

# The »Indian Gift« and the Taiwan Indigenous Literary Hunter's Gift

Darryl Sterk

## *Introduction*

As Lewis Hyde relates at the beginning of his book on the gift in literature (and as literature as a gift), in 1764, Thomas Hutchinson, successful businessman and Governor of Massachusetts, defined the English term »Indian gift« as »a present for which an equivalent return is expected.«<sup>1</sup> This definition suggests that Hutchinson, and American settlers generally, did not understand the gift culture of the indigenous peoples. The settlers did not see an Indian gift as a true gift, because a true gift is supposedly given without any expectation of return. Anyone who has read up on the theory of gift economy will be better able to understand »Indian« exchange practices: anthropologists claim that in non-monetized local societies, gift exchange is the predominant form of exchange, more important than barter, which tends to be practiced with relative strangers. The aboriginal gift and the modern gift are certainly different, because modern people make a distinction between the commodity and the gift. But even in modern societies, in which the gift contrasts with the commodity, we normally do not continue to give gifts to someone who does not reciprocate; reciprocity is part of the invisible package of the modern gift.

1 *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. »Indian« <[www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)> (last retrieval Oct 10, 2011); see Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York: Random House, 1983), 3.

Though I hope to understand aboriginal gift culture and its contemporary relevance, my methods and aims are different from those of anthropologists. Rather than the Indian gift or the modern gift in general, this article is specifically about the modern Taiwanese indigenous literary gift. Though this narrowing of focus may seem to reduce the potential audience, there is general interest in the particular, and as I suggest in my conclusion the particular results I obtain here may be used in comparative study. Yet the specific focus of the article may still need some explanation. I study gifts in literary works by modern Taiwanese aborigines living in a predominantly Chinese settler society. They are modern in the sense that they live in an industrialized, commoditized, and individualized society. Like all modern people, Taiwan's aborigines have to balance gift giving and commodity exchange and related attitudes or inclinations. Yet they remain aboriginal. Aboriginality is an important part of their identity. They may have some kind of link to aboriginal tradition, in which gift giving is the predominant form of exchange. Aboriginal elites have expressed modern Taiwanese aboriginality in literary form, and Taiwanese aboriginal writing has been made available to an English speaking audience by the efforts of Professors John Balcom and Taotao Liu, who translated the stories in *Indigenous Writing From Taiwan*.<sup>2</sup> The fiction and essays in this volume deserve critical attention and should be the first candidates for such attention, because they are available for the general reader and to students in college survey courses; but to my knowledge they have received none in published English language scholarship.

This is not to say that no foreign scholars have paid attention to Taiwan indigenous literature. Professor Terrence Russell of the University of Manitoba is an indigenous Taiwan literature specialist, who has written a valuable article on the oral literature of Taiwan's indigenous peoples, an introduction to a special issue on the topic in the Taiwan Literature English Translation Series.<sup>3</sup> In this article, Professor Russell discusses oral »identity legends«,<sup>4</sup> while I focus on the construction of identity in prose narrative fiction. Christophe Mazière at the Université de Provence Aix-Marseille is preparing a doctoral dissertation on the topic. The most important published English language scholarly contribution to the study of Taiwan indigenous literature is Chiu Kuei-fen's excellent article on

2 *Indigenous Writers of Taiwan: An Anthology of Stories, Essays, and Poems*, ed. by John and Yingtshih Balcom, tr. by John Balcom (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

3 Terrence Russell, »The Mythology and Oral Literature of Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples«, *Taiwan Literature English Translation Series* no 24 (Jan 2009), xxi-xxx.

4 Terrence Russell, »The Mythology and Oral Literature of Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples«, *Taiwan Literature English Translation Series* no 24 (Jan 2009), xxi-xxx, here xxviii.

the literary prose writings of the celebrated Taiwan Taos indigenous writer Syman Rapongan 夏曼·藍波安 (Shi Nulai 施努來, b1957).<sup>5</sup> Chiu's article addresses the relationship between Taiwan nationalist discourse and indigenous discourse. She also discusses the more general issue of the indigenous writer's relation to tradition; borrowing Derrida's notion of inheritance, Chiu sees Syman Rapongan in a condition of »undeniable alienation from his tribal culture«,<sup>6</sup> a condition that seems to require reacquaintance with tradition on his part. I discuss a similar issue, of indigenous efforts to maintain in modern society traditional conceptions of identity which they no longer »live«, through the motif of the hunter's gift.

None of these foreign scholars has written about gift culture in Taiwan indigenous literature, however, and although indigenous literature is now a hot topic in Chinese language Taiwan literary studies, yielding numerous theses, a few dissertations, journals, books, and, in 2009, Pasuya Poiconu's (Pu Zhongcheng 浦忠成, b1956) epic attempt to write the history of Taiwanese aboriginal literature,<sup>7</sup> nobody to my knowledge has written about the motif of gift giving in Taiwan aboriginal literature. There have been studies of identity construction<sup>8</sup> and the character of the hunter<sup>9</sup> in Taiwan aboriginal literature, but nobody has brought the two topics together. I think they may be very fruitfully integrated, and that the motif of the gift is a good way of doing so.

- 5 Chiu Kuei-fen, »The Production of Indigeneity: Contemporary Indigenous Literature in Taiwan and Cross-Cultural Inheritance«, *The China Quarterly* no 200 (Dec 2009), 1071-1087.
- 6 Chiu, »The Production of Indigeneity«, 1082.
- 7 Pu Zhongcheng 浦忠成, *Taiwan yuanzhu minzu wenxue shigang* 臺灣原住民族文學史綱 [A Brief History of Taiwanese Aboriginal Literature] (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2009).
- 8 Two relevant articles include: Wei Yijun 魏貽君, »Zhaoxun rentong de zhandou weizhi: yi Walisi Nuogan de gushi wei li« 找尋認同的戰鬥位置：以瓦歷斯諾幹的故事為例 [A Combat Position For Finding Identity: The Story of Walis Norgan], in *Taiwan yuanzhu minzu Hanyu wenxue xuanji* 台灣原住民族漢語文學選集 [Taiwan Indigenous Chinese Language Literary Anthology], 7 vols, ed. by Sun Dachuan 孫大川 (Taipei: Ink, 2003), 2: 97-145; and Yang Cui 楊翠, »Rentong yu jiyi: yi Awu de chuanguo shitan yuanzhumin nüxing shuxie« 認同與記憶：以阿烏的創作試探原住民女性書寫 [Identity and Memory: Using Liglave Awu's Literary Creations to Discuss Indigenous Women's Writing], *ibid.*, 2: 257-298.
- 9 Fu Dawei 傅大為, »Bailang senlin li de wenzi lieren« 百朗森林裡的文字獵人 [The Hunter of Words in the *Bairang* Forest], *ibid.*, 2: 211-246; Xu Junya 許俊雅, »Shanlin de beige: Bunong zu Tian Yage de xiaoshuo "Zuihou de lieren"« 山林的悲歌：布農族田雅各的小說《最後的獵人》 [The Elegy in the Forest Grove: The Bunun Writer Topas Tamapima's Short Story »The Last Hunter«], *ibid.*, 2: 19-45.

My basic observation is that gifts in Taiwan aboriginal literature tend to be given by hunters, and that hunters tend to give gifts. My thesis is that Taiwanese indigenous writers of stories about gift exchange are constructing or reconstructing indigenous individual, social and ecological identities in a modern social context. I emphasize that I am discussing literary gifts rather than actual gifts because this concerns the critical context for this article. One would assume that this context would include the wealth of scholarly literature on the gift as a social institution, a body of scholarship to which anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers have contributed. It does, and a literary scholar interested in gift giving will find this tradition to be of inherent interest. But a study of literary gift-giving has an awkward place in this scholarship. Thus, I shall very briefly trace the broad outlines of this tradition, then introduce some qualifications that relate to the study of the literary gift. I apply this qualified model to the interpretation of four Taiwanese literary hunter's gifts and offer some preliminary reflections on the results of the interpretation. I end the article with a self-critique of my method, which is to 'apply' a simplified anthropological model to the study of local indigenous literature without doing the kind of local fieldwork that illuminates and makes possible the refinement or interrogation of the model.

### *Theorizing the Gift*

There are several collections of articles that present the tradition of gift theorization in an accessible format, most notably the American philosopher Alan D. Schrift's *The Logic of the Gift* (1997) and the Dutch sociologist Aafke E. Komter's *The Gift: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (1996). Both volumes review the tradition of gift theorization in anthropology and sociology and trace how this tradition has attracted the interest of a wider scholarly community in the social sciences and humanities. Both collections begin with Marcel Mauss (1872–1950), author of the seminal *Essai sur le don* (1902–03).<sup>10</sup> Mauss is a kind of bridge between the anthropological and sociological study of the gift. He wrote about gift exchange in Melanesian and West Coast Amerindian cultures on the basis of his reading of Bronisław Malinowski (1884–1942) and Franz Boas (1858–1942), among many, many others, but he wrote in Emile Durkheim's (1858–1917) circle and was thus working in the *problématique* of urban social atomization and

10 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, tr. by W. D. Halls (New York: Norton, 1990).

*anomie*—Durkheim’s word for the relative normlessness of modern urban life. Mauss’s main contribution was to theorize gift exchange in societies where gift giving was the main form of exchange. Mauss assumed that there were three basic links in a gift chain: giving, acceptance, and reciprocation or giving away. Further, the chain formed a circle, as the gift would ultimately be returned to the original giver. In Melanesian, the word to describe the circle was the *kula*. Following native explanations, Mauss thought that it was because of a spiritual power called the *hau* that the gift had to be given away, until it finished the *kula* circuit. The *hau* of a gift was the trace of its giver. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) asserted that the *hau*, an indigenous concept theorized by Mauss, was theoretically extraneous, while Marshall Sahlins (b1930) went on to reconsider Lévi-Strauss’s excision, feeling that anthropologists should not dismiss folk theorization lightly. Sahlins analyzed the spiritual power of the *hau* as the increase in value of gifts as they rounded the *kula* and argued that to hoard a gift would make its *hau* malignant. For this reason, in the end a gift has to be returned to the ultimate donor, the natural spirits.<sup>11</sup> Only in this way would the *kula*, and the way of life of these people, remain intact.

Anthropologists emphasize the communogenetic character of the indigenous gift. One has, perhaps overly simply, followed Marx in asserting that the commodity establishes relations between things through market mechanisms, while the gift establishes relations between people.<sup>12</sup> Commodity exchange is socially atomizing, because the exchange relation is interpersonally temporary and purely functional. Gift-giving establishes relations between people because it creates gift debt, which is discharged in a display of generosity that creates further debt. It is bad form to return a gift of equal exchange value, as in barter, because that implies that no further social connection is desired. In indigenous communities, most transactions are gift exchanges with close associates, whereas barter, equivalent exchange, is practiced only seldom, with strangers, i.e. people one does not trust and with whom one has little interest in maintaining a relationship. Moreover, gift culture not only conditions interpersonal relations but also relates humanity to nature, because in aboriginal societies, at least in the society studied by Malinowski in Melanesia and theorized by Mauss in Paris in the 1920s and by many scholars since, the fruits of nature are viewed as the gifts of natural spirits to human beings. These gifts demand counter-gifts, hence the offerings to the gods in the world’s religious traditions.

11 Mauss, *The Gift*, 77.

12 Christopher A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (London: Academic Press, 1982), 41.

There seems to be a radical difference between traditional or indigenous society on the one hand and modern society on the other. But the more one studies indigenous gift culture the more commonalities appear. Only a primitivist would expect that aboriginal society is a kind of golden age from which modern man has fallen, and anthropologists ever since Mauss discussed the extravagant gifts of the potlatch have emphasized the potentially aggressive character of gift giving, which in aboriginal society took the form of, for instance, the potlatch, in which conspicuous giving was intended to humiliate the recipient in a status display and maintain intertribal relations. Similarly, Christmas in twentieth century is both the season of the spirit of giving, during which networks of intimate social ties are cultivated, and a chance to flaunt one's generosity and control one's children.<sup>13</sup> One can therefore talk about modern gift giving in terms of similar abstractions such as status display and intimate network management. According to Komter, social psychologists emphasize the relationship between identity and gift-giving, arguing that giving gifts displays an identity and imposes one on the recipient.<sup>14</sup> This approach in some sense begins with Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803–1882) meditations on the kind of gift that comes from the character of the donor, such as »a handkerchief of [a girl's] own sewing«.<sup>15</sup> Identity seems to be a more subtle approach than status display and relationship management, as it seems that at least sometimes we bother displaying ourselves and managing intimate networks because we feel that relations with such a person or such a group are an important part of who we are, of our social identity.

Certainly my research on the indigenous Taiwanese literary gift might comment on these debates. However, reflecting on literary gifts is hardly the most obvious way of studying the gift in society, nor may the results of these reflections serve as data for sociological study without qualification. Anthropological gift theorists read ethnographies, while sociologists tend to interview people and get them to fill out surveys. Studying gifts in literature is by contrast a way of studying the ways different writers relate gift giving to larger concerns such as identity construction or social belonging. Literary scholars sometimes try

13 Barry Schwartz, »The Social Psychology of the Gift«, in *Social Solidarity and the Gift*, ed. by Aafke E. Komter (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 72.

14 Aafke E. Komter, »Introduction«, in *The Gift: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. by Aafke E. Komter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 8; Schwartz, »The Social Psychology of the Gift«, 69.

15 Ralph Waldo Emerson, »Gifts«, in *The Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. by Alan D. Schrift (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 26.

to link what they do back to sociology by arguing that reading is an important form of sociocultural reproduction. I am not trying to make this kind of argument. Rather I am attempting to view the hunter's gift in Taiwan aboriginal literature as a form of self-reflection.

Literary writers who write stories about gifts likely do not know the tradition of gift theorizing, though through their stories they field social or philosophical observations for readers who are similarly historically and theoretically uninformed. This ignorance on the part of writer and reader seems to set the literary critic free in the virgin soil of the field of literary gift criticism. The field, however, has been tilled before, most notably by Jacques Derrida (1930–2004). In his *Given Time*,<sup>16</sup> Derrida makes his argument partly by reading a short story by Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867). In the story the narrator witnesses his companion give a counterfeit coin to an overjoyed beggar, whose joy will soon turn to sorrow when he discovers the gift is fake. Derrida generalizes by arguing that all gifts are fake, even ones that are not fake in Baudelaire's sense, in that they are ultimately nothing but time, the time interval between the receipt and the realization that a further gift is necessary. This recognition means that all the gifts we give are not true gifts. Schrift places Derrida's assertion in the context of his philosophical reflections on aporia by explaining that »the conditions of the possibility of the gift are precisely the conditions of its impossibility«. <sup>17</sup> In other words, as soon as a person recognizes a gift as a 'gift' it is no longer a gift, for the only true gift is recognized as such by neither donor nor recipient. This would seem to negate the social meaning of the gift, or its possible relevance in self-conscious identity construction. I prefer the educated common sense of Mary Douglas (1921–2007). Derrida's notion of a gift reminds one of Douglas's idea of a »free gift«<sup>18</sup> in her introduction to a translation of Mauss's text. Douglas asserts that gifts should not be free, for free gifts deprive the recipient of the chance to assert his self-respect and are not conducive to solidarity.

Lewis Hyde (b1945), like Douglas, accepts the everyday notion of the gift. He simply argues that gifts are a matter of Eros, of feeling, rather than simply of Logos, of reason.<sup>19</sup> Lewis Hyde's work contains interesting criticisms of gifts in fairy tales, which in his reading illustrate the maxim that to hoard is to lose and

16 Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* [*Donner le temps*: 1. *La fausse monnaie*, 1991], tr. by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).

17 Alan D. Schrift, »Introduction: Why Gift?«, in Schrift, *The Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, 10.

18 Mary Douglas, »Introduction«, in Mauss, *The Gift*, xii–xviii.

19 Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*.

to give is to receive. But in general he is talking about the literary gift as a gift of nature to a writer, who must then give it to the world in the form of writing. This is part of Hyde's concept of art. Hyde offers two in-depth, rich examples of literary gift criticism, by studying the poets Walt Whitman and Ezra Pound. I will be studying the more narrative mode of fiction as a form of indigenous literary self-reflection.

Rather than use either Derrida or Hyde to conceptualize this self-reflection, I would like to refer to Clifford Geertz (1926–2006). Geertz is helpful for the research I am attempting to conduct here. In contrast to extreme structuralists who posit rules of behavior in deep structure, Geertz assumed that to some extent aboriginal people understood themselves and could use metaphors and stories to represent their cultures. In his celebrated essay »Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight« (1972) Geertz describes the cockfight as part of »a Balinese reading of the Balinese experience, a story they tell about themselves«.<sup>20</sup> The cock represents the man, and the fight the art that sublimates homosocial hostility. The Balinese people were like the anthropologist in that they interpreted themselves, but the anthropologist, being an outsider writing for outsiders, had to provide a thick description to make the institution meaningful for the reader. The cockfight as story can be described using a title of Northrop Frye's (1912–1991) as a »fable of identity«.<sup>21</sup> Geertz did not use the term identity, but judging from his references he was deeply influenced by Frye. Rephrasing my thesis in this article using Frye's turn of phrase, I am arguing that Taiwan aboriginal literary hunter's gifts are symbols in fables of collective identity, attempts to reconstitute such identity in a modern context. Though the hunter's gift can be interpreted using social science concepts like social cohesion and status display, it is more compelling to see it as a symbol of identity with social and suprasocial or ecological significance.<sup>22</sup>

### *Taiwan Indigenous Literary Hunter's Gifts*

In the following account I have arranged the stories according to a rough idea of cultural development, from mostly isolated hunting-and-gathering culture in

20 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 448.

21 Northrop Frye, *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963).

22 Etymologically the word »ecology« is the study of home, but not of a home separated from the larger environment but of the larger environment, considered as a web of relations, as home.

Husluma Vava's *The Hunter* (»Lieren« 獵人), to a story of trading cultures with Auvini Kadresengan's »Home to Return To«, in which the trade goods are products of modern industry, to stories set in the near past, in which the frontier has been incorporated into a modern state and the people of the frontier have been drawn into a national or even international production-consumption commodity system (Badai's »Ginger Road« and Topas Tamapima's »The Last Hunter«). Though I will go on to question this ordering, I have adopted it to suggest that the gift is an important symbol of aboriginal self-understanding in the *longue durée* of tribal memory. In each reading I attempt to show the relevance of the hunter's gift to individual, social and ecological identity.

*Husluma Vava's »The Hunter«*

Husluma Vava 霍斯陸曼·伐伐 (Wang Xinmin 王新民, 1958–2007) was a Bunun 布農 aboriginal writer from Gaoxiong 高雄. He won the 1998 Wu Cho-liu literary prize for his short story *The Hunter* (»Lieren« 獵人).<sup>23</sup> This story is about the Bunun hunter Banidun. Banidun carries a gun, but the story takes place in the traditional Bunun spiritual world. In this world, gift exchange is extremely significant. Gift exchange regulates the relationship between the hunter and the forest: When Banidun takes firewood from the forest he supports the seedlings, adopting an attitude of »pious worship«<sup>24</sup> in order to remind the seedlings that when they grow tall and strong they will have to help passing Bunun hunters. This is the reciprocal relation between the hunter and the forest. The hunter's relation to animals is the same. Though when he hunts he gives false gifts of millet in order to seduce animals into his traps, it happens that the animals who eat the millet on which he has cast a spell »welcome« his arrival.<sup>25</sup> They give themselves to him. This is the ecological meaning of the gift in the story. Their gift becomes the foundation of the human community, because

[...] the Bunun believed [sic] that game was bestowed by the god of heaven. For this reason it could be shared with others who saw it; it is the duty, then, of a successful hunter to share his game with those around him.

»This is the oldest of traditions. What power do we have to change it?«<sup>26</sup>

This utterance has a social meaning. When out in the hunting ground Banidun the hunter discovers a younger member of another Bunun tribe, he gives him the

23 Husluma Vava, »The Hunter«, tr. by John Balcom, in Balcom and Balcom, *Indigenous Writing from Taiwan*, 71–85.

24 Ibid., 73.

25 Ibid., 77.

26 Ibid., 75.

gift of meat. The gift is partly out of reciprocity, as he tells his companion, »The next time when the god in heaven looks after you and we meet on the road, you'll *have to* give me a hind leg«. <sup>27</sup> This gift establishes Banidun's status as a capable hunter, and thus it supports his individual identity, but does not seem to humiliate the recipient, as in the ritualized gift giving of the potlatch. Banidun's statement reassures the recipient, promising him that the time will come when he will establish his competence by a return gift.

The power to give is also the point of the lazy woman story Banidun recalls up in the mountain hunting ground. <sup>28</sup> The lazy woman was too disorganized and lazy to make millet properly for her family and was cast out to live in the forest, with nobody to depend on. The story within the story serves the same function for Banidun as the story itself serves for its Bunun indigenous readers: it communicates the value of competence as a prerequisite for gift-giving, or contributions to the community, according to a gendered division of labour. Yet the story is also about loss, because, as we discover at the end of the story when Banidun returns from the hunt, Banidun is a hunter who has lost his wife and child. Banidun is a Bunun Job. The story is thus Jobian wisdom that what is given can also be taken away, or that what has been received eventually has to be given back, so that the cycle can continue.

»The Hunter« was written decades after hunting had ceased to be the dominant way of life of Bunun men. So one wonders what it meant for the author and its audience. Reading the story in translation highlights this issue, because a translator has to make choices about verb tense in English. Balcom and Liu opt for the past tense in the first sentence in the quotation, then switch to past tense. This switch interestingly raises the issue of the temporality of the tradition. The speaker in the story is saying that this is Bunun tradition, that this is what Bunun people believe, but the narrator, and the author himself, are, it stands to reason, at a distance from that speaker and that belief. The final question at the end of the quotation also raises the issue of the contemporary relevance of the tradition, because whether or not any particular person had the power to change tradition, tradition has changed. Indeed, people do not have the power to stop tradition from changing, though they may reinvent and pretend it has always been thus. There seems to be an unintentional irony in the final question. I make this remark without intending any disrespect to Huslama Vava, who is trying to preserve aboriginal cultural memory or reconstitute aboriginal identity in the modern world.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 76—emphasis mine, D.S.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 78.

*Auvini Kadresengan's »Eternal Ka-balhivane (Home to Return To)«*

Auvini Kadresengan 奧威尼·卡露斯盎 (Qiu Jinshi 邱金士, b1945) is a Rukai 魯凱 writer from Pingdong 屏東, originally from Jiuhaocha 舊好茶, or Kochapongane in the Rukai language. In the dreamscape at the beginning of his story *Home to Return To* (»Yongheng de guisu« 永恆的歸宿),<sup>29</sup> he evokes an animistic sense of presences. The ancestors speak through these presences, offering their blessings.<sup>30</sup> They also provide flora and fauna, the bounty of nature. On a journey through the sacred territory of the Rukai people the protagonist receives help from the ancestors; they grant him a gift he dreams about, »a buck with young antlers«. <sup>31</sup> The totem ancestor of the Rukai people is the cloud leopard, but it seems the case that the ancestors inhabit other natural beings, or at least that they have the power to give these beings to their descendants. Whereas in Husluma Vava's story, the plants and animals give themselves, here it is the Rukai ancestors who give or act as mediators. This may effect a similar sense of ecological intimacy, or even identity, of intimacy with nature, but it is not clear whether the ancestors are immanent in nature or separate. This could be a topic for further research.

The story is also intriguing on the issue of individual identity. Clearly the gifts of the ancestors establish the social status, the personal identity, of a hunter. A great hunter has a high social status in the village, which is externally marked by the wearing of lilies and eagle feathers; such a hunter has the right to wear these items. Yet the hunter Esai seems to be particularly modest, and has »never dared count [him]self among the glorious lily bearers« and feels himself »unable to wear feathers [...] a disgrace to [his] ancestors«. <sup>32</sup> This may be what we call low self-esteem, or it may be that, at least for Esai personally, the connection to the ancestors and to living people is more important to his identity than his personal accomplishment; indeed, without his ancestors, he would have no accomplishment, and without others there would be no one to recognize it.

The story certainly speaks to social identity; gift-giving is the basis for both intertribal and intratribal interpersonal relations. I speak first of intertribal relations, because they appear first in the story. The story is about the montagnard hunter Esai who travels down from the hills to trade with a headman on the

29 Auvini Kadresengan, »Home to Return To (Eternal Ka-balhivane)«, in Balcom and Balcom, *Indigenous Writers from Taiwan*, 100–114.

30 Ibid., 100.

31 Ibid., 105.

32 Ibid., 108.

plain around Zhiben 知本 in Taidong County 台東縣 on Taiwan's southeast coast. The father lives primarily as a hunter, but as a hunter he has adopted articles of modern technology. He goes down to barter with the headman on the plains for guns and other articles.<sup>33</sup> But most of the description is taken up with the elaborate rituals of gift exchange surrounding the barter. The montagnard presents the headman with gifts; the nature of these gifts is not specified, but one gathers they are mountain products, gifts of nature given by the ancestors. It is not clear how he can turn the gifts of the ancestors into articles to be traded for desirables, though perhaps the barter itself is seen in terms of something like 'gift exchange'. The headman, being a good host, receives them with ikakes, a sweet wine made from glutinous rice.<sup>34</sup> After the barter is done, they go into the hills and bring back a log to make a new mortar for the headman.<sup>35</sup> In return, the headman gives them food for the road.<sup>36</sup> The ceremony certainly goes beyond barter; »Home to Return To« does not describe a way of life that is predominantly based on barter. Rather, it represents a society in which intertribal relations are maintained through ritualized gift exchange.

Then Esai returns to his home village, where the items he has obtained through barter or received from the ancestors build intratribal relations. The culture it describes remains a gift giving culture. The father returns home with gifts for his fellow tribesmen and for his family. The father has promised his son he will bring him back a nice gun.<sup>37</sup> The gun for his son is intended as a wedding gift when the boy gets married. The gift has a social meaning. An article of modern industry serves to reproduce traditional Rukai culture. The hero in the story remains a hunter who trades on the side. However, the fact that the hunter trades for guns places the story in a fairly narrow historical time frame, the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century. The encroaching capitalist industrial system is implicit in the gun, which speaks to a different kind of fate. We may explore this identity through the consideration of Badai's *Ginger Road* and Topas Tamapima's *The Last Hunter*.

*Badai's »Ginger Road«*

Badai's 巴代 (b1962) *Ginger Road* (»Jianglu« 薑路), winner of the first China Motor Indigenous Literary Award, puts gifts in the context of a Puyuma 卑南

33 Ibid., 102.

34 Ibid., 101.

35 Ibid., 102.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 101.

indigenous community that has been drawn into the national or even global capitalist system of production and consumption. The story treats the difficulty of balancing gift economy with commodity economy for a socio-economically and geographically marginal group. Ginger Road is the story of a sixty year old man named Luben who grows ginger and maintains the road to a ginger patch. The field where he plants ginger belongs to his brother in law, who has given Luben cultivation rights in exchange for thirty days of service a year. One assumes the brother in law needs the help, and that the service is viewed partly as a gift. At any rate, the relationship is not purely functional, and is not the focus of the story. The Ginger Road and all it means is Badai's concern. The Ginger Road is described as resembling the Silk Road, and it has the same function: facilitating trade. But it also opens the community up to the outside. Nature produces the ginger and gives Luben a strong body, but its products, cultivated by Luben's family, are destined for the processing plant and the market, on which they will be sold as commodities. Connecting Luben to the market is a character named Ni'en. With two wives and a bad Puyuma accent, Ni'en mediates the community's marginal economic relations with the outside world. His name means 'neck' in the Puyuma language and one wonders if this implies that the neck is a connective part of the human anatomy in the same way as the owner of the neck is a connection to the global economy. Ni'en brings to the scene a new habitus, Pierre Bourdieu's word for a mindset, a bundle of attitudes and inclinations that conditions but does not determine behavior: Ni'en's *habitus* is best suited to a commodity economy:

[...] some people in the village regarded him as a little stingy. He liked to shortchange people and would haggle over a few cents. But there was no winning because he was the only outsider to handle the sale of the village crops and offer them odd jobs.<sup>38</sup>

Though this portrait makes Ni'en seem like a tribal stereotype, Badai's characterization is not so simple, as the relationship between Luben and Ni'en is not quite a business relationship. Ni'en does after all offer to buy Luben lunch at the beginning of the story; this kind of gift-giving fleshes out purely functional market relations by humanizing them.

The humanization of market relations seems to be one of the significances of the wild goat kill episode. Luben is still a hunter, not just a ginger farmer. One day he kills a wild goat. When Ni'en hears about the kill he is intrigued, because wild goat blood might be the answer to his problem. Ni'en is a man with two wives who feels unable to satisfy both of them sexually. In his traditional Chinese medical belief, wild goat blood restores sexual potency. So Ni'en

38 Badai, »Ginger Road«, in Balcom and Balcom, *Indigenous Writers from Taiwan*, 28.

came to ask Luben to sell him a bowl of the blood. Luben, of course, knew why he wanted it but said nothing. He mixed the blood with onion flowers, medicinal herbs, and wine and gave it to Ni'en free of charge. But the following day his two wives came up the mountain and, when they came to Luben's door, they blushed and presented him with some fruit.<sup>39</sup>

The episode is to some extent a joke at Ni'en's expense, because if he wants the blood to maintain or restore his sexual potency his manliness is thereby in doubt. His two wives must feel embarrassed in several ways. It is not clear whether the counter-gift is Ni'en's idea, but then he does not stand in its way. The fruit was likely purchased on the market, not picked wild from nature, in the way that the goat was hunted by Luben. But it is still a gift, unnecessary, unexpected and in some sense sincere, unless it is given so soon after the original gift that it is designed to discharge gift debt. The motivations behind Luben's gift are obscure. The gift seems to follow from the dictates of the hunter's code, whereby a hunter has the duty to share the fruits of the forest, the bounty of nature. But it may also be colored with more modern notions of gift giving, where functional relations are humanized.

To the extent the relationship between two minor operators in the capitalist system is humanized, the system itself is not. It remains impersonal. Near the end of the story Luben reads the newspaper after a long day of ginger picking:

It was all the business and financial news. »...trading on the stock market was hot. At mid-session the market was at 11 thousand and by the close of trading it was up another 235 points. 1.5 million shares were traded, delighting investors.« He didn't understand a word. Bored, he flipped to the back page and read: »...in high tech, Forbes listed four new tycoons with an average age of 36 who had joined the ranks of billionaires, with respective fortunes of \$25 billion, \$22 billion...« He still didn't understand. How many zeros were there in a billion? How many years would he have to grow ginger? How many baskets would he have to carry on his back? <sup>40</sup>

These investors comprise the brain of the global economic order, as Luben serves as its arms and legs. It is easy for someone who considers ginger as a commodity to treat the investment abstractly and numerically while remaining ignorant of what is behind it, the labor people involved in ginger production. This is the alienating logic of the system. Luben himself has learned and tacitly accepted this logic. His family reads the advertisements in the newspaper, and their desires for material goods, the production of which is hidden from them, are cultivated. Luben is a consumer as well as a producer. Yet all of his consump-

39 Ibid., 36.

40 Ibid., 40.

tive behavior, as represented in the story, is in order to buy gifts for his family. Like Ni'en's wives, he turns commodities into gifts. His teenage son, Budan, wants a two thousand NT dollar bicycle,<sup>41</sup> a lot of money for a poor family, while his wife wants a sewing machine.<sup>42</sup> There seems to be no way for Luben to satisfy both of them, but somehow in the end he finds a solution, by spending more of his profit from the ginger crop than he should, banking on a bumper crop the following season. This turns out to be a risk he should not take. It is Luben's last season growing ginger on the farm accessed by the Ginger Road, and not because Luben is getting old. The Ginger Road—the Puyuma Silk Road which opened opportunities for Luben's community but also drew it into an exploitative economy—gets washed out.<sup>43</sup> No doubt the price of land will plummet and someone like Ni'en will take it off Luben's hands. When the commodity economy is dominant, the tokens of the interethnic gift economy will not pay the bills. Luben and his family will likely have to go to work in the nearby factory.

Luben's way of life is radically different from Husluma Vava's or Auvini Kadresengan's hunters. He is the only farmer in this story, and farming, production for the market, changes his relationship to the land, by bringing in a modern regime of cultivation. Can we still talk of his individual, social and ecological identity with respect to the gift? Luben has a different personality than the hunters one encounters in the pages of indigenous literature: he is steady, not proud. Hunters strive to be great, but farmers just want to get by. Socially, I have argued, the gift of blood fleshes out the functional relationship between Luben and Ni'en, and though it seems strange to argue that Luben's relation with Ni'en has become a part of who he is, I think that is the case. The ecological meaning of the gift of blood remains obscure: Luben may well conceive of his relationship to the land in different terms depending on whether he is weeding his ginger plot or wandering the traditional hunting ground. The reader cannot tell.

*Topas Tamapima's »The Last Hunter«*

The family in »Ginger Road« seems to be mostly intact, and its members economically viable, if vulnerable. The final story I will discuss represents the indigenous community as fragmented, and its members as unable to survive in the new capitalist economic order. The bleakest story in Balcom and Balcom's collection of translations is also still the most famous, namely Topas Tamapima's

41 Ibid., 32.

42 Ibid., 34.

43 Ibid., 40.

拓拔斯·塔瑪匹瑪 (Tian Yage 田雅各, b1960) *The Last Hunter* (»Zuihou de lieren« 最後的獵人). The hunter in the story, Biyari, has endured a failed stint as a factory worker. Like a defective component he has been discarded. He now has a marginal position in the modern economic order, but capitalism has changed his way of life. He desires the products of modern industry, like rice wine, betel nut, matches, gas for his motorcycle, which he buys from the local Hakka store. Unable to stand the abusive and repetitive nature of factory work, all he can do is hunt. He hunts for himself, for his self-respect, and for his wife Pasula, who has suffered a miscarriage and is suffering from poor health. Yet hunting no longer brings the same prestige as it once did, and can no longer have the same socially reproductive function.

To begin with, the forest no longer produces as it once did, which the hunter blames on the Chinese attitude towards the forest: the Chinese see the forest as an exploitable or manageable resource, with no concept of the need to give back when one has received the gift of nature. The Chinese instrumentalize, abstract and quantify nature, like the investors in the ginger market. The hunter prophesizes that, some day, modern men »would unravel the enigma of the forest and, like sinners condemned to hell, they would regret their previous lack of understanding in seeing the forest as nothing but a source of timber«. <sup>44</sup> As a result of this modern attitude, the hunt yields precious little, and the old attitudes become counterproductive and cruel. When Biyari meets another hunter coming down the mountain, he tries to get the latter to share his prey. Biyari even humiliates him when he claims he has little to share, by reminding the other that a hunter's greatest taboo is to let others know his hunt has been a failure. Biyari's cruelty is rewarded at the end of the story, when the forest sentry makes him cough up the prize of the catch, a muntjac, which he was hoping to give to his wife, not because he wanted to impress her but so that she could regain her health, which has been depleted since her miscarriage. The sentry, much more of a caricature than Ni'en in Badai's story, refuses to listen to him.

Biyari hunts illegally, as is the sentry's seizure of the muntjac for his own use, but the petty crimes of the hunter and the agent of the state do not threaten the integrity of the eco-political system. The state has legislated the traditional cultural behavior, supposedly out of concern for wildlife, but it is the modern mentality that has impinged upon Biyari's lifeworld, depriving the traditional gift of its individual, social and ecological significance and the hunter of his identity.

44 Topas Tamapima, »The Last Hunter«, in Balcom and Balcom, *Indigenous Writers from Taiwan*, 15.

*The Contemporary Meaning of the Taiwan Indigenous Literary Hunter's Gift*

The only essay in Balcom and Liu's collection that bears on the fate of gift culture in modern times is also by Topas Tamapima. Topas Tamapima is a medical doctor. He has written a book about his work in Yami 雅美 (or Tao 達悟) communities on Orchid Island (Lanyu 蘭嶼). In an essay entitled Fish (»Yu« 魚)<sup>45</sup> he recalls visiting a village and seeing the locals eating raw fish eyes. Wanting to try the delicacy for himself, he offered to buy some fish, only to be rejected, because the fish were a gift from a relative. The person was afraid that if the relative found out he would be cursed and might never be given fish again. This is an interesting statement, suggesting that fear is as much a part of the refusal as gratitude; but we would expect the rejection, given the truth of experience that what is given as a gift should be sold as a commodity and given what we know of traditional aboriginal morality. Yet Topas Tamapima's response is even more interesting. He remembers being »stunned«. »Accustomed to be able to buy anything I wanted with money, I suddenly discovered that money was of no value«, he writes.<sup>46</sup> As an aboriginal, and the author of »The Last Hunter«, surely he should not have been so impressed by this discovery of the inviolacy of the fisherman's gift. Perhaps in making this statement he reveals that he himself has internalized the habitus of commodity exchange, or perhaps he is simply trying to get the reader, immersed in this modern mentality, to confront difference. Later he is pleasantly surprised when a patient of his brought a gift of parrotfish in gratitude for medical services rendered or in the hopes of getting an especially high quality of treatment. The moral he attaches to the episode, »sincerity is worth more than money«,<sup>47</sup> does not do justice to its individual, social and ecological implications.

The fact that this essay is by an aborigin doctor belies the apparent teleological ordering of the stories in my analysis above. Teleology is the study of ends. In Hegel's progressive thought, the end of history is an ideal political state, which Hegel thought his own society had almost reached. In ordering the stories as I did, I suggested a regressive teleology, in which aboriginal communities in contact with modernity are fated to be incorporated into the capitalist machine and spit out when they are worn out. In Taiwan, the odds have been against aborigines. This is not because of some fundamental difference between aborigi-

45 Topas Tamapima, »Fish«, in Balcom and Balcom, *Indigenous Writers from Taiwan*, 154–155.

46 Ibid., 155.

47 Ibid.

nal and Chinese society. Like the aborigines, the Taiwanese population on Taiwan had a traditional gift economy, which is often called the *guanxi* system, as well as a strong sense of family.<sup>48</sup> These features of Taiwanese Chinese society have had socioeconomic consequences. Taiwan's style of capitalism has been called petty capitalism, because it is based on the family, on the families that owned the SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) so important to Taiwan's growth.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, the aborigines were not part of the family, nor would the typical Taiwanese be interested in entering into *guanxi* relationships with them, because the aborigines are socially, economically, and geographically marginal. As a result, the aborigines were incorporated into the economy in the capitalist mode. They had to sell their labour as a commodity for market-determined rates. Most aborigines remain socioeconomically marginal, but today there are aboriginal professors, engineers, and, much more visibly, recording artists and entertainment personalities. In other words, the teleology has to be revised. It may be inevitable for aborigines to get incorporated into global capitalism, the results of the encounter between aborigines and capitalism are not predetermined.

All the same, Taiwan's aborigines remain relatively vulnerable, and not just in a socioeconomic sense. In the process of modernization their identity has become a problem, in the same way that it has for traditionalists who feel threatened culturally, for instance nativist writers. It is not surprising that in searching for answers to the questions of modern aboriginal identity, aboriginal authors would be drawn to the gift, especially the hunter's gift. The aboriginal male literary obsession with the hunter is obvious. Three of the stories included by Sun Dachuan 孫大川 (b1953) in his seven-volume collection of aboriginal literature have the word hunter in the title. What is less obvious is why, or the significance of the obsession. I would suggest that based on my research the writers are not simply fondly recalling an age in which men were men, in which a man's greatness was a function of his hunting skill and luck. Writing about hunters is not simply the expression of nostalgic aboriginal manliness. It is part of the story that aboriginal writers are telling about themselves, a fable of

48 Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang in her *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets. The Art of Social Relationships in China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994) has done research on gift economies in the PRC in which she traces the Chinese cultural components of practice and features of liberalizing socialist society in the 1980s. Naturally, Taiwan's situation is rather different; but I have not found a source on Taiwan's 'Chinese' gift culture.

49 See Hill Gates, »Petty Capitalism in Taiwan«, ch. 10 in her *China's Motor: Thousand Years of Petty Capitalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

identity. In Geertz's essay about the story the Balinese tell about themselves to make sense of themselves,<sup>50</sup> the cockfight is the central symbol. In Taiwan indigenous literature by male writers it is the hunter's gift. The identity the hunter's gift expresses is individual in the sense that it establishes the hunter's status in the community. But it is also social and ecological, social in the sense that it connects individuals into a community, and ecological in the sense that it ties this community to the larger environment.

Yet as I suggested at the end of my analysis of Husluma Vava's story *The Hunter*, the hunter's gift can no longer serve the same function for modern aborigines. Unlike the Balinese village discussed by Geertz, the structure of which seems stable, unaltered by nationalism let alone by globalization, aboriginal communities in Taiwan are in a state of flux. So what do these Taiwan aboriginal literary hunter's gifts mean today? Stories set in a traditional time, such as Husluma Vava's *The Hunter* and Auvini Kadresengan's *Home to Return To*, remind us of a basic truth, that life is a gift, that ultimately this gift demands reciprocation. These stories also remind us that our modern resource exploitation or management mentality is not self-evident. They denaturalize our modern abstracting and quantifying attitude towards nature. Stories set in a recognizably modern time, such as Badai's *Ginger Road* and Topas Tamapima's *The Last Hunter*, remind us that in a capitalist society, socioeconomically marginal groups like aborigines find it difficult to establish social status. Topas Tamapima's hunter is potentially a social nuisance, while Badai's character Luben is more independent and as a result has the power to give gifts, even to engage in gift economy with Taiwanese middlemen. His gift to the Taiwanese trader Ni'en speaks to the awkward tension between gifts and commodities, between gift relations and commodity relations, in modern society. It also introduces the complexity of interethnic relations in a multicultural society. Like the traditional hunter's gift stories, it reminds us of an older attitude of gratitude towards nature. Finally, the relationship between writer and reader also seems implicated in these hunter's gift stories. If the relationship between a writer like Badai and the reader is not just transactional, then a story like *Ginger Road* is a gift to the reader, who must at some point reciprocate, by paying it forward or passing it on.

50 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 448.

*Conclusion: A Methodological Self-Critique*

I wish to conclude with a methodological self-critique that should form the basis for further research along these lines.

The first problem with the methodology I deployed in this article is that it moved from the general to the particular, from anthropological theory to local literature, without any consideration of local anthropological research. If there is any single lesson of modern anthropology it is that generalizations have to be viewed in the light of difference. It may for the most part be the case that gift exchange is communogenetic and ecogenetic, but one may not assume this for all local contexts. In this regard, the anthropologist Rane Willerslev argues that traditionally, the Siberian Yukaghirs assume that »people are obliged to give away their possessions, not as gifts for which eventual reciprocation is expected, but unconditionally«, that »the passing along of gifts among hunter-gatherers like the Yukaghirs does not involve any such notion of obligatory reciprocation, exact accounting, or compensation«. <sup>51</sup> Willerslev's account reminds one of Derrida's idea of the pure gift, which is gone in the giving, which is therefore not obviously communogenetic or ecogenetic. With this example in mind, one cannot assume that in Puyuma, Rukai, Taos, and Bunun communities in Taiwan the gift is conducive to the formation of social and ecological relations; one has to demonstrate it. One may find evidence for it in stories, as I have done, but there seems to be a missing link in my research between general anthropological theory and Taiwan indigenous fiction: local anthropological research. Lewis Hyde does not supply this link in his monograph *The Gift*, but then he is working on modern poets, Whitman and Yeats, not on indigenous writers. I tried to bridge the gap with a notion of identity as different from personal identity, or of individual identity including relationships to other people and to the natural environment; but the bridging should be reinforced by consulting relevant research.

There is some English language research that bears on ideas of gift exchange in local indigenous communities in Taiwan. The Canadian anthropologist Scott Simon has written on the traditional knowledge of Truku hunters. Simon refers to »the generosity of nature to provide food« <sup>52</sup> and notes that »Hunters are

51 Rane Willerslev, *Soul Hunters: Hunting, Animism, and Personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 39 and 46.

52 Scott Simon, »Animals, Ghosts, and Ancestors: Traditional Knowledge of Truku hunters on Formosa«, in *Indigenous Knowledge and Learning in Asia/Pacific and Africa: Perspectives on*

expected to share meat with others in the community<sup>53</sup> but does not indicate whether the duty to share derives from the fact that the meat is the gift of nature. Simon pays more attention to the social meaning of hunting.

Hunters often cook and eat in the front of their homes, in which case they are expected to share with other community members or they sell the meat to Chinese middlemen. They also eat more privately with family and friends in the back yard or in the kitchen. They may also share meat strategically. One successful hunter/farmer, for example, always provided game and alcohol to community members and visiting cadres before meetings of the Farmers' Association. When he earned a good profit on his crop, other members of the community suspected it was because he had given meat to the cadres. Hunters say that the forest is their refrigerator, and emphasize the importance of sharing in Gaya. Those who eat alone are said to be selfish like rats (*gorwilit*). This is considered morally reprehensible.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, though »Hunting is a sign of masculinity, a source of prestige, and proof of one's moral standing«, »Truku hunters are more concerned with sharing and community building«. <sup>55</sup> These quotations recall many of the themes I have explored in my criticism of the stories, of the hunter's gift as a figure for, or as a way of thinking about, individual and social (though not so much ecological) dimensions of indigenous identity. However, none of the writers I have discussed in this article is Truku. I still have to investigate whether there is research in Chinese on gift culture in Bunun, Rukai, Puyuma, or Taos communities. All I can do at the present is admit the provisional nature of my findings. In the future, I intend to do something like fieldwork in the communities in question, and it seems to me that fieldwork has a place in literary research methodology, especially in the research of contemporary indigenous literature. This fieldwork may include interviews with the authors. These interviews would not necessarily reveal the true meaning of the stories. But the data they produce should be included in the interpretative process. I have conducted one preliminary online interview with Badai, the author of *Ginger Road*. This interview added detail to my understanding of the local context, but made me feel that I had overhastily put the story in the general interpretive framework of anthropological gift theory. I did not come to feel that my interpretation was invalid; indeed, I think my interpretation enriches our reading of the story. But it did make me want to

*Development, Education, and Culture*, ed. by Dip Kapoor and Edward Shizha (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 82.

53 Ibid., 88.

54 Ibid., 89.

55 Ibid., 90 and 93.

complement my generalizing reading with on the ground social and linguistic experience of the communities reflected in the stories. Linguistic experience is crucial. If we reflect that »gift« is the nominal form of the verb »to give«, that »present« has a dual meaning, referring both to time and a freely given object, that in Chinese *liwu* 禮物 implies a ceremonial context for gift giving, we realize that semantics and perhaps etymology has to be part of any study of the gift. A study of gift giving in Taiwanese indigenous short stories, therefore, must consider the relationship between the words the writers use in Chinese and the indigenous language analogs the writers may have had in mind when writing the stories.

The second problem with the methodology is that, after leaping to the particular, it did not move from the particular to the general, to articulate why readers with no interest in Taiwan's indigenous literature should care about my conclusions. It still seems to me that this research would be of more general interest, to scholars of indigenous literature in other parts of the world for instance. Indigenous writers in other communities must have written stories about hunters' gifts that could be fruitfully interpreted using a similar framework and then compared with stories from Taiwan. In looking for research on the topic of literary hunters' gifts, I found almost nothing, only a short article by an anthropologist on »hunter/founder« stories about the hunter's gift of meat, which »serves in Mende oral histories as a symbolic statement validating contemporary authority patterns«. <sup>56</sup> This reads the function of a story as social control or as a naturalizing front for hierarchy. This is obviously a very different interpretation from the one I advanced in this article: that the literary hunter's gift is a symbol of contemporary indigenous individual, social and ecological identity. I do not think one interpretation invalidates another, but scholars adopting the one should keep the other in mind. In the future I hope to pursue these reflections further, with the benefit of more local experience and wider reading in the world of indigenous literature to find examples with comparative or contrastive value.

*National Taiwan University, Taipei  
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures*

56 Matthew H. Hill, »Where to Begin? The Hunter/Founder in Mende Histories«, *Anthropos* 79 (1984), 654.