

# **A Voice from the Ocean and the Forest: the Writing of Syaman Rapongan**

## **Abstract**

Indigenous knowledge has become a globally prominent academic issue in the past decades. Indigenous writing in Taiwan started to bloom in the 1980s, as indigenous voices called for self-empowerment as well as the subjectivity to express indigenous knowledge. Writing, however, is neither a form of indigenous knowledge nor related to the oral traditions of Taiwan indigenous peoples. With the urgent demand to safeguard indigenous knowledge, writing is considered a useful form of preservation and expression in order to generate attention in government policy and law making. This paper aims to explore the indigenous knowledge within representations of indigenous writings, with a close focus on the works by a Tao indigenous writer, Syaman Rapongan who maintains his social practice in many dimensions: in his everyday life, through social movements, and in his literary writing. He writes not only about indigenous knowledge but also the stories of other Islanders and the entanglement of modernity and tradition. The paper examines the representation of indigenous subjectivity in Syaman Rapongan's work and moreover, questions and discusses how Tao ethnic culture is presented in the works through discourse analysis. With the combination of written literature and indigenous knowledge, Syaman Rapongan's literary voice powerfully articulates and sustains indigenous subjectivities.

**Keywords:** Syaman Rapongan, Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Writings, Tao