

Two Book Covers, 20 Years' Transformation: *The Mythology of Badai Bay* 1992/2011

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Abstract

This paper intends to discuss the profound meanings in the two book covers of Syaman Rapongan's *The Mythology of Badai Bay* published in 1992 and 2011.

Although one old saying goes, "Don't judge a book by its cover" implying that a person should not and cannot be judged by the appearance, yet, as time goes by, with the transformation of thoughts and social ideology, the change of a book cover may be hidden with the transformative ideas. Syaman Rapongan's *The Mythology of Badai Bay* can be a good example. The book was firstly published in 1992 by the Morning Star Publishing Company with political implication; in 2011, it was reprinted with a different book cover, telling a complete different intention. From 1992 to 2011, the political development as well as the development of the indigenous right had been undergone a huge transformation. Such a transformation was imprinted in the two editions of these two book covers. As a result, this paper attempts to uncover the twenty years' development in the indigenous history by means of a further analysis of the design of the book covers including the layout, the words and illustrations selected to exemplify the intertextuality between the cover and the indigenous history.

Keywords: Tao, Syaman Rapongan, *The Mythology of Badai Bay*, Book Cover

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兩種封面，20 年的「原」變： 《八代灣的神話》1992/2011

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摘 要

本論文旨在討論於 1992 年與 2011 年，由達悟族作家夏曼·藍波安所出版的《八代灣的神話》，其截然不同封面中所蘊含的生成/深層寓意。

英文有句諺語：「勿以封面論斷書本內容」(Don't judge a book by its cover)，即「勿以貌取人」。然，隨著時間更迭，期間思想、意識的易變，卻極可能因著書本的改版同樣出現了異變，此異變是為奇異的變動，更是顯示差異之更動，達悟族作家夏曼·藍波安 Syaman Rapongan《八代灣的神話》即可為例。從 1992 年晨星出版社 Morning Star Publishing Company 到 2011 年改由聯經出版社 linking Publishing Company 改版的《八代灣的神話》(見圖 1 與圖 2)，近 20 年歲月中，除了出版界的氛圍，包括台灣政治現象，尤其原住民民權進展等都出現極大轉變，這樣的轉變也著實刻印於前述兩種不同版本的《八代灣的神話》。本文因此企圖就這兩種版本的圖書封面，從外在文字與圖像的設計到內文的選擇，併之與台灣原住民歷史同步進程，揭櫫近 20 年時空衍變，封面載體與原住民攸關的互文風貌。

關鍵字：達悟族、夏曼·藍波安、《八代灣的神話》、封面

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An old saying goes, "Don't judge a book by its cover" indicating a possible mistake could be made if we judge a person by his/her appearance. This saying also implies a book cover can seldom express the essence of a book. Despite a book cover may not be the real spokesman of a book, it, however, plays a very important role especially in catching readers' attention, interest and furthermore increasing the possibility of purchasing. Readers' interest, however, could be varied in accordance with the socio-economical trend and thus, the designing of a book cover should adept to the trend and be modified. Hereby, Syaman Rapongan's *The Mythology of Badai Bay* can be a very good example. This book talking about Tao (or Yami) tribe's traditional tale, was firstly published in 1992 by Morning Star Publishing Company. In 2011, almost 20 years after, the content of the reprint edition is of slight modification; the book cover, however, is completely different. In 1992 edition, the pictures and words occupied the book cover; for the 2011 edition, only blue and white color were used in a simply design. Complying with Rapongan's indigenous background, the paper, as a result, intends to uncover the deeper meaning by means of a comparison between the two book covers. Especially during the 20 years, the social status in Taiwan had been of aggressive change such as the KMT was not the always and dominating ruling party anymore. In accordance with the political and social status, this paper aims at exploring in which way the two-edition book covers of *The Mythology of Badai Bay* have explicitly and/or implicitly expressed the development of indigenous history.

After the introduction, the literature review section would focus first of all on the importance of book covers and a brief introduction of the domestic indigenous movements and development. Before the final conclusion, an analysis will be preceded by taking two book covers of *The Mythology of Badai Bay* as the texts to examine the words and the pictures/illustrations to see how the indigenous historical development has also put impact upon the publishing field.

Literature Review

The importance of book covers

Despite the old saying goes, “Never judge a book by its cover,” many researchers and scholars emphasize the importance of a book cover. Drew and Sternberger (2005) pointed out, “The book [is the] first communication to the reader” (8). Sonzogni (2011) indicated the book cover is a visual aid that summarizes the book contents to readers. The book cover definitely is a crucial tool providing the first impression to readers’ decision upon whether they want to read or even buy the book.

In classifying functions of book covers, thus, Landa (2013) remarked “grab attention” as the top priority. Selling the book definitely is the first and major aim of a book cover. Drew and Sternberger (2005) accentuated that “By the 1930s and 1940s, publishers recognized that a stylish book cover could attract consumers and that if they produced a good-looking product, it was more likely to sell” (33). Confronting with the challenges from the multi-media, designs of book covers are more and more important. Minor (1995) made a list of four rules of a successful cover: (1) pay attention to the trends; (2) simplification; (3) ambiguous visual messages (thus to catch readers’ curiosity); (4) the design should shed light upon the writers and the story.

Haslam (2006) in his study of the design of a book, exemplifies four types of book covers: (1) covers that promote the brand; (2) covers that visualize the content; (3) conceptual covers that may bring browsers “a smile in mind” (165); and (4) expressive covers that “evoke a hint” to “entice readers” (165).

Landa (2013) categorized 7 rules of a good book cover.

- A) attract the audience with skillful visualization and composition
- B) organize and compose information in a clear visual hierarchy
- C) express the essence of the subject matter
- D) type and image should work cooperatively
- E) differentiate—make it unique
- F) consider the proportions of the format when composing

G) design with type for impact as well as readability

A Taiwan graduate, Huang Shi-tien (2011) concluded rules for book cover and layout after collecting information for various designers and scholars' findings. These rules include symmetry, equilibrium, rhythm (the visual stimuli of the book cover), contrast and harmony, appropriation, repetition, and variety and unity (17-19). However, it does not mean a good book cover will match all the rules.

Up to now, there is no study upon indigenous writers' book design. Yet, to understand a book cover, we can take a book cover as a text delivering message and thus, it can be examined as an intersemiotic translation, coined by Jakobson (1959), defining as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign-system". To this extent, book covers are not just functioned as a summary tool but may involve complicated messages as the intentions of the authors, the strategies used by the publishers and/or the designer, and even the trends of the culture and/or the market. As a result, Baule (2009) annotated that once the design is changed, a new identity of the book is changed—it is defined as a "metamorphic sequence of visual translation". Salter (1950) affirmed by telling that a study of a book cover should be scaled in a larger, namely, socio-economic context (37).

In Lee Shin-fu's (2006: 27) thesis upon the development of Japanese poster designs, he divided the Japanese design into five periods of time: business art (1900s-1940s), functionalism (1950s), internationalism (1960s), pure business-ism (1970s) and informationalism (1980s). He thus affirmed that the designs demonstrated the time aura including politics, economy, social trend, industry technology, history-culture, ideas of art and so on. Thus, his finding asserted Baule's and Salter's statements on the importance of the study of artistic design (including book cover design) especially, Lee demonstrated that in addition to social-economic context, other aspects as politics, history and culture could be revealed in the design.

The history of the indigenous movement in Taiwan

On the ground that the book cover analyzed in this paper was associated with a

famous domestic indigenous writer, Syaman Rapongan, the following literature review would take a view upon the development of the indigenous history in Taiwan.

Generally speaking, Huang (2004) divided the history of the indigenous movement into four sections (Table 1): first, the awaking time (1983-1986); second, the starting time (1987-1990); third, the conflict time (1991-1996) and fourth, the weakening time (1997-2001).

Table 1: Development of indigenous movements translated by the researcher (Huang 36)

Period of time	Feature of the movements
The awakening (1983-1986)	1. Protest due to single event 2. Focus on single issue and mostly related to social issues 3. Awaken by the event
The starting (1987-1990)	Redefine the indigenes Most protests are about collective rights. Multiple issues.
The critical (1991-1996)	All eleven issues are related. The top three times of the movement all happen in this time. The protest is re-directed to the parliament
The weaken (1997-2001)	Not as many protests are held. Focus on politics and economic issues.

In different sections, there were some important institutions or achievement made. As far as the awakening of the indigeneity is concern, an aboriginal journal, *The Green Mountain* (高山青) should always be mentioned.

With the awakening by the journal, the individual right of the aborigines was more and more emphasized and many institution and right were thus set up. In 1984, Association for Aboriginal Rights Promotion (原權會) was established. In 1987, the indigenous tribes were justified as Yuen Ju Min Ju (原住民族). After then, more demonstrations focused on the collective rights. In 1995, Aboriginal People Council (原民會) was established.

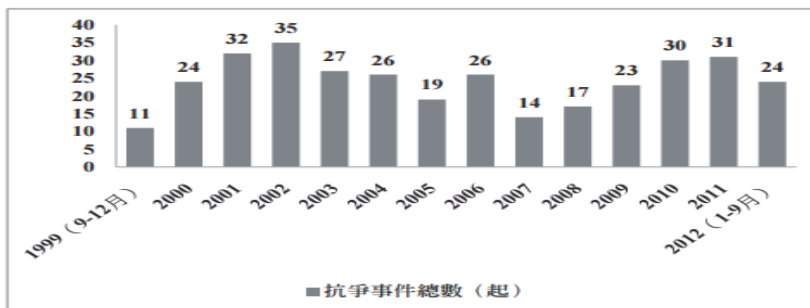
Movements for the indigenes apparently play a very crucial role in the development

of the indigenous rights. According to Huang's (2004) research, 286 protests were held. Different issues related to the indigenes were appealed from politics, economics, education, environment, society, legislation, medical system, and so on (see Table 2). Juan (2014) has followed the study and made a list of protests from 1999 to 2012 (Figure 1). Surprisingly, 2010 and 2011 occupied the top 3 and 4 in the yearly protests. It is therefore rational to conclude that the protest times indeed put certain impact toward the publication since due to the protests, indigenous culture would be attended particularly.

Table 2: A list of street protest: 1983-2001 (Huang 33)

年	文化	司法	外交	法制	社會	政治	經濟	教育	環境	醫療	媒體	總筆數
1983						01						01
1984						01						01
1985					01	03						04
1986					01							01
1987	02				06	03		02			02	15
1988						01	02		02	01		06
1989	01					05	01					07
1990				01		01	02					04
1991	03		01	05	02	11	11		04	01		38 b
1992	04			03	01	14	02		03			27
1993	01			01	02	02	07	02	07			22
1994	06	04			07	19	15	01	12			64 a
1995	03	03	02	03	01	05	07	01	05			30 c
1996				02		05	05	01	02			15
1997		01		01		03	04		01			10
1998					01	01	01	01				04
1999							02		02			04
2000					01	07	03	01	03	01		16
2001	03		01			02	04	02	03			15
小計	23	08	04	16	25	84a	66b	11	44c	03	02	

Figure 1: The indigenous demonstrations, 1999.09-2012.09 (Juan 2014: 145)



Uncover the hidden meanings of the two book covers

Rapongan is a Tao person from Orchid Island. He was graduated from Tamkang University, majoring in French. He earned his master degree from Ching Huang University, majoring in anthropology. Surrounded in the oceanic atmosphere, Rapongan has always had problem in his self-identification during the time when the aborigines were not yet officially justified. However, in 1980s, he determined to go back home to lead a Tao life and henceforward, he involved in the indigenous writing and had earned many awards. In 2010, he won the Golden Tripod Award, one of the most famous prizes in literary publishing field in Taiwan.

From Literature Review, it could be easily understood that why Rapongan's works of art was caught the attention in the 1990s. Even though in the twentieth century, indigenous writing is not especially outlined, Rapongan was still a very prolific writer. It was not a surprise that his book *The Mythology of Badai Bay* was reprinted in 2011 by a very famous publishing company, the Linking Publishing Company since he won the Golden Tripod Award in 2011 and protest had been aroused again (Juan 2014) though not as aggressively as before.

Readers who have never seen the book cover of edition in 1992 would be amazed—at least, the researcher herself was very much surprised. In fact, the researcher was caught attention in a bookstore by the blue-white book cover of *The Mythology of Badai Bay* in a book store in 2011. The researcher was very much shocked to know the book had been printed in 1992 and even more shocked to know the differences of the two editions (Figure 2 and 3).¹

¹ The researcher does not have the rights of the two book cover illustrations. The rights are reserved to the publishing companies.

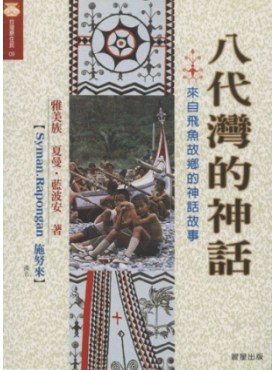

Figure 2: The book cover published in 1992 by Morning Star Publishing Company.	Figure 3: The book cover published in 2011 by Linking Publishing Company
	

Table 3 is the comparison and contrast of the two editions from three aspects: layout, font and the people presented on the cover. Further analysis will be offered later.

Table 3: Comparison and contrast of the two editions (made by the researcher)

Edition	1992	2011
Layout	Full of words Crowding: various colors	Simple Two colors: white and blue
Effect	Anxiety, many to tell	Serenity and tranquility
Font	Ming and Yen	Kai and Poster Font
Effect	Serious	Light and fun
People in the covers	Many	Only one kid
Effect	For tribal identity	For personal identity (or fun)

First, a general first impression upon the two editions could have already told how huge differences they have. The 1992 edition is in a bit crowd layout. Not only are there tribal marks and pictures, but the book cover is also full of words such as the tribe name, the tribal name of Rapongan in English and Mandarin, Rapongan's Chinese name, the book title, one line summary of the book and even the name of the publishing company. It is as if there are so many things to talk about and therefore, the designer is eager to put everything onto the book cover. The anxiety is clearly shown on the book cover. While



the 2011 edition shows a very different mood. The picture shown on the book cover in fact is one of the illustrations of a story in the book. Originally it is of different colors but when on the cover, only white and blue colors are used. The publishing company is replaced by the illustrator's name. The 2011 edition caught the researcher's attention on the ground that, first of all, the blue as the major color, and secondly, the serenity shown on the cover. The two editions surprisingly clearly demonstrate the social status of their times. In 1990s, it was the very time of the surging of indigenous demonstrations. In 1990s (1990-1999), Huang made a list of 218 demonstrations, among which, there were 38 and 27 demonstrations in 1991 and 1999. She concluded that 1991 the year as the critical time for the indigenes fought for their rights. She therefore marked the time (1991-1996) the conflict time with the most demonstrations but after 1997, she marked as the weakening time, pointing out the decreasing of the demonstrations. The two periods of time reverberate the first impressions of the two book covers: one is full of anxiety matching the aura of the critical moment in the early 1990s while the other, quite tranquil as the remark made by Huang (2004).

Since it usually takes about one year to finish all the publishing process, it is reasonable to know what happens one year earlier before the publication to understand the possible background. Thus, the indigenous movements in 1991 and in 2010 deserve further examination. In addition to Huang's (2004) accentuation on the year 1991, Parod (夷將·拔路兒) et al (2008) also highlighted 1991 with the focus on the 606 Union in which many clubs and institutions were united to protest for the deletion of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (蒙藏委員會) and for the establishment of Council of Indigenous Peoples (原住民委員會). As to the year 2010, despite it was in the weakening time, indigenes still paid attention in protests.

Following the major hues of the two editions, the photos and the words selected can all match with the two time trends.

One photo of the Tao is selected in the 1992 edition. The photo clearly shows the Tao canoe (or tatala in Tao language) and totems as the eye of the boat (mata no tarara) pattern and the human shape pattern (Figure 4 and 5). It is very obvious that the book

cover intends eagerly to demonstrate (or to justify) the writer's indigenous background. In addition to the picture and the patterns in the middle part of the book cover, the words once again articulate loudly of the author's identity. On the right side of the book cover, it clearly accentuates the stories are from the homeland of the flying fish. During the 1990s, despite of the many movements from the indigenes, not so many people were aware of the features of the aboriginal cultures. Therefore, the flying fish is specified in the 1992 edition. The justification of the author, Syaman Rapongan and his origin apparently is very important in the 1992 edition. On the left side of the book cover, it shows Rapongan is from Yami (the tribe), and interestingly, his Chinese name is put on the other line, after the English spelling name. The arrangement implicitly implies the scorn and negligence of the Chinese name which is putting at the bottom, a less obvious position.

Figure 4: The eye pattern	Figure 5: The human shape pattern
	

The eager intention of self-justification of the 1992 edition is completely changed in the 2011 edition. There is no way readers can tell the author is from Tao on the book cover of 2011. The author's name tells he is an aboriginal or perhaps even a western person with the westernized spelling. However, neither Tao nor Yami is specified. The famous features of Tao such as the canoe and the pattern are not shown on the book cover either. Only if the readers know where the Badai Bay is can they realize in fact the author is a Tao person. It is quite obvious that the indigenous background is not the selling point anymore in the 2011 edition since different from the 1992 edition published in a surging time, the 2011 edition seemingly self-justified the book as one telling fairy or children stories. The tear-dropping child riding on a big fish implies perhaps a sad story. The tear on the child and the strange smile on the fish indeed can catch readers' curiosity. Again, it is so different from the 1992 edition which tells something serious and even political,

even the children in the picture are like well-trained warriors waiting for a big sea-fight.

The different tones and hues are also contrasted in terms of the fonts selected in different editions. In the 1992 editions, only Ming (明體) and Yen (圓體) fonts are selected. The ming font is almost the most normal and formal font. When in paper submission, Ming font is frequently requested. Likewise, in English, Times New Roman is a frequently requested formal font. The bold Yen font in the origin, the homeland of the flying fish, expresses something less formal. However there is only one line using the less formal font on the book cover.

When the 2011 edition is put as a comparison, the contrast is strongly demonstrated. Neither Ming nor Yen font is selected. For the author's name, instead, Kai font (楷書) is picked. Different from the Ming font frequently used in printing, Kai looks more like hand-writing words. In Lee Chi-ming's (李志銘, 2011) study about the book design in Taiwan from 1940 to 1990, he especially pointed out the employment of Chinese calligraphy was popular around 1960s because it was a manifestation of national identity (5). The Kai font, similar to Chinese calligraphy, may be used with a similar intention. The machine-like Ming may portray the rigidity of the time while the lively Kai, seemingly made by human labor, may show a sense of sincerity and even self-identity.²

As if being afraid that the message cannot be delivered clearly, the fonts of the book titles may double accentuate their differences. In 1992, the book title is printed by using bold Ming; in 2011, poster font is selected. Thus the tones are clearly differentiated. Again, the Ming in 1992 keeps its serious and serene tone. The poster font apparently delivers more the casual, funny and even free aura (Date, 2008). In the 1992 edition, it is the homeland that is accompanying with the book title; in the 2011 edition, under the book title is the Tao language of the *The Mythology of Badai Bay*.

The contrasts may imply the different intentions of the two editions. The 1992

² The finding of the identity part seems to be contradictory to the previous result of the early version design as a demonstration for identity. However, once the layout is re-checked, the number of the tribal persons (or kids) can give the answer. In the earlier edition, many tribal people (including adults and kids) are shown while the later edition, only one kid is shown. The design of the earlier edition appeals to the tribal identity while the later one, to a more personal, self-identity.

edition, apparently, intends to accentuate the aboriginal origin while the 2011 edition, perhaps aims at creating something dream-like and funnier. According to Parod, 1991 (one year before the first edition of *The Mythology of Badai Bay*) indeed is a very critical time. The 1992 edition thus tries to articulate its political justification while the 2011 edition, surprisingly, has let go off the aboriginal background and stepped into a new world—a kid's world, definitely a huge change comparing with the political issue of the adult world in the 1992 edition.

Conclusion

After the analysis of the book covers, it should not be surprising to explore the different contents of the two editions. In the 1992 edition, many pictures of the Tao people are added and every article is translated into the Tao language on the left side of the book. In the 2011 edition, the picture is replaced by colorful illustration. Most illustrations are finished as if it is carved on the wood. And all illustrations are done as those on children's books. It would be a big surprise to know the 2011 edition in fact was published by the Linking Publishing Company—a company issues mostly famous writers' works—a very typical company putting adults as the target readers. It is never or rarely to find the Linking Company publishing such a child-like book. So, even the contents of the two editions speak different aims. The 1992 edition with Tao translation again intended to remind readers of the Tao tribe and its culture. The 2011 did not go with the same intention but focused more on the light and even cuter tone perhaps to attract both adults and kids. In accordance with the historic development, the 1992 edition eye witnessed the surging period of the time while the 2011, the weakening time in indigenous movement.³ As a result, next time, perhaps we in fact can judge a book by its cover—at least, a book cover may have loaded the historical transition and collective ideology waiting for further exploration.

³ Based on the anonymous reviewers' suggestion and to confirm the researcher's finding, the researcher had sent an email to request the editor of the Linking Company upon the re-design of 2011 on Oct. 9, 2016. However, up to now (December 20), there is no reply from the company.

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