this transformative era as the impact upon the identity of the people of North Borneo is reflected and framed in literary voices that had outlets in the English Dailies (Nour M. Adriani 2021). By unveiling the influence of English fiction in North Borneo and examining the role of short stories within the broader historical narrative, this research hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of English propaganda thus underlining the contribution of daily printed news dailies to the formation of nationalism.

OBJECTIVES

Among the objectives of this research is to analyze the short stories published in daily newspapers, in particular *North Borneo News* and *Anak Sabah* which were published during the period from 1949 to 1963 and intended for both adults and children. The short stories are as Table 1 below:

Table 1: Source & Data

Newspaper	Author	Title of Short Stories	Year Published
North Borneo News	P. S. Llyod	<i>Internment Reversed</i>	1 June 1949
<i>Anak Sabah</i>	<i>David Kong (pupil of Holy Trinity School)</i>	<i>The Story of a Mosquito Told by Itself</i>	December 1959

Uncovering the themes, characters, plots, and messages within the short stories in relation to cultural, social, and political contexts that impacted the people is another objective. Ultimately, this research aims to explore the interconnectedness between literature and historical circumstances in colonial North Borneo under the BNBC in Sabah from 1881-1949.

The research questions arising from these objectives are as follows:

- a. What were the prevalent themes, plots, and messages portrayed in the short stories published in English news dailies in North Borneo from 1949 to 1963?
- b. How did the cultural, social, and political contexts of North Borneo influence the development and representation of English fiction in the short stories during the specified period?
- c. To what extent did the short stories published in English News Dailies reflect the aspirations, concerns, and perspectives of the local community in North Borneo during the transformative era leading up to the formation of Malaysia?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Baker (2022:1076) “Historicism, history, and literature are intertwined.” Short stories have a rich and enduring history, akin to a perennial river that flows with renewed vigor and an ever-expanding array of variations (Thambi Jose, 2019:3). English fiction in North Borneo during the period from 1949 to 1963 has been a subject of limited scholarly exploration, with few studies specifically focusing on the influence of short stories published in English News Dailies. However, existing research on related topics provides valuable insights into the broader historical and literary landscape of North Borneo and sheds light on the significance of English fiction during this transformative era.

Studies examining the cultural and historical developments of North Borneo highlight the importance of literature as a reflection of societal values, aspirations, and concerns. For instance, North Borneo during the period of British colonisation from 1888-1963 produced many texts about the British presence and their activities on the island. According to Robert (2021), literature plays a crucial role in shaping society's understanding of its past and present, while postcolonialism is a fertile avenue for unveiling emotions, challenges, and history of the colonized. In the context of North Borneo, it becomes evident that there is a scarcity of local writing about the postcolonial experience in English. As such, revisiting British North Borneo texts represents an opportunity to bridge the gap in historical and literary inquiry, shedding light on the complexities of the postcolonial experiences in the region (Robert, Jenna Desiree. 2021:38). This contextual framework which underpins this research lifts the potential of short stories as vehicles for cultural representation and identity formation within this transformational period of the British North Borneo administration just after World War II.

New Historicism recognizes the interconnectedness between literature and its historical contexts. Stephen Greenblatt undoubtedly stands as one of the most distinguished critics in the realm of literary and historical studies, particularly in the domain of New Historicism (Veenstra, Jan R. 1995:174). This critical movement offers a fresh and innovative approach to reading and interpreting texts, breaking new ground in the field of literary analysis, and emphasizing the need to analyse literary works within their specific historical circumstances. Scholars such as Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) further expanded on this framework, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between literature, history, and power structures. Applying New Historicism to the analysis of short stories in the context of North Borneo can provide a deeper understanding of the multifaceted influences on both the development of English fiction and the changes in socio-political landscape of North Borneo in this transitional period of time.

Short stories were selected to be published in English News Dailies in North Borneo were limited but important as they helped to convey valuable insights into the British colonial agenda when they returned and expose their inclinations by implications. A short story is defined as a piece of prose fiction that can be read in a single sitting (Thambi Jose, 2019:3). According to Thambi Jose (2019) and Lewis (1964) short stories are enduring, vibrant literary forms, that evoke varied emotions and experiences. This is related to the fact that “storytelling” has an ancient lineage and continues to be popular until the 20th century. Edgar Allan Poe (1892) once defined a short story as "a prose narrative requiring anything from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal" and its very flexibility allows it to have endless possibilities (Hervey 1927).

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative method incorporating library, and archival research to collect the data needed for analysis and interpretation as shown in Figure 1. To comprehensively analyze these short stories the first step is to collect the English Daily News that are relevant within the time frame with literary publications. The source for the data in this research is the Sabah National Archives, Sabah State Library and University Malaysia Sabah Library for the critical literature needed to interpret and analyze the short stories.

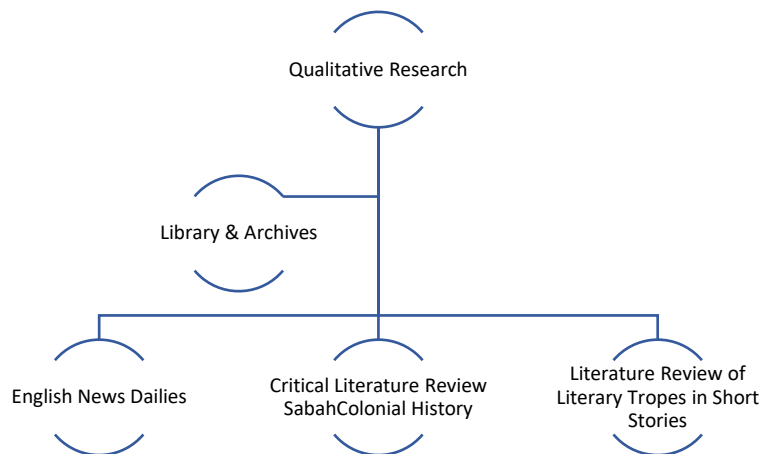


Figure 1. Data Collection

The analysis involves identifying the literary instruments like plot, themes and to critically examine the characters in these short stories. New Historicism is applied as an approach toward this analysis as shown in Figure 2.

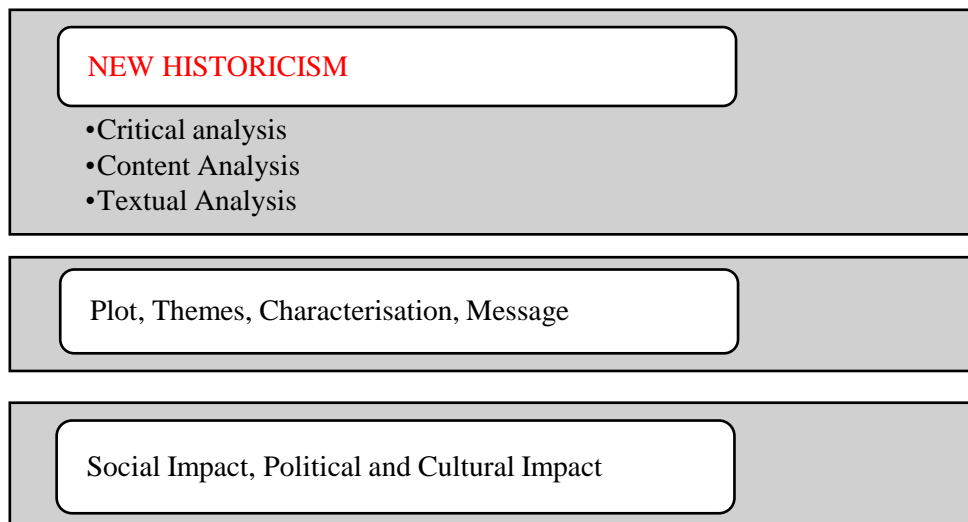


Figure 2. Research analysis framework

Established by Stephen Greenblat, it is a theory based on the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. With this approach, there will be a focused approach toward the interconnectedness of literature and history, recognizing that literary works are not isolated entities but products of

specific sociocultural and political circumstances. This framework provides a valuable lens to explore the multifaceted influences on English fiction in North Borneo during the specified era. For the analysis, the mixed-methods approach that includes archival analysis, textual analysis, and content analysis is used to uncover the intricate connections between literature, society, and identity formation in North Borneo.

All the above form of analysis has been employed to interpret the themes, plots, characters and narrative styles of these short stories in a historical context as has been done in past research on literary text with historical significance. (Toews 1992) Chalise (2021). While the relevance of archival analysis according to Ventresca and Mohr (2002:2) is imperative to grasp the significance of an interpretation in the past. According to Smith (2017), textual analysis allows the researcher to analyse all manner of text in different forms whether they are documents, films, newspapers, paintings, web pages, and so forth. These forms of data serve as the “texts” under study and are used to assess the meanings, values, and messages being sent through them. Content analysis involves a systematic examination and interpretation of a large body of texts, images, or symbolic materials as performed for the short stories concerned. Unlike other forms of analysis that focus on an author's or reader's perspective, content analysis seeks to uncover patterns, themes, and meanings within the texts themselves, independent of individual perspectives (Krippendorff. 2004: 3). It provides a structured and objective approach to studying textual or visual data, allowing researchers to identify recurring themes, sentiments, or trends across a vast collection of materials. By utilizing these methods in the context of short stories published in English News Dailies, this research can uncover the historical and literary forces that shaped English fiction in North Borneo during the specified period.

Initial steps to analysis involves comprehensive reading of the selected short stories to identify recurring themes, plots, and messages. Close attention was paid to the historical, cultural, social, and political contexts embedded within the narratives. Next, a systematic coding and categorization process was employed to organize and analyze the identified themes, plots, and messages. The coding helped to capture the key aspects of the short stories, allowing for comparative analysis across different narratives and identifying patterns and connections. The analysis was guided by the principles of New Historicism especially in the historical perspective in response to the sociopolitical and cultural events, cultural shifts, and power dynamics that shaped the literary production and reception of the short stories.

Data

The primary data for this research is obtained through library and archive research. The selected sources for this study are the English news dailies *North Borneo News* and *Anak Sabah*. These newspapers were chosen based on their availability, relevance to the research topic, and their significance as platforms for English fiction in North Borneo during the specified period. The research involved accessing physical and digital archives of the selected newspapers. Library resources, such as the Sabah State Archives and Sabah State Library were utilized to obtain copies of the relevant issues of *North Borneo News* and *Anak Sabah* for the years 1949 to 1963 and references pertaining to the study. The selection of *North Borneo News* and *Anak Sabah* as the primary sources for this research was justified by their prominence as English news dailies during the period from 1949 to 1963 in North Borneo. These newspapers were widely circulated and played a significant role in disseminating English fiction to the local community. The selection of these newspapers was also practical, considering the availability of archival materials and resources for accessing their publications, and each news dailies reflects both the

youth and adult perspectives *North Borneo News* was targeted to the adult readers whereas *Anak Sabah* was focused on the youths

FINDINGS

The findings of this research paper are illuminated through the analysis of three short stories that reveal the literary role as political, cultural and social tool to promote a positive reception of the returning forces after the Japanese evacuation in North Borneo after the defeat of the Japanese in 1949. These short stories reveal a compelling interplay between history and literature within the context of North Borneo during the period from 1949 to 1963. For example, the short story titled *Internment Reversed*, published on 1st June 1949 in 'North Borneo News,' exemplifies the nuanced relationship between history and literature.

Analysis 1: 'Internment Reversed' (1st June 1949)

Written by P.S. Lloyd, an Australian officer deployed in the 24th Battery of the 2/12 Field Regiment of artillery after the surrender of the Japanese interned in Kuala Papar beside the river and the sea. It's a first-author narrative that recorded incidences in the camp that was inhabited by Japanese soldiers suffering and dying from malaria. What has been particularly emphasized was the differences between the treatment of the Japanese prisoners of war as compared to Australian prisoners of war who were cruelly tortured and starved leading to the Ranau Death Marches (1945) where only 6 Australian soldiers out of 2434 prisoners survived the grueling treatment and track across 260 kilometres on foot (Carter, Sarah 2023). Instead of lashing out at these prisoners of war, in an act of brutal vengeance against the brutality the Australian & British soldiers received during the Japanese occupation in North Borneo, the author chooses to highlight the cultural differences between the Japanese and the Australians to understand the inhumanities that occurred during the war. Lloyd highlights the immense discipline and expectations of the Japanese for discipline, respect, and obedience that they demanded of themselves rather than their captors. When one man dies and fails to salute the Australian Commandant who came for an inspection, the Japanese commandant screams at the Japanese R.S.S. demanding the reason for such a display of disrespect only to be told the man had died the night before which was why he could only be propped up but could not salute as the rest of the prisoners. The actions of the batman assigned to Lloyd himself called Hino, who rewashes all his master's linen after washing them as he is afraid that Lloyd would be displeased if he returned and saw him not doing any work in his tent underlines the differences between the Eastern and Western cultures as well as explaining the atrocities of war that has just occurred in the historical context.

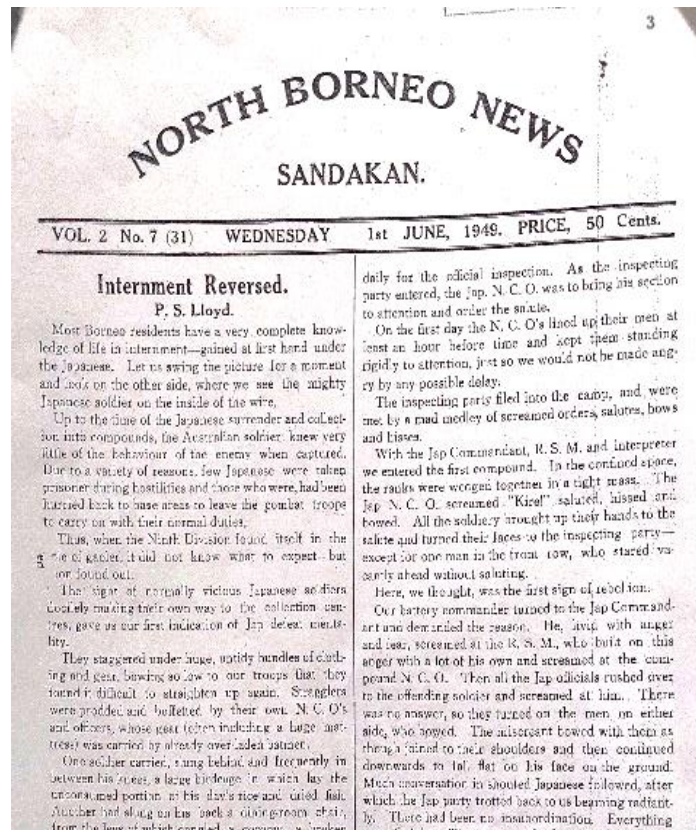


Figure. 1 *Internment Reversed* (North Borneo News: 1 June 1949)

a) Cultural Impact

The contrasting cultural behaviours of the Japanese and Australian soldiers as depicted in the story shaped the locals' perception of the occupying forces. The Japanese soldiers' harsh and authoritarian treatment of prisoners, which they deemed as normal, might have evoked fear and apprehension among the local population (Tze-Ken, D. W. 2001: 94). On the other hand, the compassionate approach of the Australian soldiers will garner more trust and respect from the locals, leading to a more positive perception of the returning British administration.

The final part of the narrative where Llyod refers to Agnes Keith's prediction of how it would "only be a matter of time" (North Borneo News 1949:5; Keith, Agnes Newton, 1946) that the brutal instincts in every one of us will lash out and commit brutalities is not true because the experience of war has only made them more eager to change. The war has taught them the ugliness of expectations and cultural inhumanity that even causes Hino, the prisoner slave to be willing to serve as a slave rather than return home is a testimony to change. The narrative unveils the impact of war on individuals, portraying the stark cultural differences between the past administration and the present one at that point of time. Underlying, the story is the intention to promote the returning forces as kind, considerate and humane just as Llyod the army officer. As history unfolds in the background, the story serves as a microcosm of the larger sociopolitical landscape, revealing the political propaganda of a returning British colonial force to North Borneo during this transformative era.

b) *Political State and Leadership*

The transition from Japanese colonization to British rule marked a significant shift in the political state of North Borneo, and this transformation is subtly reflected in the short story "Internment Reversed." The story provides a glimpse into the political context of the region during this transitional period through the contrasting behaviours and mindsets of the Japanese and Australian soldiers. After the war ended in 1945 and the British came into rule over North Borneo which the declaration made on 15 July 1946 named the territory of North Borneo a Crown Colony (Wong Tze Ken, Danny. 2015:170), the political state of North Borneo began to improve. The political context of North Borneo during the transition from Japanese colonization to British rule is subtly reflected in the story. The different behaviours and mindsets of the Japanese and Australian soldiers represent the contrasting leadership styles and political ideologies of their respective countries. The story deliberately contrasts the harsh and authoritarian nature of the Japanese military regime with the more compassionate and restrained approach of the Australian soldiers, who represent the British colonial administration. The Australian officer assigned to supervise the Japanese prisoners, as depicted in the story, treats the prisoners with respect and dignity, refraining from beatings or ill-treatment.

The deliberate difference emphasized between the different leadership portrayals implied a change in leadership that is both supportive and "fatherly" as reflected in Llyod's treatment of Hino. The differing leadership styles and political ideologies of the Japanese and Australian forces toward the prisoners of war in the story hinted at the forgiveness and benevolence that will be shown to the locals post-war, especially to the locals who sided with the Japanese willingly or through force. The compassionate and respectful treatment of the prisoners by the Australian soldiers is targeted at erasing the fear of reprisals toward the local community with the advent of the British administration which is more empathetic and fairer, fostering a positive view of the new rulers. The political intent is clearly to open up dialogue and cooperation and encourage greater engagement with the local communities that is the message behind the short story.

c) *Impact of War on Individuals*

The emotional toll of war is evident both in P.S. Lloyd, the author as an officer in the infantry as well as his relationship with Hino, the Japanese batman assigned to assist the Australian officer. Hino's experiences in the prison camp have left a lasting impression on him, to the point where he is reluctant to return home after the war. He is changed by the treatment he receives as a prisoner by Llyod who appears to be a kind and considerate officer unlike Hino's experience with his own Japanese officers that punished harshly and brutally till the point of death for minor misdemeanours. Llyod also highlights the psychological trauma war can inflict on individuals, even after the conflicts have ceased. The story thus delves into the complex emotions and mental struggles faced by individuals who have endured the horrors of war. The impact of war on individuals, as illustrated through the character of Hino, extends beyond the boundaries of the prison camp and appears to be a microcosm of a larger trauma suffered by the locals and other forces involved in the war. This resonates with the experiences of many locals who have witnessed the horrors and devastation of war firsthand (Tze-Ken, D. W. 2001: 93). North Borneo was reported to have been one of the most completely devastated of all the areas overrun by the Japanese and the material condition of the country was described as having reverted to that at the beginning of chartered rule. (Kahin, George McT. 1947: 62). The interactions between the locals and the former prisoners would have been shaped by the psychological

effects of war that Hino exhibits. The impact on individuals like Hino serves as a reminder of the importance of empathy, as shown by the Australian Soldiers by not taking any slaves and not torturing prisoners, understanding, and compassion towards those who have endured the traumas of war. It appeared to have fostered a greater sense of community support and solidarity among the locals, as they grappled with the collective memory of war and its impact on their society.

Analysis 2: ‘The Story of a Mosquito Told by Itself’ (Anak Sabah, December 1959)

The short story titled "The Story of a Mosquito Told by Itself," published in Anak Sabah, an English monthly newspaper for school children in December 1959, presents a unique narrative perspective from the viewpoint of a mosquito living in a housing area in North Borneo. It is told in the form of a “tale” that allows a moral message to be inserted similar to the classics such as *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (1946) [1965]. A tale allows the elements of reality and fiction to be the story explores the life of this mosquito and its interactions with the human inhabitants of its surroundings. Through this captivating narrative, the author David Kong, a pupil of Holy Trinity School, Tawau, sheds light on the intricate relationship between humans and mosquitos while delving into broader cultural and societal themes. As the story begins, the mosquito emerges as the central character, offering readers an extraordinary glimpse into its world. The mosquito's interactions with humans and the surrounding environment serve as a powerful metaphor for the cultural changes transpiring in North Borneo during this era.



Figure. 2 *The Story of a Mosquito Told by Itself* (Anak Sabah, December 1959)

a) Cultural Perspectives and Societal Changes

The mosquito narrates its humble beginnings, born amidst the swamps and seeking sustenance through the crimson elixir of blood. To humans, the mosquito is an unwelcome visitor, perceived as a foe that threatens their health and well-being by transmitting diseases such as *Dengue* and *Malaria*. The tension between the mosquito and humans mirrors the broader socio-cultural landscape in which they coexist. The mosquito's narration as an unwelcome visitor and disease vector reflects the surface intention of the short story which is to evoke the locals' awareness of health risks associated with mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria that had become very acute (Mcarthur, J. 1950) spreading all over the North Borneo including Labuan, Sarawak, Brunei and Dutch Borneo at that time. Among the measures taken by the British administration to curb the increase of mosquito-borne diseases is to use creative writing in the form of short stories to promote the awareness and steps to take to curb the rise in the cases. 'The Story of A Mosquito Told by Itself' in *Anak Sabah* (1950) is an example of the role played by short stories in English News dailies that was used to disseminate the information to the locals without evoking distrust or hostility against a new administration that has just replaced the Japanese in North Borneo.

The short stories appealed to both the young and the old taking into consideration the literacy level of the locals and the subservience to the didacticism of an analogy to teach the people. The mosquito's tale of seeking sustenance through bloodshed might have served as a wake-up call for the locals, prompting them to adopt proactive measures to mitigate mosquito-borne diseases. This increased awareness likely prompted the community to take proactive measures to protect themselves and their families from these diseases. This included initiatives such as keeping their surroundings clean, eliminating potential breeding grounds for mosquitos, and using mosquito repellents or nets. The success of using the short stories to teach and spread awareness in North Borneo's post-war period is found in the Colony of North Borneo Annual Report, 1959. It is mentioned that there is progress in the Malaria Control Scheme which has helped to prevent the transmission of malaria marking a turning point in health awareness and disease prevention in North Borneo.

The young narrator's proclamation that "*People usually keep their houses clean and they see that there is no breeding ground for us*" suggests that education and knowledge played a crucial role in empowering the locals to understand the mosquito's role in disease transmission. The dissemination of health information and the awareness of the mosquito's significance as a disease vector empowered the community to take charge of their health and make informed decisions. The mosquito's portrayal as a threat to human health is targeted at promoting a sense of collective responsibility within the community. In short, the short story encourages the local community to work together and cooperate with the authorities, namely the British administration to fight the disease from spreading. The simultaneous message to cooperate with the present administration to ensure the departing Japanese forces stay depart4d is not loss on the reader. The mosquito's narration appears to be part of the British North Borneo's public health policies and initiatives in North Borneo during the post-war period for example the Malaria Control Scheme which was sponsored jointly by the Government of North Borneo, World Health Organization, and United Nations Children's Fund and initiated in mid-1955 (Colony of North Borneo Annual Report, 1957). The growing awareness of mosquito-borne diseases prompted authorities to implement measures to control mosquito populations and address public health concerns

as mentioned in the Public Health section of the *Colony of North Borneo Annual Report, 1959*. The impact on the locals is evident in their increased health awareness, adoption of proactive measures, mindset shift towards disease prevention, empowerment through education, community collaboration, and potential influence on public health policies.

b) *The Mosquito Metaphor*

The mosquito's monologue is also a symbol of the gradual metamorphosis of North Borneo society from a past filled with destructive threatening forces to a cleaner, safer environment. The mosquito becomes more than a mere insect; it transforms into a symbol of the broader human experience, reflecting the interplay between humans and nature, and the implications of their coexistence. The desire to create a healthier environment becomes a shared responsibility. With newfound understanding they will avoid a past of ill-hygenic and instead practice maintaining cleaner homes, eliminate stagnant waters that serve as breeding grounds for mosquitos, and employ mosquito repellents and nets as protective shields. As the mosquito shares its story, it provides a lens through which readers can explore the cultural dynamics and societal changes in post-war North Borneo. Moreover, the mosquito's monologue offers insight into the cultural perceptions and attitudes of the time that were conducive for the mosquitoes to breed (J. McArthur 1950). By conveying the humans' fear and animosity towards mosquitos, the story unveils a cultural dichotomy between the insect and the people. This portrayal is not only a reflection of the reality of mosquito-borne diseases but also a representation of the prevailing cultural mindset concerning nature and the role of insects in their lives.

c) *Post-War North Borneo*

The short story reflects on the aftermath of the war and how it affected the political landscape of the region. The mosquito, is personified as the narrator, offering a unique perspective on the societal changes that occurred during this post-war period. The first-person narrative from the mosquito's point of view, not only provides another point of view but allows the reader a macro perspective of the current situation at that time. The mosquito's narration provides insights into how the political changes and British governance affected the local environment. The mosquito is both the threat and the precursor exposing the practices in housing areas of North Borneo, that encouraged mosquito breeding. The mosquito's monologue serves as a metaphor for the interactions between humans and nature, and how political decisions can influence the natural habitat and ecosystem. During the post-war years, the British colonial authorities undertook efforts to rebuild and stabilize the region. This included improving general sanitation and preventive measures (Colony of North Borneo Annual Report, 1959.) aimed at improving public health and sanitation, which were crucial in controlling mosquito-borne diseases like malaria and dengue as stated in the the mosquito's observations of how humans tried to eradicate mosquitos through cleaning and using mosquito repellents like D.D.T. highlight the impact of these political decisions on the mosquito population and their natural habitats. Furthermore, the mosquito's perspective sheds light on the changing cultural norms and values during the post-war era. The mosquito explains how humans viewed it and its clan as enemies due to their role in spreading diseases. The cultural perception of mosquitos as

pests and vectors of illness reflects the influence of public health campaigns and education initiatives implemented during British colonial rule.

d) *Health Awareness and Societal Evolution*

"The Story of a Mosquito Told by Itself" like all tales with edifying messages impacts the locals in profound ways. The mosquito's perspective acts as a mirror, reflecting the evolving cultural values and priorities of the community. It catalyzes introspection and self-awareness, urging people to take control of their environment and well-being. The story's portrayal of the mosquito as a sentient being, with its own thoughts and emotions, challenges the traditional perception of mosquitos as mere pests. This shift in perspective prompts the locals to reconsider their attitudes towards nature and wildlife, fostering a sense of empathy and interconnectedness with the environment. By humanizing the mosquito, the story urges people to take responsibility for the impact of their actions on the ecosystem. As health awareness rises, the story plants the seeds of societal evolution. Empowered by knowledge, the North Bornean people begin to transform their daily practices, demonstrating resilience and adaptability in the face of newfound challenges. The mosquito's humble narrative inspires collective action, fostering a united front against disease and cultivating a healthier, more vibrant society. In the broader context of the *Anak Sabah* newspaper, where this short story takes a prominent place on the front page alongside other articles on *Boy Scouts and the Senior Badminton Championship winners*, it becomes evident that this literary form serves as a platform for imparting important cultural values and knowledge to the younger generation. Education and health awareness emerge as pivotal factors in society's transformation, and literature, such as this story, plays an instrumental role in facilitating this change.

Overall, "The Story of a Mosquito Told by Itself" transcends its narrative boundaries to become a profound representation of cultural shifts, disease awareness, and changing societal attitudes in North Borneo during this period. The power of literature to influence and reflect cultural transformations is evident, underscoring the significance of literary expressions as vehicles for preserving and shaping cultural identity and societal progress. From the mosquito's unique vantage point, we witness the complex interplay between humans and the environment, as well as the enduring resilience of a community embracing health awareness. As the echoes of this tale reverberate through the region, it leaves an indelible mark on the North Bornean people, igniting a desire for progress, unity, and well-being that echoes through the generations to come.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research paper provides valuable insights into the role of English fiction, particularly short stories, as a vehicle to help the post-war British administration be accepted by the local people after World War 2. It is a propaganda to pave the way for the changing political leadership and ease the locals into the political culture (*Internment Reversed* 1949) that will affect post-war North Borneo as well as teach and disseminate important social cultural practices that saved lives as shown in the discussion on the impact of "The Story of a Mosquito Told by Itself" in *Anak Sabah* (1950). Creative writing although fiction in nature, has always been used mightily as a political tool that ironically becomes the impetus for literary growth.

This research has unveiled the important relationship between literature or creative writing and the cultural, social, and political development of North Borneo from 1949 to 1963. Through the New Historicism perspective, the research has demonstrated the immense potential to uncover aspects of colonial British North Borneo company administration via the analyses of literary works published in English news dailies on the shaping of cultural values, the dissemination of health awareness, and the fostering of collective action in post-war North Borneo. The findings underscore the power of literature as a reflection of society and as a catalyst for societal change, making it a vital resource for understanding the past and informing the future. As North Borneo navigates its journey through history, these literary gems remain essential touchstones, providing invaluable glimpses into the complex tapestry of the region's cultural heritage.

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