


The Colonized Masculinity and Cultural Politics of Seediq Bale

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Chin-ju Lin

"The Colonized Masculinity and Cultural Politics of *Seediq Bale*"

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Thematic Issue ***Voices of Life, Illness and Disabilities in Life Writing and Medical Narratives***.

Ed. I-Chun Wang, Jonathan Locke Hart, Cindy Chopoidaló, and David Porter

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Abstract: In her article, "The Colonized Masculinity and Cultural Politics of *Seediq Bale*," Chin-ju Lin discusses a Taiwanese blockbuster movie, a postcolonial historiography and a form of life-writing, which delineates the last Indigenous insurrection against Japanese colonialism. This article explores the cultural representations in *Seediq Bale*. Fighting back as a colonized man for pride and dignity is portrayed as means to restore their masculine identity. The headhunting tradition is remembered, romanticized, praised highly as heroic and even strengthened in an inaccurate way to promote individualistic masculinity and to forge a new national identity in postcolonial Taiwan. Nevertheless, the stereotypical and essentialist representation of Seediq culture is misleading. Director Wei De-sheng's multicultural misrepresentation depicts Taiwan nationalist claims as Han-male centered. Seediq culture has thus served as "a violent other" for a Han settler director to strengthen a notion of colonized masculinity.

Chin-ju LIN

The Colonized Masculinity and Cultural Politics of *Seediq Bale*

賽德克·巴萊 (*Seediq Bale*), directed by 魏德聖 (Wei De-sheng) and released in 2011, has been the most expensive and highest grossing blockbuster in the movie history of Taiwan. Claimed to be the first Taiwanese epic, the movie featured the last Indigenous insurrection, 霧社事件 (the Wushe Incident) in colonial Taiwan in 1930.

After the Japanese won the war with China, Taiwan was ceded to the Japanese as a colony by the Chinese Empire in 1895. People on the island of Taiwan, including the Han and Indigenous peoples resisted them fiercely from the day the Japanese colonizers arrived. However, the Japanese utilized powerful artillery and chemical warfare to suppress these uprisings. The Japanese established comprehensive systems of police and modern education. They also utilized political marriages between Japanese and local elites, as well as manipulative strategies of "以夷制夷" (which translates as "using barbarians to fight against barbarians") to stabilize their governance in Taiwan. The Japanese were proud of the success of their strategies. The Wushe village, where the Wushe Incident took place, was perceived as a model for colonial governance of the "barbarians." When the Seediq (賽德克族人) killed 139 Japanese in Wushe Public School on October 27, 1930, it was a shock to the Japanese colonizers. More than 3000 troops and policemen were marshaled to suppress the uprising. Since the Japanese could not gain control in the war for two months, they again deployed the strategy of "using barbarians to fight against barbarians." Different segments of the Seediq, Seediq-Toda (道澤群) were incited to kill around 200 Seediq-Tgdaya (達克達雅群). Moreover, the Japanese dropped internationally prohibited mustard gas bombs to end the war. The Seediq-Tgdaya that were involved in the uprising faced massacre and genocide. Only 298 Seediq people survived, most of them women and children.

After 1949, Chiang Kai-shek led the Chinese Nationalist Party (國民黨, KMT) in its retreat from China to Taiwan and proclaimed Taiwan as the new seat of The Republic of China. Since the Japanese were perceived as invaders and enemies to China before and during World War II, the Wushe Incident was appropriated as a nationalist story by the KMT to mark the Indigenous people's loyalty to the Chinese. The leader of the uprising, 莫那·魯道 (Mona Rudou), who was censured by the Japanese, was then praised as 抗日英雄 ("the hero against the Japanese") (see Chou). In contrast, the Seediq people, with the transition in colonial governments and the continuous White Terror that followed, lived with the consequences of the uprising and the genocide. This past was rarely mentioned. In public, only officially promoted discourses in praise of Mona Rudou circulated around. In private, descendants of the Seediq, who were educated in Chinese under the KMT regime, found it difficult to recall the history in their own terms. Without written records, the collective memory of the Seediq people on the Wushe Incident seems to have disappeared.

Two works were essential to the production of *Seediq Bale*. 阿威赫拔哈的霧社事件證言 (The Testimony of Awi Hepahe to the Wushe Incident) is a precious work. Awi Hepahe was a Seediq boy who participated in the uprising at the age of 14 but escaped death. He witnessed the Seediq warriors' last words and felt an obligation to record them. The Testimony influenced the plot of *Seediq Bale* in the scenes describing the heroic deeds of Mona Rudou and the young children's involvement in the Wushe Incident. The narration of *Seediq Bale* were also deeply influenced by 邱若龍 (Chiu Ruo-long). Chiu was a Han man. He conducted fieldwork and interviews with the Seediq people for 6 years and published a graphic novel in 1990. Wei De-sheng, also a Han man, learned of the Wushe Incident from Chiu's book and volunteered to assist in the making of Chiu's documentary film *Gaya: 1930 年的霧社事件與賽德克族* (*Gaya: The Wushe Incident 1930 and the Seediq*). In his work, Chiu raised the idea that "gaya" (ancestral laws) was important factors contributing to the Seediq uprising. Wei adopted and reinforced this perspective in his movie.

Seediq Bale is a film based on the life-writing genre. Wei transformed these historical data, gathered through ethnography, oral history and testimony, into a movie script, and then a novel *Seediq Bale* (co-authored with Yan Yun-nong). Then, Wei made this 4.5-hour film for domestic showing, entitled *Seediq Bale*, and a shorter cut of 2.5 hours for international showing, entitled *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*. The domestic version spent more time delineating historical contexts and the tribal feuds among the Indigenous people than the English version. A history of the Wushe Incident was reconstructed from a first-person narrative perspective, something that was rare among both Japanese historical documents and the KMT nationalist account. The story appears to be narrated through the eyes of the Seediq people. Wei paid great attention to historical details, drawing on characters and stories that were documented

in Japanese historical records as well as by living survivors. To represent their history truthfully, all Indigenous actors and actresses dressed in Seediq costumes and spoke in Seediq. Wei chose amateur actors and actresses from the Seediq and the Atayal (an indigenous people that share a social structure similar with that of the Seediq; the Seediq were categorized as the Atayal by the Japanese). He translated the Mandarin script into the Seediq language, which had almost become extinct. At the end of the premiere showing, survivors and descendants of the Wushe Incident were invited to appear on stage to receive the audience's applause. All of these efforts are remarkable achievements given the long period of colonialism and declining cultural identities. This movie was perceived as a visual representation of the Seediq past. It represents in part the everyday lives of the Seediq men in colonial times, explaining their subjective identities and reasons for participating in the Wushe uprising. It appears that *Seediq Bale* gave a long-suppressed and generally disregarded voice and returned agency to the Seediq people.

The ways that *Seediq Bale* represents the colonized Indigenous people are distinctive. It does not make fun of the Indigenous people as *Royal Hunt of the Sun* did. Neither does it create a hero from an ethnic majority to save endangered Indigenous tribes, such as in *Dances with Wolves*. It also differs from *Apocalypto*, produced by Australian director Mel Gibson, who aims at restoring the glorious but cruel past of the ancient Mayan at a time that directly precedes the history of colonialism. *Seediq Bale* is a movie produced by a Han (the settlers of the island of Taiwan) director but centers on the Indigenous people. Chia-rong Wu sees *Seediq Bale* positively as an Indigenous-centered film. He finds only two Han characters in the movie and they play minor roles as traders (26). Yu-wen Fu claims that *Seediq Bale* has reframed Taiwan's past while framing a future with Indigenous people as more active agents (112). Nevertheless, there are also articles questioning how Wei, with a Han settler identity, could realistically and faithfully represent Indigenous history. Nakao Eki Pacidal argued that the oral tradition of the Indigenous people made it problematic to produce an Indigenous historiography. When Wei chose the Wushe Incident as the main focus of the film, he might have aimed at writing a history of Japanese colonization of the Seediq people--in that the Japanese brought modernization--rather than a history of the Seediq people themselves (184). Liou Liang-ya claims that rather than providing a dichotomous identity of "the civilized" vs. "the barbarians," this movie creates multiple identities under colonialism, signifying the conflicts between the modern state and indigenous traditional culture (39). Liu Fang-jeng questioned whether Wei as a Han director could really speak for the Indigenous Subalterns (80). Yu-Lin Lee develops concepts from Deleuze that *Seediq Bale* was a "minor cinema." Minor cinema has four linguistic "impossibilities," one of which was the impossibility to write differently from the dominant language ("In Search" 185). All of these criticisms stand for the impossibilities of representing Indigenous historiography.

This paper further interrogates the impossibilities of representing Indigenous historiography. Previous literature has addressed problems of historical representation in *Seediq Bale* (Lee "In Search," "Archiving"; Liou; Liu). Nevertheless, few criticisms have paid attention to the gender dimensions of the film. I think gender provides a critical dimension from which to enrich the discussions of cultural memories. This paper will now explore the ways in which masculinity was reconstructed in *Seediq Bale*. How are the stories of Seediq men and their masculinity told in *Seediq Bale*? What is remembered? What is forgotten? What kind of cultural memories are reconstructed? Why? How does the representation implicate the cultural politics of writing a postcolonial historiography in contemporary Taiwan? Although my analysis here is based on the domestic version of the film, for it could better elaborate the cultural politics in postcolonial Taiwan; the scenes and contents that I mention appear in both versions of the movie.

Seediq Bale means "true human/men." In an opening scene, young Mona Rudou went out hunting with a tribal party. He was a leader, brave hunter and sharpshooter, bringing down his enemy from a distance, immediately, with deadly aim. This scene highlighted Mona Rudou's heroic shooting and hunting skills. He flew through the woods and hanged from the treetops, traversing the mountains like they were his own back yard. These scenes were presented with natural colors, signifying Seediq men's harmonious existence with the nature. Accompanied by delightful Seediq chanting as the background sound, the warrior was inspired to fight with pride and dignity, and to perform his masculinity. Following the success of his headhunting excursion, Mona Rudou was welcomed by his people, then able to be face-tabooed, and to marry a good wife. Face-tattooing shows cultural recognition of his masculine identity. Marriage indicates his path towards adulthood/full masculinity. He showed full confidence as a *Seediq Bale* (a true human/man). These scenes indicate a timeless "primitive man," with heroic capability of headhunting. This is the moment to which Mona Rudou always wanted to return.

Under colonialism, the now-colonized men were degraded as "savages" or "non-human." After thirty years of Japanese colonialism, modernizations began. Wei contrasted images of modernized Seediq

young men, who were diligent policemen and teachers of Japanese schools, with those of traditional young warriors, who were no longer hunters, exploited by the Japanese as lumberjacks. The former dressed modern, spoke in Japanese, appeared cheerful but they could not disguise their faces as Seediq. The latter were frustrated, lost their cultural identities, beaten by the Japanese, repressed their anger, and drank alcohol. After personal conflict arises between 達多·莫那 (Tado Mona) and a Japanese policeman, a moment of violent confrontation with the colonizers seemed to be inevitable. Thus a critical moment arrives, in which Mona Rudou must decide whether to revolt or not. 達奇斯·諾賓/花崗一郎 (Dakis Nobing/Hanaoka Ichiro), a colonized bourgeois, tried to persuade Mona Rudou not to fight against the Japanese, for an uprising seemed suicidal. He further argued that colonizers had brought about positive changes. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a colonized Seediq, Mona Rudou replied insightfully that modernization actually impoverished the colonized. Men lost control of their labor, their women, their dignity and their cultural identity. "After twenty years, they were no longer Seediq/human anymore." Mona Rudou says.

However, the decision of the colonized men to rebel against their colonizers is no easy one, given the latter's powerful weapons. It was a life-and-death decision. In the novel, Wei explains Mona Rudou's well-contemplated thoughts,

For a long time, Mona Rudou took on too much responsibility for life and death on his shoulders. After Mona Rudou became a leader, he learned that a worried person could never be "brave." But at this very moment, he saw again those young souls were like himself, when young, who put death aside, in order to gain *gaya* approval. He suddenly realized that he no longer needed to worry about them. They had grown into respectful Seediq Warriors!"

(長久以來，莫那肩膀上背負了太多人生與死的責任。莫那是成為頭目之後才瞭解到，一個有牽掛的人是永遠無法「勇敢」的。但是在這一刻，當他從眼前的這些年輕的靈魂裡，再次看到當年那個為了想得到 *gaya* 認同而置死生於度外的自己（年輕），他恍然明白那些他想保護的牽掛，現在已不再是牽掛，他們已成長為一群值得尊敬的賽德克勇士！) (Wei and Yan 180)

The decision between life and death is actually a decision between docility and genocide. As a colonized tribal leader, Mona Rudou had repressed his bravery to avoid genocide. In the past thirty years, Seediq men had been shamed, insulted, overworked, abused and beaten by the colonizer, often for no reason. But he put up with the extreme violence and humiliation imposed by the Japanese colonizers. Once they had been "true men," but under colonialism they came to be degraded as "barbarian" and "non-human." For the protection of his people, Mona Rudou could no longer afford to be "brave." To be brave meant also to be a man. When Mona Rudou reclaimed the bravery of a Seediq warrior, it also meant he would strengthen the masculinity of the colonized man.

Apart from bravery, pride was another reason for Mona Rudou's decision to start a revolution. Mona Rudou tried to persuade another tribal leader 達多·諾幹 (Tado Nokan) to join the revolution. Tado Nokan refused to participate because three generations of his family had been killed due to their anti-Japanese stance. He asks Mona Rudou rhetorically, "if we all know that we will definitely be defeated, why should we fight?" Mona Rudou replies, "For *gaya*!" "Mona Rudou, you ask me to promise to take the lives of these young people for *gaya*! But, what else can I take back for the lives of these young people?" "Pride!" [...] Even if, in Tado Nokan's mind, there were millions of worries, in front of Mona Rudou, in the name of Pride, worries were unworthy of any weight." ("為了 *gaya*!" "莫那你告訴我，你要我答應拿這些年輕人的生命來換 *gaya*，那麼又有什麼東西可以拿來換回這些年輕人的生命呢?" "驕傲!" [...] 面對凜然的莫那，塔道·諾幹心中縱有千萬種擔憂，但在「驕傲」這兩個字面前，那些擔憂不配擁有重量。)(Wei and Yan 180). What is worthy of fighting? What is worthy of death? The first answer comes as *gaya* (ancestral laws). But further interrogation shows that it was pride, men's pride that pushed them to take up armed resistance. Pride came before life, and pride came before *gaya*. Male pride was the foremost important reason for colonial resistance.

My analysis has shown that bravery and pride were central reasons for the Seediq men's rebellion in *Seediq Bale*. Colonizers took away the sense of pride and bravery of the colonized men, both of which seems key elements of masculinity. To reclaim their masculine identity, revolution becomes the means for these colonized males' emancipation. Even if they must face the dilemma of bravery, thus genocide, as colonized men, their lives are eroding under colonialism, and this makes them fearless enough to take up revolutionary violence. This correlates with Frantz Fanon's argument that revolutionary violence restores the humanity of the colonized men, and brings rehabilitations from the colonial inferiority-complex (35-106). *Seediq Bale* is a movie of colonized men fighting against their colonizers: to strengthen their damaged masculinity and to achieve recognition of their humanity.

Up to this point, my interpretation suggests that if the life-writing genre of *Seediq Bale* provides causal explanation of the Wushe Incident, colonialism was the key cause of revolutionary violence. However, Wei does not use the term "revolution" at all. Instead, he gives the revolution a cultural explanation. The headhunting culture is remembered and reinvented. A new terminology is created, 血祭祖靈 (blood sacrifice for ancestors), to refer to the political uprising. When Mona Rudou decides to rebel, he says, "let us exact blood sacrifice for ancestors." Through repetitive images and poetic teachings from father to son, a set of symbols is articulated and brought together to associate "blood sacrifice for ancestors" with "headhunting," "the Seediq cultural practice of face-tattoos," and "gaya" (ancestral laws). This articulation attributes the cultural essentialist interpretation of the Wushe Incident to the headhunting tradition and *gaya*, rather than the masculinity of colonized men.

Headhunting is probably the most important theme that Wei tries his best to keep in the forefront throughout. In the movie, headhunting represents the masculinity of "true men." Headhunting connects "true men" with bravery, pride and dignity. Headhunting allows men to be accepted by their ancestors as "true men." This legend was told repeatedly with the ancestors' images always showing up at critical moments, thereby establishing the Seediq men's mythical connections with their ancestors. In the scene when the Japanese invaded Mona's tribe, the cultural meaning of being a Seediq was chanted in a poetic way, with the image of Mona's father teaching Little Mona,

Living on the earth, we will die in the future, but we are true men. Oh! The true man dies on the battlefield. The true man goes to the house of spirits. ... On the way to the source of the house of spirits is a beautiful Rainbow Bridge. There, the ancestor says: "Look at your hands!" When a real man spreads open his hands, they are to be stained with blood. "Sure enough, it's a true man!" The ancestor says in approval. The ancestor says to the man, "Go! Go! My hero, your soul can enter the ancestral home, and guard the eternal honor of our hunting grounds."

(活在這大地的生靈呀，我們將來都會死，可是我們是真正的男人喔！真正的男人死在戰場上。真正的男人走向鬼魂之家。... 走向鬼魂之家的源頭，是一座美麗的彩虹橋喔！在那裡，守橋的祖靈說：「看看你的手吧！」男人攤開雙手，手上是怎麼也揉擦不去的血痕。「果然是真正的男人呀！」祖靈讚嘆著。祖靈對男人說：「去吧！去吧！我的英雄，你的靈魂可以進入祖靈之家！去守護那永遠的榮譽獵場吧。)

In the name of headhunting, the Seediq men's violent revolution is dedicated to *gaya* and to their timeless ancestors, who appear to guide their spiritual path. After Mona Rudou decides to perform "blood sacrifice for ancestors" and to "guard their hunting grounds for the ancestors," the exotic Seediq headhunting tradition and the repetitive decapitation of both the Seediq and Japanese, interspersed with different segments of the Seediq men, become the main focus, one that accounts for more than half of the 4.5 hour movie. Because Wei gave so much space to headhunting, *Seediq Bale* was sometimes categorized as an action movie. Some critics condemned these violent decapitations as excessive and meaningless. Holden criticized the movie by calling it "a bloodbath that fetishizes the machete as the ultimate human slicing machine" (Holden). Yang commented that Wei self-orientalizes himself as a "barbarian" by these repetitive headhunting scenes (1117). Chiu Kuei-fen argues that "The film's reiteration of the violence of headhunting seems to consolidate, rather than deconstruct, the dichotomy between civility and savagery" (147). Others who favored this movie interpreted headhunting as a native response to colonial violence and oppression (Wu 26; Fu 101-105). Being frequently asked the question about excessive violence, Wei argued in public talks that the violence and headhunting amounted to historical truth, which the people of Taiwan should not be reluctant to confront (Wei "Public Talk").

Contemporary Seediq People disagree with Wei's representation of headhunting and *gaya*. Seediq translator Kuo Ming-Cheng/Dakis Pawan has told us that "blood sacrifice for ancestors" and "pride" were not part of Seediq culture. He found no corresponding terminology in the Seediq language (Chiu, Y.). In other words, in Seediq culture, headhunting does not equate to "blood sacrifice for ancestors" and "pride," both of which were so essential to the movie, but which were actually Wei's invention. The difference between "blood sacrifice" and "headhunting through *gaya*" is that the former is Wei's invention while the latter reflects a true Seediq cultural practice. Successful headhunting was a triumphant event to be celebrated either by the whole tribe or by any man who in a dispute was able to prove his innocence in a trial by ordeal. To die on the hunting ground was regarded as unfortunate, bringing bad luck to the family (Temporary Committee on Old Taiwan Customs 41). When one bears this in mind, it would appear rather ridiculous and confusing to see Wei proudly make the heroic claim, "*Seediq Bale*/true men died on the battlefield" throughout the movie. Even if Seediq ancestors honored their descendants for guarding their hunting terrain, this does not mean that it was acceptable to prove their masculine

identity by sacrificing their lives. On the contrary, whereas "blood sacrifice" embraced death and created a tragic hero, the aim of "headhunting through *gaya*" was to avoid death and maintain the continuity of the Seediq.

Contemporary Atayal writer Walis Nokan (瓦歷斯·諾幹) clarifies how a headhunting decision was achieved traditionally. Firstly, there must be an incident for the Nkis (i.e., the elders of each family) to discuss in order to determine whether a headhunting sortie should be prescribed. If the elders could not decide, it would be left to the Mhoni (spiritual leader of the tribe) to decide. Lastly, the decision was to be announced by the Mlahu (the political leader of the tribe, the chief) (Nokan). This suggests that headhunting was a collective decision made by the tribal male leaders in both the Atayal and Seediq cultures. The community leadership followed a colligating system. No single man made his own decisions but consulted with the elder and other leaders of the same tribe. Walis Nokan further comments that Taiwanese society talked about the Wushe Incident as if it was a decision made solely by Mona Rudou, probably showing the influence of western movies that advocate individualistic heroism as righteous. This is not a characteristic of Atayal culture (Nokan). I agree with Nokan's comments that Wei's *Seediq Bale* advocates individualistic heroism because the several points on which the Seediq people disagree with Wei all involve issues of individualistic heroism. For example, the most controversial issue is that Wei arranged Mona Rudou to fatally shoot his wife and children. The staging of this event, it seems to me, is meant to be a show of masculinity in which a man shows his domination over his family members' lives and his ability to sacrifice those he loves. The Seediq translator Dakis Pawan pointed out, for the Seediq people, this act is a violation of *gaya*. He advised the director to handle it with caution (Kuo 90).

By contrasting the two different perspectives of Wei and the Seediq people, I argue that these perspectives rightly demonstrate a huge difference in, on the one hand, contemporary concepts of individualistic heroism and, on the other, the Indigenous perspective of enacting displays of manhood/masculinity in collectivity. Wei's idea of heroism is to demonstrate the masculinity of the colonized man, of his pride and bravery, of his masculine ability in headhunting and the determination to be a man/human again. In contrast, the Seediq men in honoring *gaya* reached political decisions collectively. This does not deny the importance of individual masculine identity. But no individualistic heroic identity can be achieved without consideration of the continuity of the tribe. Therefore, there would be no idea of "blood sacrifice for ancestors" without considering the consequence, the genocide of the Seediq. That is why "blood sacrifice for ancestors" does not make sense at all in Seediq culture or according to *gaya*. In Seediq culture, individual masculine identity is situated in a collectivity with the ultimate goal to ensure the survival of the tribe.

Wei conducted fieldwork and interviewed Seediq tribes, and consulted these tribes before he started shooting and while he was making the film. How did Wei respond to Seediq criticisms of his misrepresentation? He replied to the Seediq people, "The story will inevitably require tension and shocks, so that the drama can touch people's hearts. [...] I hope to gain the understanding of the people" (Kuo 90). Yu-lin Lee was sympathetic to Wei in that his largely truthful, historical representation might have contradicted the narrative structure of an epic film ("Archiving" 162). However, what does "the cinematic effect" or "narrative structure" mean? My research suggests that by highlighting individualistic heroic masculinity, the film led to the systematic misrepresentations of colonized masculinity as Seediq culture.

This is not to say that Seediq men did not act on individualistic masculinity. *Seediq Bale* as a form of life-writing might have correctly represented the most complicated human male psychology under colonialism. Probably, Mona Rudou, as well as Fanon as a colonized man, was utterly convinced of his belief that the uprising might restore his humanity/masculinity. The desire to revolt and to be human again, which appeared to be so common among the Seediq men of his time, however, was not allowed in the tribe for it violated the principles of *gaya*. At the critical moment, a colonized man had to choose between bravery and genocide or submission and survival. Maybe Mona Rudou decided to resist without following *gaya*. Unfortunately, he failed. What was the consequence? According to the historical record, around 300 Seediq men and their families committed suicide right after the uprising. And the Japanese colonial government further incited the Seediq-Toda to kill around 200 of the Seediq-Tgadaya. The Seediq lost nearly 1000 men and women, while only 298 people survived. However heroic the Wushe Uprising might appear, it triggered the genocide of the Seediq people. Given the historical facts, how would the survivors of the Seediq evaluate Mona Rudou? What kind of historical teaching might the Seediq people learn from this? One could imagine that for the Seediq survivors who experienced the massacres and genocide after the Wushe Uprising, such a requisite desire to prove an individualistic masculinity that deviated from the ancestor laws of *gaya* and triggered the genocide of the Seediq was in every possible way something to be shunned and repressed. The misrepresentations of colonized masculinity as Seediq culture means that the motivation for colonized men revolt to be human/man

again is misunderstood to be "for *gaya*." The motivation to stark a violent revolution, a means for colonized men to reclaim their pride and bravery as "true men," has now been interpreted by an essentialist and stereotypical cultural tradition of headhunting. The masculine identity of the colonized men is overshadowed by the cultural essentialist representation of "*gaya*" and "headhunting." This misrepresentation has political consequences.

Seediq Bale is praised highly for raising the national consciousness of the Taiwanese. In postcolonial Taiwan, people are still searching for their histories and identities, so *Seediq Bale*'s hidden desire to search for origins has contributed to created dialogues among people of different ethnic identities. Yu-Lin Lee regards *Seediq Bale* as a historical archive that "not only helps to preserve the past but also manages to create a passage to the future through communication with the past" ("Archiving" 162). Moreover, the popularity of *Seediq Bale* has served to forge a new Taiwan identity. According to *The Economist*, *Seediq Bale* stands out in that "its message of a unique, empowering Taiwanese identity is unmistakable" ("Blood"). Chialan Sharon Wang regards this film as contributing to Taiwan native consciousness because it creates a space for local and grassroots history to be readdressed. Moreover, Wei's two directorial pieces *Cape No.7* and *Seediq Bale* reconfigure the colonial past in a way that presents Taiwan's collective memory, with "the desire to search for a cultural, national or even ethnographic origin" (Wang 95). Stephanie Chiang suggests that the movie has been assimilated into "hypersensitive questions of Taiwanese identity and nationalism that have dominated Taiwanese politics and cross-straits relations between China and Taiwan." Indeed, *Seediq Bale* is rife with undertones of Taiwanese nationalism.

In "*Seediq Bale*," a product of settler Han director, the headhunting tradition was remembered, romanticized, praised highly as heroic and even strengthened in an inaccurate way to promote individualistic masculinity and to forge a new national identity. Feminists have rightly pointed out that nationalism has "typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope" (Enloe 44). If the KMT appropriated the Wushe Incident on behalf of Chinese Nationalism for political propaganda, *Seediq Bale* serves to forge Taiwanese Nationalism as an antagonist to Chinese Nationalism. Taiwanese nationalism is achieved by a softer tone, in the name of multiculturalism. However, due to the misrepresentation, colonial oppression and resistance are no longer the main focus. Violent revolution, a means for colonized men to reclaim their pride and bravery as "true men," has now been replaced by a stereotypical cultural tradition of headhunting. The Seediq culture is falsely represented. The Seediq culture that works in collectivity and the spiritual meanings of headhunting were missing. Seediq culture could be misunderstood as barbaric and uncivilized.

Seediq Bale as a form of life writing appears to be narrated through the eyes of Seediq people and to give voice to the Indigenous. However, what is claimed as Seediq is reinvented by a settler male director to strengthen a notion of colonized masculinity by imagining and portraying their heroic and individualistic headhunting culture. For Wei De-sheng, a settler Han director, producing a movie to promote individualistic heroism not only does no harm but also serves to forge a new national identity of Taiwan in post-colonial contexts. In contrast, for the Seediq people, individualistic masculinity that led to genocide might better be repressed and forgotten. The Seediq people would probably like to remember and re-honor their traditional Seediq culture that discourages the idea of individualistic masculine identity and works in a political system for joint decision making. However, the Seediq people's perspectives on the genocide and the uprising might yet to come. But, the historical trauma had already been opened up by the movie without them feeling they were ready to see them so represented.

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