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The Threefold Mimesis of Evil in the Myths of Formosan Aborigines

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the probable origin of Taiwan aborigines' unique vision of evil and their rationalization through the mediation of myths and concomitant ethical norms and taboos. We apply Paul Ricoeur's theory of evil and threefold mimesis in order to analyze in a systematic manner the imaginary of evil, which could be rooted in the conception of human mortality. The study sheds light on the cosmological nature of Formosans' attributing of evil while bringing to light the fundamental difference in conceiving evil between Christian and non-Christian cultures.

KEYWORDS

Taiwan; Formosa; Aboriginal Myths; Evil; Narrative; Metamorphosis; Paul Ricoeur.

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Taiwanese, or Formosan, aborigines account for about 2% of the entire Taiwan population. Currently fourteen tribes are officially recognized by the Taiwan government: Ami, Atayal, Bunun, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Tao, Thao, Tsou, Truku, Sakizaya, and Sediq. According to recent research, their ancestors may have been living on the islands for approximately 8,000 years before major Han Chinese immigration in the 17th century. As Austronesian peoples, Formosan aborigines have linguistic and genetic ties to other Austronesian ethnic groups, such as those in the Philippines, Malaysia, Polynesia and Oceania¹. This fact shows that the native Taiwanese were originally unconnected with the Asian Mainland, thus also with Chinese culture. An investigation of the conception and imagination of evil among the Taiwanese aborigines reveals this cultural distance. The perpetually debated issue of whether humans are born good or evil has been gnawing at Chinese literati, particularly Confucians, for centuries. In general, Confucianism embraces the idea that humans are born good; Taoism takes the neutral stance of treating humans as it does other beings in nature, thus holding them to be naturally beyond good and evil; Legalism (School of Law) insists that humans are born evil and thus require strict laws and punishments to regulate their behaviours. This metaphysical



144 argumentation never appears in Formosan aborigines, though their treating themselves as a part of Nature appears closer to Taoism.

For Formosan aborigines, evil is not considered a big issue in the human condition. Moreover, the imagination of a hell almost does not exist. Nonetheless, like all human mortals, they have to face the inescapable fate of death and the spirits of the dead. They fear death, which mainly underlies their imaginary of evil. This evil is in principle not within human beings but without. At first sight, the correlation between death and evil evokes the origin of man's mortality conceived in Judeo-Christianity: being driven out of Eden, where man enjoyed immortality. In his essay titled «Evil, a Challenge to Philosophy and Theology», Paul Ricoeur treats four different discursive responses to evil: lament and blame, myth, wisdom, and theodicy. The second discursive genre, myth, especially presents a universal mediation of explaining evil when the hermeneutic study of it reaches out to non-Christian cultures. Mythic narratives incorporate evil into great narratives of origin, in light of Mircea Eliade. According to Ricoeur, these narratives seek to explain the origin of evil in terms of cosmogony; as such, they provide a plot that configures the elements of evil. This function of myth as a mediation of evil and moral choice is all the more evident when it comes to Formosan myths. As he sees a conflict between rational explanation (theodicy) and irrational submission (mysticism) in treating the topic of evil, Ricoeur proposes an eclectic threefold approach to address evil, namely practical/ narrative understanding, catharsis, and pardon. This threefold approach can be examined through the Ricoeurian threefold mimesis.

Therefore, I attempt to explore the probable origin of Taiwan aborigines' unique vision of evil and their rationalization

through the mediation of myths and concomitant ethical norms and taboos. In order to analyse their imaginary in a systematic manner, I resort to Ricoeur's theory of evil and mimesis along with his threefold mimesis to, on the one hand, shed light on the cosmological nature of Formosans' attributing of evil while on the other, bring to light the fundamental difference in the conception of evil between Christian and non-Christian cultures.

I. In the beginning was immortality

One crucial belief among Formosan aborigines is *zuling*, or ancestors' spirit. The faith in *zuling* underlies the prefiguration (mimesis 1) of narratives; their configuration, mimesis 2; and their reception, mimesis 3. *Zulingis* significant and functional in terms of the temporal and spatial conception of the aborigines, for it offsets the fear of death and the mystery of time as well as, spatially, the uncertainty of the beyond. The aborigines believe they will return to the homeland of *zuling* after death. As narrative is a mediation of man's being conscious in time and his intention of making sense of it, temporality in *zuling* reveals the emphasis of narrative understanding of man and the world. Since *zuling* in essence never dies, it inspires Formosan aborigines to imagine an original immortal body. This imagination of an original immortality grounds the figuration of the threefold mimesis, which is characterised as follows: Mimesis 1 refers to the prefigured world of action. It concerns the relation of narrative to action which reveals the situation that human action can be symbolically mediated. The features of mimesis 1 – structural, symbolic, temporal, among others the symbolic mediation of action – illumine the openness and thickness of semantism. Ricoeur points out that «before being a text, symbolic mediation has a



texture»². And before being «submitted to interpretation, symbols are interpretants internally related to some action»³. Hence, symbolism provides an initial readability to action. The second mimesis designated as the creative act of configuration. It concerns the construction of the text, structured by employment with schematism and traditionality. This demonstrates how imitated action functions as a text. Mimesis 3 refers to the receptive act of refiguration. It operates on the level of reading as well as context and involves a process of «fusion of horizon», of the worlds in the text and the world in reality. In essence, they correspond to the three elements of rhetoric: *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*.

In the imagination of Formosan aborigines, as in that of Chinese people, the Christian original sin, not least the concept of defilement and guilt that build up Ricoeur's hermeneutics of evil, does not exist. Yet, different from Chinese people, most Formosan aborigines believe in original immortality, which resembles that in Christian belief. This imagination of original immortality may derive from the belief in the eternal existence of *zuling*. Yet, they have to accept the truth that they must die. Since evil is generally believed to be something exterior and a European-style speculation of theodicy on this issue is beyond the aboriginal mind, the best way to make sense of such phenomena is practical understanding, which Ricoeur specifies as narrative understanding. Thus, the original immortality is narrated as being somewhat a nuisance to aborigines, for they do not consider the status of immortality a "paradise lost" resembling the Judeo-Christian Eden. Like other aborigines in the world, the religion of Formosan aborigines is pan-animism or spiritualism, in which the belief in spirits forms the centre of aboriginal rituals and festivals. This religious belief is accordingly essential to the aboriginal conception of evil.

According to the extant Formosan myths, immortality was something which existed naturally within the creation myth of human beings. No one is to blame for the loss of immortality, though someone did change the status of immortality, which was not considered a blessing. The befalling of mortality was rather an accident, even an outcome of frightening objects left by immortality. As serpents are generally revered in aboriginal belief, even regarded as the ancestor of human beings or the tutelary gods (e.g. by the Paiwan and Rukai tribes), they are not configured in narration as the origin of evil like the Christian Satan and his menials, nor as the cause of temptation that causes the loss of immortality. In contrast, the serpents grant immortality to man; on top of that, their moulting inspires the aboriginal imagination of what it is like to be immortal. In the beginning, it is told that humans were like serpents, they underwent moulting for a renewal of life. Here are some examples of myths in the tribes of Paiwan, Ami and Saisiyat that bridge the images of immortality and mortality and thus neutralize the lament and blame in the face of man's inevitable mortality evident in the Christian world.

Ami⁴:

In ancient times, humans were immortal. When they aged, they shed a layer of skin and returned to youth; therefore, shed skins were everywhere. However, children were frightened by the sight of these shed skins; adults thus collected all the skins and buried them in the earth. Henceforth, humans started to die »⁵. A variation of the story adds detailed descriptions of the scary scene of the shed skin: «the shed skin has the eyes, mouth, nose, ears, etc. on it, which presents horrible shapes»⁶.



Paiwan:

In ancient times, humans never died however aged they became. They could live for hundreds of years. There was an old man called Gigulailai who gradually shrank to the size of a bird and lost all his power. He could only sigh “aye aye!” Therefore, his offspring let him sit in a low chair and took care of him. However, during the day, the family had to go farming, and the children were afraid of staying with the very old Gigulailai alone at home. So the family considered taking care of Gigulailai very troublesome and finally decided to bury him. Ever since, humans have become mortal. After dying, they turn into spirits. Because they feel lonely without company, the spirits of the dead give the living diseases to cause their death and thus go to the beyond to accompany them⁷.

A variation of the tale shows that death is blessed: “In ancient times, humans were immortal. Later there was once an old woman who told her family that she would go for a tour underground. But she never returned. Henceforth, people knew that there was a paradise underground and became willing to die”⁸. Although diseases are normally depicted as being spread by evil spirits, the Paiwan people’s optimism urges them to explain the existence of diseases in a delightful tone, similar to how they treat the loss of immortality: People felt bored and thus tried to get something to occupy themselves. They decided to buy fleas, pustules, and rheumatism. Since they cause itches, wounds and pain, people had to tackle them and thus became occupied. The family that bought fleas is the Kakokangs; the family that bought pustules is the Chuorurus; the family that bought rheumatism is the Daobilis. This narrative also explains why

people from these families are vulnerable to those diseases⁹.

Saisiyat: Ancient people shed their skin when they became old, and recovered their youth. One day, a foreigner came and saw an old man moulting painfully and asked: “Is it better to painfully moult or is it better to die?”. People of the tribe had suffered from moulting and replied right away that it is better to die. Ever since, the Saisiyat people have become mortal¹⁰. Later versions of such stories add the cause of the deprivation of immortality: the wrath of God. This is clearly a Christian influence as most aborigines were converted to Christianity: “humans lived a very long life like trees. However, they turned lazy and disobedient to orders. God was angry and reduced their longevity”¹¹.

In grand narratives such as the myth of human creation, human immortality or the deluge, man is narrated as one of the beings in nature and innocent. In the Formosan deluge myths, man, like other animals, is simply one of the victims. Parallel to the deprivation of immortality being a result of contingency, the occurrence of deluge is something accidental and contingent; it is by no means a punishment for evil human deeds. Myths of deluge exist in all Formosan tribes, and nearly all of them are narrated directly as an existing fact without attributing to humans either their cause or their aftermath and solution¹². One exception is a version told in the Rukai tribe that attributes the deluge to a brother and a sister that violated a taboo during the harvest festival and thus infuriated the sky god. This in turn is probably influenced by Christianity. In the genuine narrative understanding of Formosan aborigines, man is not to blame for the disaster; it is rather a natural phenomenon. Although Formosan aborigines treat mortality and immortality in an unconcerned way, they are concerned about death, especially the way of dying, which is vital to their conception of evil.



II. Evil and death

Without a belief in original sin and lamentation for the loss of an Eden, the origin of evil must be searched for elsewhere. The optimistic nature of aboriginal people eliminates the imaginary of man possessing an evil nature within. It is natural to resort to the mysterious and thus mythic and narrative understanding of the origin of evil. The conception of evil pivots on death or the loss of human status. The way of dying features as the biggest concern for Formosan aborigines. Although humans were believed to be immortal in the beginning, and the emergence of mortality was not a punishment, the aboriginal people fear death. In general, they believe every person has a soul or spirit, which will leave the body after one dies.

The argument over the definition of evil within aboriginal ethics is centred on what *zuling* teaches; in practical terms this is what the elderly in the tribe teach. On the level of mimesis 1, the admonition and eternality of *zuling* set the symbolic meaning of action in the tribes. The definition of evil is less an ontologically speculative issue than a pragmatically mythic issue. It concerns the tribal benefits and an exterior cause. Through variations of storytelling, the audience build up their conception of evil and taboos that should be avoided. Mimesis 3 counts most significantly in the process of their narrative understanding. The configuration is derived from collective narrative creation while the refiguration is enacted as the ethical world which unfolds before the audience. Death, including loss of human shape, plays the central role in defining evil, involving the motive for causing death and the way of dying.

In this manner, the moral vision of Formosan aborigines is different from that of the so-called civilized man. Causing others

to suffer or die is not always evil and immoral. It can be a sacred and heroic deed. For example, headhunting is generally not evil, though it is a violent and cruel act of killing and harming others; in contrast, it is esteemed as sacred. For example, the people of the Atayal, Seidiq, Bunun and Tsouwere among the fierce head-hunters, who honour their tribes. According to many narratives, they will pass the after-death judgment and return to the paradise of their tribe – the so-called homeland of their ancestors' spirit or *zuling* – after death. The 2011 film *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale* illustrates how sacred it is to hunt the heads of the enemy (the Japanese colonizers) and the belief that the headhunting heroes will return to the Rainbow, the homeland of their *zulingv*. Therefore, it is worth sacrificing one's life, and in the film almost all of the warriors die. For the average audience, the headhunting scene appears violent and can be considered evil from the perspective of humanitarianism. However, in compliance with the ethics of the tribe, this ostensibly evil action is endowed with a symbolic meaning of the sacred. This step of prefiguration is further configured into explicit plots that logically connect the violent action with the authorization of passing the judgment for entry to the «paradise» of *zuling*. The Ricoeurian catharsis and pardon in his threefold approach to addressing evil assumes the character of catharsis and punishment.

The Atayal people clearly configure the causality between headhunting and paradise. After death, Atayal people go to the house of souls or *zuling*. As they pass the bridge of souls (*Haononautux*), a crab comes to check their hands. If the male soul succeeded in headhunting when he was alive, and if the female soul was good at weaving and accomplished the necessary complicated red pattern, the rainbow image appearing on their hand cannot be rubbed



off by the crab, which will let them reach the house of souls. Inversely, the crab can rub off the rainbow image on the hand of the souls that did not accomplish the aforementioned great deeds; it will require these souls to take the detour. The detour presents a difficult journey where they will shed hair and damage their bodies. Only after suffering on this journey can they reach the house of souls¹³. In other versions, the crab is replaced by the spirit of ancestors, Utux, who verifies whether the dead men and women are genuinely brave and skillful. If Utux cannot tell, it spreads Ici (a kind of wild weed) on the spirit of the dead and then rinses him or her with water. If Ici cannot be washed away, it indicates the spirit is a real man or woman. Utux will allow it to cross the bridge towards the beyond of ancestors (Atuxan). The opposite means the spirit is evil and is not allowed to pass the bridge. It has to take the detour, which necessitates a trek full of dangers such as thorns and leeches. If it tries to force its way over the bridge, it will be pushed and fall off the bridge to be eaten by large snakes and fish¹⁴.

What do people think of those victims whose heads were hunted? The response is unrelentingly negative. If one dies of decapitation, his spirit or soul will be condemned as evil. This reveals the opposite view that being a victim of headhunting is not sacred but profane because it is counted as a kind of unnatural death. What is in common among the tribes of Formosan aborigines is the concept that dying an unnatural death means evil. People who die in this negative manner will become evil spirits and are believed to do harm to the living. Besides, it is believed that diseases are caused by these evil spirits.

For example, in the Atayal tribe, the soul after death is called *utux*. People know only that the dead go to the Mont Kalibu but know not what they will do there. *Utux*

are divided into good and evil; when one dies a sudden death, the *utux* is considered evil, and is not allowed to go to the realm of rest, or *zuling's* land¹⁵. Likewise, Saisiyat people also consider those who die an unnatural death will become evil spirits, *imauhahavun*. The unnatural death includes decapitation, dystocia, and the violent death such as those through intoxication and suicide¹⁶. Paiwan people also hold a similar view when it comes to the way of dying. Those who die an unnatural death will not go to the mountain of paradise, and their souls or spirits will continue roaming about the world of the living. Since they are considered evil spirits, the living take good care to shun them and generate rituals or taboos against the evil spirits. In general, most aborigines fear dead spirits or ghosts; among others, the Yami people fear ghosts in an excessive way. Paradoxically, whereas Formosan aborigines treat immortality insignificantly, death is considered a most sinister event.

Another origin of evil is the outcome of the struggle between the good and the evil spirits that respectively inhabit man's right and left sides, shoulders or hands. This is a common imagination in many tribes. The Bunun elders teach children about the good and evil spirits inhabiting the right and left shoulder. Given that Bunun society presents no caste system, people's behaviour becomes vital in judging their position in society. They are taught that man is pulled by the duo of spirits, the right spirit orienting towards good deeds whereas the left spirit towards the wrong deeds. Ultimately, it depends on the person's will which side to take. In similar fashion, Paiwan people believe that the good spirit or *tsumas* stays on the right hand while the evil *tsumas* stays on the left hand. Evil spirits, which are the spirits of those who die an unnatural death, are also called monsters or *gumaraj*. Because the evil spirits (*nakuyatsumas*) stay on



the left hand, Paiwan people use their left hand to offer food to evil spirits. They even believe that evil spirits can metamorphose into cats or monkeys. Their true form cannot be seen but their voice can be heard, and sounds human¹⁷. The belief in the evil spirit inhabiting the left side also prevails among other tribes such as the Rukai, Puyuma and Ami.

It is evident that the aboriginal narrative understanding of evil operates through ethical inculcation generation after generation. This configuration becomes the concepts of prefiguration in the moral vision. Through the perpetual storytelling in the tribes, the younger audience realizes the symbolic meaning of evil and conducts a refiguration of their narrative world; there is eventually a shift from practical understanding and comprehension to action.

III. Evil and the loss of human status: the myth of metamorphosis

As mentioned above, death, including the loss of human shape, constructs the conception and perception of evil. Evil deeds are caused by the external influence of evil spirits. A possible speculative argument may be directed to the universal aboriginal belief in pan-animism. Like other animals, man is an element in nature; different from them, man assumes a different form, spirit, to continue his life in the homeland of ancestors. The core rationale lies in the mishap of rejection on the return to this homeland, caused either by unnatural death or by losing human shape, i.e. a metamorphosis into other animal forms resulting from evil cause. As man is just a part of nature, like other animals, the Formosan imaginary operates on relating abundant stories of the metamorphosis motif.

Whereas mimesis 1, as a premise of a potential story, is understood at the level of

our everyday experience, in which we are inclined to see “in a given sequence of the episodes of our lives’ (as yet) untold stories”¹⁸, mimesis 2 centers on the act of emplotment that renders our action a text through a creative interpretation of events within a structured framework. The previous sections present how the evil conception grounded in the faithful belief in *zuling* configures plots that exert practical understanding and thus create effects in the audience as a realization of mimesis 3. The mimesis 3 enacted here corresponds to its quality as «the effects that historical meaning has on our present acting and suffering, is shown to coincide in large part with the transmission of meaning via the textual mediations of the past»¹⁹. In the present motif of metamorphosis, the operation goes the other way round. Through storytelling, people learn about the origin of evil and are warned to ward off the evil spirit, born from unnatural death. In what follows, the narrative configuration stems from the unnatural « death », precisely the loss of human status, which in turn is caused by evil deeds.

The most common motifs are metamorphoses caused by laziness, gluttony and greed. The elderly in the tribe draw on narratives to warn children not to do what is considered evil. Instead of preaching abstract moral norms to the youth, the process of storytelling can expand the audience’s horizon of knowledge through a fusion of past events and the mythic imagination. It also serves as an intimidating means, through the representation of a concrete consequence such as metamorphosis, to prevent people from doing evil or immoral deeds. Laziness is considered a great evil in the aboriginal societies. Since agriculture is their lifeblood and grain is narrated as a grant from God/ the gods, man is supposed to work hard and contribute his efforts. Therefore, being lazy, evaluated as disrespect to the divine, is



naturally narrated as an evil, which is to be punished by supernatural means. In narratives of this kind, lazy people are often transformed into monkeys.

The Atayal tribe presents abundant tales concerning this narrative understanding of the evil comportment of laziness. Here are some examples. There was once a man who was very lazy. He found excuses not to work or just dawdled about. One day, this lazy man wanted to work on the farm, but the handle of his hoe kept breaking again and again. Irritated, he banged the broken handle against his hip. Accidentally, the handle stabbed into his hip and transformed into a tail. Then he turned into a monkey²⁰. Variations of this type of narrative present the common motif of laziness resulting in metamorphosis into a monkey: The lazy man was too lazy to work correctly and thus broke his hoe all the time. One day, after he again broke his hoe, he played with the broken handle; it stabbed into his hip, and he transformed into a monkey²¹. This lazy person is not limited to men, and the metamorphosis can take other animal forms. Here is a plot configured with a lazy woman who, by just feeding on pigeon peas, turned into a turtledove in order not to work²². In an Ami tale, the metamorphosis was caused by a mother punishing her lazy son, who refused to work and stayed at home. She spanked her son with a rice scoop, which was broken and stabbed into the son's anus. The son was thus transformed into a monkey²³.

Greed or gluttony is also considered evil in Formosan ethics. The narrative configuration with the motif of metamorphosis remains an effective means to imbue the moral judgment of greed or gluttony into people's practical life. Narrative understanding forms the core of the aboriginal conception of evil and obviously plays an ethical role that involves practical understanding and

practical judgment in real life. To teach people the lesson that greed and gluttony are evil deeds against nature or gods, a similar narrative pattern as the above metamorphosis is employed. In a Bunun tale, a woman, ignorant of the blessing of merely one grain from gods²⁴, put more than one grain in the pot to cook one day and caused the entire kitchen to be overwhelmed by an overabundance of rice. She was thus buried in the heap of grain and metamorphosed into a mouse. A variation of such a tale is told in the Rukai tribe, the difference lies in the metamorphosed animal, in this version, the woman transforms into a bird, which will continue to peck grains²⁵.

The narrative understanding and teaching of metamorphosis as punishment for evil deeds such as laziness, gluttony and greed further extends to other evil deeds such as incest, abusing sacred animals, violating taboos, and maltreating children, in particular, the stepmother abusing her step child(ren). In this last case, children would metamorphose into stones, birds or monkeys²⁶. The loss of progeny is regarded as a punishment for the parents' misdeeds.

Since aborigines are afraid of losing their human forms, the narrative representation of a moral lesson is figural and thus effective. Practical judgment of evil as defined by Formosan aborigines is in operation. In light of Ricoeur, this judgment is both *phronetic* and narrative in character. The imbrications of Aristotelian *phronesis* and Kantian judgment is, as highlighted by Kearney, "neatly captured in Ricoeur's account of the ethical role of narrative"²⁷. Ricoeur's first aspect of the threefold approach to evil expounds insightfully the ethical role in the action of narration:

It is due to the familiarity we have with the types of plot received from our culture that we learn to relate virtues, or rather forms of excellence, with



happiness or unhappiness. These “lessons” of poetry constitute the “universals” of which Aristotle spoke; but these are universals that are of a lower degree than those of logic and theoretical thought. We must none the less speak of understanding but in the sense that Aristotle gave to *phronesis*... In this sense I am prepared to speak of phronetic understanding in order to contrast it with theoretical understanding. Narrative belongs to the former and not to the latter²⁸.

Furthermore, this narrative understanding, through the undergoing of the prefiguration of mimesis 1 and the configuration of mimesis 2, enables the enactment of the audience’s moral reception and construction of an ethical world inherited through the tribe’s narrative perpetuation.

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¹ Catherine Hill, Pedro Soares, Maru Mormina, et al., "A Mitochondrial Stratigraphy for Island Southeast Asia", in *American Journal of Human Genetics*, no. 291, 2007, p. 1735-37.

² Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative. Volume 1*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1990, p. 58.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ All of the cited myths in this article are my translations.

⁵ Quoted in Dasiwulawan Bima (Chen-yi Tian), *Myths and Legends in the Ami Tribe*, Taipei, Morning Star Group, 2003, p. 178.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Quoted in Dasiwulawan Bima (Chen-yi Tian), *Myths and Legends in the Ami Tribe*, Taipei, Morning Star Group, 2003, p. 182.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹⁰ Dao-sheng Lin, (dir.), *Aboriginal Myths and Tales of Taiwan*, Vol. 1, Taipei, Hanyi Seyan, 2001, p. 36-37.

¹¹ Chun-fu Fan (dir.), *Taiwan Romance: Aboriginal Legends*, Taipei, Wuayan Press, 1966, p. 130.

¹² The deluge myths related in the Bunun and Tsou tribes present nearly the same plot. The blocking of the rivers by a giant serpent or a giant eel caused the deluge; people thus escaped to the high mountains. Then a giant crab clasped the serpent or eel in its pincers to make it turn about, thus causing the flood to recede.

¹³ Chong-cheng Pu, *Aboriginal Oral Literature of Taiwan*, Taipei, Changminwenhua Press, 1999, p. 162.

¹⁴ Dao-sheng Lin, (dir.), *Aboriginal Myths and Tales of Taiwan*, Vol. 3, Taipei, Hanyi Seyan, 2002, p. 29.

¹⁵ Kiyoto Furuno, *The Ritual Life of Taiwanese Aborigines*, translated by Wan-chi Yeh, Taipei, Yuanminwenhua, 2000, p. 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁸ Ricoeur, *Time*, p. 74.

¹⁹ Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva*, Hants, Ashgate, 2004, p. 64.

²⁰ Dao-sheng Lin, *Aboriginal*, Vol. 1, p. 24.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²² Dao-sheng Lin, *Aboriginal*, Vol. 3, p. 20.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

²⁴ In ancient times, people were blessed by the gods with only grain at each meal to make sufficient rice for the entire family.

²⁵ Fan, *Taiwan Romance*, p. 25-27.

²⁶ In a Saisiyat tale, a girl called Zihe Bakaogu made a pair of wings out of broken bamboos, stuck them under her armpits, and then flew away from her home after the unbearable abuse of her stepmother (Lin, vol. 1, p. 38). In an Atayal version, this daughter changed into a pigeon because her mother asked her to labor incessantly and she felt disappointed at her mother's treating her badly. Here the story mentions "mother" instead of "stepmother". Either way, it is curious that father is not the one that maltreats the children (Lin, vol. 2, p. 30). A Paiwan tale concerns metamorphosis into a mountain caused by the abuse of the stepmother (*Ibid.*, p. 81). Paiwan people also relate a story about metamorphosis into a bird. This one is about a mother who only cared for her work and thus ignored the needs of her sons. The elder son was taking care of the younger who cried incessantly. The elder son pleaded with his mother to take care of his brother but she kept working. Eventually, both sons turned into birds with wings made by the elder brother out of tree leaves (*Ibid.*, p. 113). In another version, the ignored children are daughters who transform into birds (Lin, vol. 3, p. 89). Similar stories are told among the Amis. The motif corresponds with the first prototype: a daughter abused by her stepmother changed into a



bird after tearing her sleeves and making them her wings (Lin, vol. 2, p. 170). Similar stories can be found in the Bunun tribe which tells of an orphan raised by his aunt. He transformed into a bird to protest against the incessant labor she assigned to him (Lin, vol. 3, p. 51). The Bunun people also tell a similar story. The stepmother of a boy named Kabos maltreated him and assigned him to do a lot of work without giving him even the burned rice (at the bottom of the pot, normally to be

discarded). The boy turned into a bird after he made wings out of a bamboo fishing net (Lin, vol. 4, p. 69-70). In similar fashion, a Rukai tale tells of two brothers who transform into birds because their mother maltreated them (*Ibid.*, p. 115-16).

²⁷ Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur*, p. 95.

²⁸ Paul Ricoeur, «Life in Quest of Narrative», *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, edited by David Wood, London, Routledge, 1991, p. 23.