

Remembering Raymond Westerling: Family Memories, History, and the Controversial Cinematic Depiction in *The East* (De Oost, 2021)

Arda Muhlisiun¹, Zeffry², Bondan Kanumoyoso²

¹ Institut Kesenian Jakarta, ✉ ardamuhlisiun@ikj.ac.id

² Universitas Indonesia

Article history

Received : 2024-10-06

Accepted : 2026-09-18

Published : 2026-10-24

Keywords

Raymond Westerling;
contested memory;
familial memory;
cinematic memory;
colonial violence;
The East

Abstract: Raymond Paul Westerling has become a symbol of Dutch colonial violence in South Sulawesi following Indonesia's independence in 1945. The release of *The East* (De Oost) in 2021 reignited public controversy, with Westerling's daughter, Palmyra Westerling, and Dutch organizations, including FIN and Maluku4Maluku, protesting the film's portrayal of him. Meanwhile, the filmmakers defended their historical approach by citing primary sources. This study examines competing representations of Westerling through family accounts, historical records, veterans' testimonies, and cinematic narratives. Using an interpretive qualitative approach informed by phenomenology and memory studies, it compares the film's narrative and visual representations with family statements, veterans' responses, historical documentation, and the filmmakers' explanations. The findings reveal contrasting constructions of Westerling's identity. Palmyra's account emphasizes familial memories of him as a loving father and respectable individual. In contrast, the film portrays him as a charismatic military commander associated with colonial violence, drawing on historical documentation, veterans' testimonies, and cinematic dramatization. These differences reflect distinct positions of remembrance rather than merely divergent opinions about an individual. Family memory prioritizes domestic intimacy, whereas historical and cinematic memories situate Westerling within the broader context of Dutch military violence in Indonesia. The controversy thus highlights tensions between personal memory, collective identity, historical accountability, and the ethical representation of colonial violence.

Abstrak: Raymond Paul Westerling menjadi simbol kekerasan kolonial Belanda di Sulawesi Selatan setelah kemerdekaan Indonesia pada 1945. Penayangan film *The East* (De Oost) pada 2021 memicu kontroversi, termasuk protes dari putrinya, Palmyra Westerling, serta organisasi Belanda, FIN dan Maluku4Maluku, yang menilai penggambaran tersebut tidak sesuai dengan pemahaman mereka. Sementara itu, pembuat film mempertahankan pendekatan historisnya dengan merujuk pada sumber primer. Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi Westerling yang saling bertentangan melalui ingatan keluarga, catatan sejarah, kesaksian veteran, dan narasi sinematik. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif interpretatif yang berlandaskan fenomenologi dan studi ingatan, penelitian ini membandingkan representasi naratif dan visual dalam film dengan pernyataan keluarga, tanggapan veteran, dokumentasi sejarah, serta penjelasan pembuat film. Temuan menunjukkan perbedaan konstruksi identitas Westerling. Palmyra menekankan ingatan keluarga yang menggambarkannya sebagai ayah penyayang dan pribadi terhormat. Sebaliknya, film menampilkan Westerling sebagai komandan militer karismatik yang terkait dengan kekerasan kolonial melalui dokumentasi sejarah, kesaksian veteran, dan dramatisasi sinematik. Perbedaan tersebut mencerminkan posisi ingatan yang berlainan. Ingatan keluarga berpusat pada keintiman domestik, sedangkan ingatan historis dan sinematik menempatkannya dalam konteks kekerasan militer Belanda di Indonesia. Kontroversi ini memperlihatkan ketegangan antara ingatan pribadi, identitas kolektif, pertanggungjawaban sejarah, dan tanggung jawab etis dalam merepresentasikan kekerasan kolonial.



Available online at
<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/journals/paramita>

INTRODUCTION

The film *De Oost (The East)* (Taihuttu, 2021) is a Dutch film that has caused controversy among Dutch society. One of the objections came from Palmyra Westerling, Westerling's daughter. For Palmyra, this film seems to create the image of Dutch soldiers as well as Nazi war criminals. Meanwhile, the figure of his father who led this army seemed to be present as the executioner of the murderer (Matanasi, 2021). Palmyra Westerling interprets the character's appearance, particularly his thin mustache and military-style clothing, as visually linking her father to Adolf Hitler. However, in the absence of direct evidence regarding the filmmakers' intentions, this resemblance should be understood as Palmyra's interpretation, not as a proven representational strategy (Wijanarko, 2021). Apart from objections from Westerling's daughter, veterans of the KNIL - the Dutch East Indies army at that time - also felt that the historical approach used in the film was very disappointing (Reinhart, 2021).

The East is a film with a cross-country production mode, namely the Netherlands, Indonesia and Belgium. Directed by Jim Taihuttu, who is Dutch of Indonesian descent, this film was also produced by Sander Verdonk from the Netherlands and Shanty Harmayn from Indonesia. Base Entertainment, as a production house from Indonesia, produced this film together with a Dutch production house called New Film Amsterdam Company and XYZ Films (Kurniawan, 2021), as well as Salto Films, and Wrong Men North (*Film The East: Kisah Tentara*, 2021). Quoting the bbc.com page, Sander Verdonk stated that the reason for raising the theme of the Dutch war after Indonesian independence was because the events of this war were very rarely known to the Dutch public (Amelia, 2021).

As a person who works as a DJ, Taihuttu financed this film project by holding a number of musical performances (Wijanarko, 2021), because Jim Taihuttu is known as a musician with his group called Yellow Claw (Arfianty, 2020). The production costs for this film itself were very large, namely around € 6.6 million or the equivalent of IDR 112 billion (*Film The East: Kisah Tentara*, 2021).

Sanders Verdonk -producer- said that what was shown in the film was actually only crime and ugliness which was only a small part of what Westerling did. In actual fact, what Westerling did could have looked more tragic and sadistic if it had been filmed in its entirety (Amelia, 2021). Verdonk's statement regarding the many actual facts that they did not show was based on the results of research

they conducted for four years. This research takes a long time to achieve accurate historical facts (Wildan, 2021). Another producer, Shanty Harmain, feels that this film can certainly provide new enlightenment on the history of the Indonesian nation (Amelia, 2021).

The controversy surrounding *The East* is not merely a dispute over the historical accuracy of a film. It illustrates how various social actors construct Westerling's image through different positions of memory. His daughter draws on family and domestic memories; Dutch veterans respond through group identity and military memory; the Indonesian historical narrative places him within the context of colonial violence; and the filmmakers transform these conflicting stories into cinematic representations. Therefore, this study investigates how these various forms of memory construct Westerling's image and why this results in conflicting claims regarding his historical identity.

Therefore, this study addresses two questions: How is Raymond Westerling remembered and portrayed by his family, Dutch veterans, Indonesian historical narratives, and the filmmakers of *The East*? Why do these various perspectives on his legacy result in conflicting representations of the same historical figure?

Two Indonesian films had problems with parties who feel they have a sociological or biological closeness to something raised in the film. The film entitled *Soekarno* (Bramantyo, 2013) experiences a conflict between the filmmaker and Rachmawati Soekarnoputri, the daughter of President Soekarno, a historical figure who is the main character in the film *Soekarno*. Meanwhile, the film *Banda, the Dark Forgotten Trail* (Subiakto, 2017), a documentary film by director Jay Subiakto which tells the history of the Banda Islands (*Warga Protes Film*, 2017), was protested by a group of people because there were concerns about misperception through this film because there was a part that stated that the original Banda people were massacrred and became extinct in the genocidal war in 1621. And that is considered misleading (*Warga Protes Film*, 2017).

In the film *Soekarno*, Soekarno's family and other children doubted the accuracy and suitability of his father's figure in the film. At least that can be read from a research article entitled *Film Scenario Scripts Made Not in Accordance with the Script* (Script Skenario Film Yang Dibuat Tidak Sesuai Dengan Naskah), published in the journal *Calyptra* Vol.9 (2) May 2021 written by Maharani et al. (2021).

This happened because Rachmawati Soekarnoputri (RSP), who was one of Soekarno's heirs, and claimed to be someone who really understood Soekarno's character, felt that the film was not based on the script "Bung Karno: Indonesia Merdeka" belonging to RPS, which she initially thought was the source. the main reference in generating ideas and views about Soekarno (Maharani et al., 2021). Even RSP felt that the character chosen by the filmmaker to play his father did not match his expectations (Asril, 2014; Edward, 2014).

Meanwhile, for filmmakers, Soekarno's film is referred to as 'Derivative Works' or simply a creative work derived from the script "Bung Karno: Indonesia Merdeka" belonging to RPS from many other reference sources (Maharani et al., 2021). RPS finally withdrew from its involvement in film production. However, MVP Pictures, the production house, continued the production process until the film was finished and shown in various cinemas (Asril, 2014). RPS believes that everyone is allowed to make films about famous figures, including about the figure of his father as the First President of Indonesia. However, filmmakers should ask permission first from the heirs of the characters they want to feature in the film (Herman, 2014).

For the film *Banda, the Dark Forgotten Trail*, according to the Chairman of the Executive Board of the Wandan Students and Student Youth Association, Kamaludin Rery, the real fact is that the original Banda people still exist today. However, they have scattered to various remote areas in Maluku, such as in East Seram and Central Maluku Regencies, Banda Eli, Banda Elat in Southeast Maluku Regency, as well as on Haruku Island (Kailolo) and Ambon Island as in Amahusu State. Some even went abroad. A group of people in Banda finally refused to show this film. They are worried that this film will cause instability in Maluku (*Warga Protes Film*, 2017).

The team at the Lifelike Pictures production house, which produced this film, said that they had never expressed the opinion that the original Banda tribe had been wiped out from Maluku (Ratnasari, 2017). Jay, the director actually explained the facts that when he went to Banda to make this film, none of them could meet any native Bandanese (*Tak Terima Sejarah*, 2017). Jay even argued that the making of this film had been carried out through a number of library research and field visits carried out since 2015. This also included interviews with historians who understand the history of Banda Island (Andarningtyas, 2017).

Indeed, there are similar conflict patterns

between *Soekarno Banda, the Dark Forgotten Trail* and *The East*. However, what is a research gap in research on the film *The East* is that the filmmakers of *The East* consider themselves to be parties who are also involved in Westerling's historical journey in Indonesia, not just a claim belonging to those who reject the film. The filmmakers of *The East* also interacted biologically and sociologically with this historical event. This is different from the filmmakers of *Soekarno* and *Band, the Dark Forgotten Trail*, who appeared to be "nobodies" in the films they made.

The history presented in films often gives rise to polemics regarding written history (often considered the most 'accurate' facts) and history in films. In a study conducted in Australia, people tended to trust history in the form of literature, various statements by academic historians and museum content, rather than films or other audiovisual products such as television programs. Written history (historiography) and film are often considered in a hierarchical relationship, where film is considered a second derivative (meaning opaque and therefore open to deviation) from written history (Hughes-Warrington, 2007).

There is a pessimistic view of historians towards films, the famous film director - Oliver Stone, in *Cineaste* magazine published in 1996, said that historians often see filmmakers in a hostile light, as if history only belonged to them (as cited in Hughes-Warrington, 2007).

Rosenstone said almost the same thing. For him, historians can be attributed to anyone, in any media, including film makers, as long as their life dedication is to present the meaning of the past in their films (Rosenstone, 2018). The ability to differentiate between reality and fiction is another way of receiving historical awareness (Moller, 2018).

The term 'historical film' can actually be an agreement between film producers, critics and viewers. In this relationship site, no one party is the controller of the truth (Hughes-Warrington, 2007). Meanwhile film history academics try to bridge this gap by dividing their respective areas, citing the concepts presented by Hayden White regarding 'historiophoty' and 'historiography' (as cited in Hughes-Warrington, 2007).

Seamon (2015) explains that watching a film involves several memory systems, including semantic, episodic, and working memory. However, in this study, his work is applied more broadly to explain how cinema constructs encounters with the past through narrative, imagery, emotion, and memory. A historical film does not merely preserve an event;

it selects, organizes, and dramatizes elements of the past, thereby influencing how historical figures are subsequently remembered.

Nevertheless, Seamon's psychological explanation of memory is insufficient, when considered in isolation, to account for the conflicts among family members, veterans, national historiography, and filmmakers. Therefore, this study combines Seamon's discussion of film and memory with perspectives on collective and cultural memory that examine how social position influences what is remembered, emphasized, preserved, or forgotten.

When it comes to visual imagery, in films the audience no longer sees the actor as a fictional character. But the actor has represented a certain historical figure. Although according to Jean-Louis Comolli, this is not an easy matter because it requires great ability from the audience to be involved in receiving the historical figure through the actor's body (as cited in Hughes-Warrington, 2007). Apart from that, the process of the audience's perception of films is also influenced by the psychological factor of short-term memory, which refers to our ability to store small amounts of information for a short period of time; and also long-term memory, which involves our ability to store large amounts of information for an indefinite period of time (Seamon, 2015).

Rosenstone even mentioned that history on screen (film) is a technique for presenting history that is worth paying attention to, because it can enable important worlds of the past to be represented again before society in another form. So we should learn to accept and read films using various techniques. For example, creating visuals, music, and sound effects along with spoken (and shouted, whispered, hummed, and sounded) words (Rosenstone, 2018). So it is believed that the past that is retold in films will not destroy the form of the past, but will actually increase the vocabulary of that past (Rosenstone, 2018). Even films utilize the creative aspects of working memory, allowing our imaginations to soar (Seamon, 2015).

The film's inability to present historical truth can at least be read from a sentence that Rosenstone pronounces as 'false historicity'. This sentence is the cumulative result of historians' suspicions about the film. This is based on the fact that in films there is a construction of the 'appearance' of the past which is then presented through costumes, make-up, props and sets (Hughes-Warrington, 2007). This also includes films that try to be 'realistic' about the past, of course they will make changes to the presentation of the past through the choice of narrative, dia-

logue, sequence of scenes (event construction), as well as the perspective of the character that must be chosen from the many figures present in the film (Hughes-Warrington, 2007). This means that many people are suspicious of the impossibility of historical films because whatever appears in the film is considered not to be a pure artifact of the past, but merely an imitation of the past. Moreover, a historical film made without authentic images or archival footage - such as a documentary such as Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) - would be considered fiction (Hughes-Warrington, 2007).

On the other hand, expecting history in films to be equal to the quality of historical writing is impossible. This is because the film is bound by its own unique principles. For example, Gregory Currie argues that when we want to enjoy a film, we must take the attitude as an imaginative act. While Baudrillard, Godard and Benjamin shared the belief that film is a work of illusion (as cited in Hughes-Warrington, 2007). Films will always be considered less complex than written history. However, moving images and soundscapes will create an experience and emotional complexity that is not found on the printed page of historical writing (Rosenstone, 2018).

Reading the meaning of the past cannot simply be brought into the present. This requires re-inscription (conversion into code). It is not surprising that in films (even those which are considered to represent history) we do not find the same qualities as various historical writings, because films rely heavily on visual symbols and icons (Moller, 2018). So historical films are not intended to provide literal truth about the past (as if written history were capable of providing literal truth) but metaphorical truth (Rosenstone, 2018).

METHODS

This study employs an interpretive qualitative approach grounded in phenomenology, historical source criticism, and memory studies. This phenomenologically grounded orientation is used to examine the meanings attributed to Westerling by various parties, not to claim direct access to their lived experiences. Since this study relies primarily on films, historical documents, published statements, books, and media reports, rather than original phenomenological interviews, it is not presented as a purely phenomenological study.

The primary audiovisual source is the film *The East (De Oost)* by Jim Taihuttu (Taihuttu, 2021). Documentary and textual sources include published statements by Palmyra Westerling, responses from

Dutch veterans and related organizations, interviews and statements by the filmmakers, Maarten Hidskes's account of his father's involvement in Westerling's forces, and historical studies on Dutch military operations in South Sulawesi. Online news reports were used only to document public statements and controversies, while historical and theoretical arguments are primarily based on academic publications and historical sources.

The data is grouped into four analytical categories: family memory, veteran or group memory, Indonesian historical memory, and cinematic memory. Statements and scenes were selected if they explicitly addressed Westerling's personality, his military conduct, his moral standing, his historical responsibility, or his visual representation. The selected film scenes were analyzed in terms of narrative position, dialogue, characterization, costumes, visual symbolism, camera framing, and the relationship between Westerling and Johan de Vries.

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, this study identified the main claims made by each actor regarding Westerling. Second, these claims were classified according to their respective memory positions. Third, the film's representations were compared with documented historical records to identify continuities, simplifications, dramatizations, and alterations. Finally, these conflicting representations were interpreted in relation to colonial memory, collective identity, and historical accountability. Historical source criticism is applied by examining the authenticity, context, purpose, and evidence of each source (Kuntowijoyo, 1995/2018), while the relationship between individual and collective memory is interpreted using the methodological guidelines of Keightley and Pickering (2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Westerling in Indonesian Historical Memory

After the proclamation of Indonesian independence by Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta on 17 August 1945, Indonesia's territory was not completely liberated by the Dutch. In December 1945, allied troops and a number of Dutch officers who were members of NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) attempted to return to Indonesia via East Sumatra. Lieutenant Raymond Paul Westerling was one of the middle officers who participated in the group (van der Veer, 2019). Raymond Westerling is an important figure in the green beret special forces from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. His military career began during World War II, where Westerling, who had attended commando level military

training in England, was also deployed to the European battlefield. Westerling was then sent to Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia to free Dutch people who were Japanese prisoners in the Siringgoringgo area of North Sumatra, after the proclamation of Indonesian independence. After he completed his assignment, he was then asked to go to Jakarta as a trainer for a special force called DST (Depot Speciale Troepen), where the aim of this force was to overcome community resistance in South Sulawesi (Yusuf et al., 2017).

For Indonesian people, the name Westerling is synonymous with the term "terrible cleansing" in South Sulawesi (Zweers, 2014). The word "murder" became an icon and Dutch hatred towards Indonesia was represented by Westerling as its personification (McGregor, 2014). Even in front of his supporters, Westerling did not hesitate to say that Soekarno (the first President of Indonesia since the proclamation of Indonesian independence in 1945) was no more expensive than a bullet worth 35 cents - while Soekarno was worth 5 cents. This was what made him unwilling to kill Sukarno (Triyana et al., 2012b).

Between 1946-1947 South Sulawesi was like a corpse field for Dutch military terror. A source stated that South Sulawesi was a target for the Dutch to remain under control because based on the Linggarjati agreement, this area was not said to be part of the Republic of Indonesia (Triyana et al., 2012a). Meanwhile, in Remy Limpach's dissertation entitled *De Brandende Kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (translated as "Extreme Dutch Violence in Indonesia") the massacre carried out by the Dutch army was an act of revenge because Sulawesi fighters had caused the deaths of around a thousand people who were pro-Dutch. This act of revenge is considered even more terrible (as cited in Pamungkas, 2020). But this act of "brutality" in the name of revenge is actually rather dubious. Quoting historia.id, it turns out that Westerling had also demonstrated his wildness in Medan, Sumatra when he served as Head of the Dutch Intelligence Service, long before he was assigned to South Sulawesi (Osc, 2021). Historian J.A. de Moor in the *Westerling Oorlog*, even stated that there was a similar pattern carried out by Westerling in his actions, starting from encircling areas, locking down areas, concentrating people who were suspected of being enemies in one location, and carrying out executions of Indonesians. After everything is finished, the villages will be burned down (as cited in Osc, 2021). According to a former KL soldier (Koninklijk Leger - Royal Dutch Army), what Westerling did was because he

did not try to understand political developments in Indonesia. He did not want to be bound by the *Konferensi Meja Bundar* agreement where the states in Indonesia had to be dissolved (Triyana et al., 2012c).

The number of victims of Westerling and his troops has never been agreed upon. In an article, in December 1946 Captain Raymond who led the movement, and was later referred to as "terror in South Sulawesi" had killed around 40,000 people in South Sulawesi (Wahyu, 2011). George McT Kahin wrote the casualty figure at 11 thousand civilians, of which 500-1,000 people became victims directly at Westerling's hands. This is written in his book *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Kahin, 1952, as cited in Triyana et al., 2012e). In other sources, it is recorded that Raymond Westerling's soldiers who were members of the Special Forces Depot in South Sulawesi (late 1946-early 1947) had caused more than three thousand casualties (Oostindie, 2012). Westerling himself in an interview in 1969 admitted to the murder. And he mentioned a figure of 600 people killed by himself and his troops. Meanwhile, in the 1950s, the Indonesian Army conducted research and found a casualty figure of 1,700 people. Anhar Gonggong, a leading Indonesian historian, actually put the number of victims in Sulawesi at 10,000 people. Meanwhile, school textbooks in Indonesia most often quote the number of Westerling victims in the version of Kahar Muzakar, an Indonesian fighter and founder of the Indonesian Islamic Army (Tentara Islam Indonesia) in Sulawesi, namely as many as 40,000 people killed (Arif, 2019).

A Surinamese war veteran named Iwan Dompig who currently lives in Rotterdam admitted that Westerling was indeed a terrible figure. One time he and his friend (Cameron) delivered food rations to Lieutenant Westerling at the Cililitan airport complex. When he arrived at the front of the building, Westerling was seen standing on the balcony at the top of the building while watching the traditional Indonesian market which was in front of the building. Westerling immediately pointed his finger at a young man who was in the market. One of his men with an Ambon face immediately arrested the young man. A moment later, the lieutenant's gun fired bullets and immediately broke the young man's head (Setyawan, n.d.). The other Ambon-looking soldiers - almost all of Westerling's men were Ambonese - then dragged the young man's body to the back of the building, where a hole was waiting for him to bury Westerling's victims (Setyawan, n.d.). The habit of shooting from close range at potential victims seemed to be Westerling's

trademark. In Sulawesi, Westerling often tortured and shot at close range people he had identified as enemies. After the victims died, their bodies were put in a hole (McGregor, 2014).

Before Westerling's arrival in South Sulawesi, the situation in that area was quite frightening for the Dutch. The Royal Dutch East Indies army called Koninklijke Nederlands(ch)-Indische Leger (KNIL) was overwhelmed by attacks from the Sulawesi army. In fact, KNIL soldiers were troops that were often defeated by Indonesian troops. They did not dare to go ashore and only hid in ships along the coast of Makassar (Triyana et al., 2012a). Finally, on December 5 1946, by General Simon Hendrik Spoor, Westerling, who served as commander of the Dutch special forces (DST), was sent with Second Lieutenant Jan Vermeulen and accompanied by his green beret troops to Makassar in order to overcome and restore security (Arif, 2019). It was even alleged that the sending of these troops was an effort by the Dutch to secure the process of establishing the Indonesian state (Yusuf et al., 2017). The number of troops numbering around 120 came from Sunda, Manado, Ambon, Java and Timor. The original Dutch troops only numbered around 30 people (*Kapten Westerling Membantai*, 2022). In other words, Westerling has created a battle between Indonesians and Indonesians.

After his arrival in South Sulawesi, Borong Village and Batua Village became the first targets of Westerling's troops. The entire population was gathered in the field. Westerling then began to name one by one the names of people who were accused of being rebels and considered part of the Republican (Indonesian) Forces. After reading the name, Westerling's gun spewed bullets at the names he uttered (Arif, 2019). Westerling said that the Dutch troops who had been handling the South Sulawesi (Makassar) region had implemented their policies incorrectly. They were considered too weak in giving punishment to captured Indonesian fighters, who, after being found guilty, were released again. According to Westerling, this does not have a deterrent effect (Triyana et al., 2012a). Sitti Hasanah Nu'mang, one of the eyewitnesses to Westerling's atrocities, through her book *A Thousand Faces of Female Fighters in the Revolution of '45* (Seribu Wajah Wanita Pejuang Dalam Kancan Revolusi '45) (1995) wrote that Westerling and his troops had created a sea of blood for native people, from the Makassar area to Parepare Regency, Barru, Sidrap, Enrekang, and Pinrang (as cited in Sugiantoro, 2021).

Maarten Hidskes, a writer and also the son of

one of Westerling's special forces, said that during each execution, Westerling often brought folding chairs and a table. The revolver was placed on the table. For Hidskes, his execution was like a stage performance (*Kapten Westerling Membantai*, 2022). Westerling always used the same method in other areas in Sulawesi such as Tanjung Bunga, Kalukuang, Polongbangkeng, Jongaya, and Polewali Mandar (Arif, 2019). Officer Hay, a former member of Westerling's troops, also said that when the execution was about to take place, the people who were sitting squatting in front of Westerling were very afraid. Their throats seemed to be constricted waiting for every name that came out of Westerling (*Kapten Westerling Membantai*, 2022). The information revealed by Hay was recorded in Maarten Hidskes' book entitled *Thuis geloof niemand mij (Zuid-Celebes 1946-1947)*. This book is one of the sources for research on the film *De Oost*. This book was born because Maarten's father throughout his life never told anyone about the events of the Sulawesi war (Iswara, 2021b).

Westerling saw that efforts to overcome this resistance could not be carried out using general war methods. This is because the resistance is already large scale. So Westerling chose the method of massacre to create an effect of horror and shock (Yusuf et al., 2017). One of Westerling's ingenuities is that he understands the socio-religious factors of Indonesian society who adhere to Islam. By placing the holy Qur'an in the head of the person being asked, it is difficult for them to evade and lie. Society is placed on two sides that are unfavorable to it. And this provides a big advantage for Westerling to facilitate the process of identifying people he considers criminals (Triyana et al., 2012e).

Westerling has positioned himself as a hero who saves the people of Sulawesi. He considered that the people selected to be killed had been categorized as terrorists, bandits, terrorists and destroyers of order. This opinion can be read through his memoirs published in 1952 (as cited in McGregor, 2014). The actions taken by Westerling and his troops did receive protection from Major General E. Engles, Director of DCO (Training Center Directorate) (Pamungkas, 2020).

The increasing pressure of the South Sulawesi army with the presence of Westerling, finally the Navy of Republic of Indonesia, Division VI of the Seberang Troops, to provide fleet assistance with six departure groups. Although in the end it was still unbearable for Westerling's troops to continue to push the Indonesian troops (Cahyani, 2018), also with the help of the power of community leaders

and the appointment of new kings who were pro-Dutch, to replace the old kings who were pro-Indonesian (Triyana et al., 2012e). Westerling's presence with the concept of mass murder has turned things around in South Sulawesi.

Westerling's action in Sulawesi was finally completed in line with General Spoor's orders. On February 21 1947 Westerling and his troops were asked by Spoor to return to Java (Arif, 2019). However, it is alleged that Westerling was actually fired as DST commander (Mutawally, 2021). This dismissal was suspected to be a protective strategy so that Westerling and his troops would not be arrested and tried as war criminals. Another way to avoid legal sanctions is to change the composition of the number of troops and erase traces of the name of the troops which were previously called Depot Speciale Troepen to Corps Speciale Troepen (KST) and then changed it again to Regiment Speciale Tropen (RST) (Yusuf et al., 2017).

In Java, Westerling was asked to form another army called the Ratu Adil Armed Forces (Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil -APRA). Together with Sultan Hamid II, in 1950 Westerling carried out the Bandung rebellion in West Java (Misno, 2020). Westerling and 800 of his soldiers tried to control Bandung and infiltrate Jakarta. The aim was to kill Indonesian officials. However, Westerling's action failed and he fled Indonesia in disguise (Mutawally, 2021). This escape used the role and services of the Dutch military, including Chia Piet Kay, his business partner in Pacet Puncak, West Java, who played a role in his escape (Triyana et al., 2012d). Through the role of Major General Van Langen and General Buurman Van Vreeden, on 22 February 1950 Westerling left for Singapore aboard a Catalina plane belonging to Marine Luchtvaart Dienst (Dutch Navy Military Service), to be flown to the Netherlands (Yusuf et al., 2017). The Indonesian army did not remain silent watching this behavior of escape. Major Brenthel Soesilo was appointed to be the head of the Westerling hunting team. Even though in the end, through his cunning strategy of pretending to surrender, Westerling actually managed to trick the hunting squad by firing a number of bullets at the army car that was escorting him, and managed to escape to the Catalina plane which was ready for him to take off immediately (Ajinugroho, 2018).

The actions that Westerling had carried out seemed to give himself pride. As if he wanted to reveal as widely as possible to society the basis of his actions, through his book *Challenge to Terror* (1952) Westerling argued that his action of killing

one guilty person would save the lives of hundreds of other innocent people (as cited in Keil, 2021). Westerling was never named as a defendant, even though many people labeled him a war criminal (Wijanarko, 2021). Some even said that Westerling was actually hailed upon his return to the Netherlands, including by some Dutch people who were in despair because Indonesia was no longer part of their rule (Triyana et al., 2012b). In fact, on October 31 1952, the Dutch Supreme Court (Mahkamah Agung) said there was no reason for further investigation against Westerling for his actions in Indonesia (Yusuf et al., 2017). Westerling died in the Netherlands of a heart attack in 1987 without ever being held accountable for his actions in the law of war.

Later, in 2005 the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Bot, made a statement that the Dutch presence in Indonesia had indeed been 'on the wrong side of history' (Oostindie, 2012).

Cinematic Memory: Westerling as a Charismatic and Violent Commander

Rather than viewing *The East* as a direct reconstruction of historical events, this section examines how the film selects, simplifies, and dramatizes certain aspects of Westerling's military operations. This comparison between the cinematic narrative and historical records is important because the film does not merely reproduce the past but also constructs a specific image of Westerling for today's audience.

Westerling's negative actions in Indonesia are so embedded in the minds of the Indonesian people, during the process of making the film *The East*, the Indonesian government reminded the production team not to mention Westerling's name. This is because the name Westerling for Indonesian people is very synonymous with crime (Wijanarko, 2021). Moreover, almost 90 percent of this film's production was carried out in Indonesia, specifically in the tourist village of Pacitan, East Java (Arfianty, 2020; Kurniawan, 2021), with a shooting time of around 2.5 months (Wijanarko, 2021). Westerling's negative stigma can at least be read in history textbooks in Indonesia, especially with the massacre he carried out in Sulawesi (Reinhart, 2021). This film is certainly interesting for Indonesian audiences to see. Because for Indonesian people, the name Westerling has a historical connection with Indonesian people with various tragedies that have occurred in the past.

The film *The East (De Oost)* tells the story of the actions of Raymond Paul Westerling, the leader of Depot Speciale Troepen (DST), special forces of the Dutch army sent to crush Indonesian troops in

South Sulawesi. The setting of the event is after Japan's defeat in the Second World War and after the proclamation of Indonesian independence in 1945. The Dutch's second arrival in Indonesia was aimed at protecting the Indonesian people and ensuring peace in their former colony. Therefore, at the beginning of the opening of the film, the Indonesian people's sympathy for the arrival of the Dutch army appears. Several people kissed the hands of the Dutch soldiers. Symbolically, this seems to want to give a message about the return of "old heroes" to society.

This film takes the point of view of Johan De Vries (played by Martijn Lakemeier), a young Dutch soldier who was assigned to Semarang, Indonesia in 1946 to carry out a state assignment. Later, Vries became a member of Raymond Westerling's troops (played by Marwan Kenzari) who also came to Indonesia in the same year (Amelia, 2021). Throughout the film, Westerling is called "De Turk" or "Raymond".

First meet Vries with De Turk or Raymond occurred when on a road they encountered a clash with Japanese soldiers. This is where the cooperation between them begins. First impression, Johan really admired Raymond who was brave and brave in driving away the Japanese soldiers. Raymond also positioned himself as 'the referee' which made Johan even more impressed. Gradually Vries grew into a brave soldier, at least in his attempts to fire bullets from his gun. All thanks to Raymond's upbringing. But gradually, Johan saw that the Dutch troops were being very cruel to the people, especially the people in Sulawesi. Johan has a dilemma. On the one hand, he is a human who has a conscience for humanity. But on the other hand, he is just a soldier who must follow his leader's orders. With his own eyes he saw the massacre of thousands of civilians. Raymond shows himself to be a killing machine. Similar to historical facts, when going to carry out the "cleaning", Raymond is shown sitting in a chair at a table while holding a note containing the names of people suspected of being rebels. This scene aligns with historical accounts describing Westerling's use of intelligence lists, open interrogations, and summary executions during counterinsurgency operations in South Sulawesi. The table, the list of suspects, and Westerling's role as the arbiter of guilt create a visual representation of the authority attributed to him in the historical narrative. Bullets were then fired to burst the heads of the owners of the names mentioned by Raymond. This film shows Westerling's method of slaughter, namely: gathering people, taking attendance and calling

people one by one, then killing them (Febrian, 2021). This situation ultimately caused Vries to often clash with Raymond. He did not agree with Raymond's attitude of executing people without a proper interrogation process. Raymond, who didn't like it when he was contradicted and debated - especially by his subordinates, finally punished Johan. Their relationship ended.

Familial and Veterans' Memories: Rejecting the Film's Westerling

Palmyra Westerling, who in an open letter stated that this film was the creator's fantasy, was not done with proper research, tended to be subjective and manipulated existing facts (Amelia, 2021). Even Palmyra firmly said that her father was a true human being, who not only respected humans, he also respected animals (Harrett, 2021b). Palmyra also said that his father was a respected figure in Indonesia. That is why Westerling was later nicknamed 'The Fair Queen' (Wildan, 2021). In another article in the letter, Palmyra accused Indonesians of being behind this film (Matanasi, 2021). It is not explicitly stated who the Indonesian people he means are. For this reason, it might be concluded that for critics of this film, *The East* is an anti-Dutch propaganda film (Endra, 2021), because the film does seem to have a big narrative about the negative side of Dutch army operations in Indonesia in post-Indonesian independence 1945-1949 (Reinhart, 2021). Palmyra also recommended that the film should not be seen, including not buying the novel *De Oost* by Maarten Hidskes (Harrett, 2021b).

Federatie Indische Nederlanders (FIN), an organization in the Netherlands which claims to be a group of Dutch people of Indonesian descent from the third generation of Dutch citizens of Indonesian descent (Wijaya, 2021), also protested the birth of this film. Ariel Heryanto, a Professor Emeritus from Australia's Monash University, Ariel Heryanto, said that the objection raised by FIN was because this film was a medium that defamed war veteran groups from the Netherlands (Iswara, 2021a). FIN took the filmmaker to court, although the court ultimately decided that the filmmaker was not guilty (*The East: Film yang Membuka*, 2021). One of FIN's demands was to ask for a text at the beginning of the film called 'fiction film' (Wijanarko, 2021). If we quote what Seamon (2015) said, this happens because everyday memories can fade quickly, while traumatic memories can last for years. War veterans (for example) can suffer from painful memories, leading to post-traumatic stress disorder, a debilitating condition in which

they constantly relive battlefield experiences and find it difficult to cope with everyday stress.

FIN, which continues to argue that this film is a work of fiction, also takes issue with the quite vulgar things in the film, especially the presence of the wild behavior of the Dutch soldiers. Even from the mouths of Dutch soldiers, racist sentences were often uttered, including the habit of Dutch soldiers who often visited brothels (Wijanarko, 2021). The chairman of FIN, Hans Moll, said that the Dutch soldiers were constructed in such a way in the film that they resembled Nazi soldiers, and this of course caused wounds in the hearts of Dutch war veterans. A note of objection also came from the statement of the Dutch Minister of Defense, Ank Bijleveld. He thought that the Dutch soldiers were not entirely to blame because they had risked their lives and gone to war because of political decisions in the Netherlands (Iswara, 2021b). However, unfortunately in the film it is clear that the Dutch army seems to be the only party who has to face criticism because officials making war policy are almost never shown in the film. Even if he appeared, the Dutch official appeared within seconds (Reinhart, 2021). The Dutch soldiers ultimately had to bear the burden of ridicule from their critics 'alone'. Another organization that took part in the protest was the Maluku veterans group which called itself *Maluku4Maluku*. They consider that the makers of this film have insulted certain groups and have sown the seeds of hatred (Sukmana, 2021).

Filmmakers' and Intergenerational Memories: Defending the Representation

Jim, the director, defended himself. He assumed that the behavior of the soldiers seen in the film was based on genuine testimony from the veteran soldiers who were used as sources. Even when the veterans watched the film directly, they said that what was shown in this film was authentic to the original incident (Wijanarko, 2021). This was proven by the statement of a veteran who admitted that when they had just arrived in the Netherlands after serving in Indonesia, people in the Netherlands made various insults and insults, including throwing various kinds of beer bottles at them and being presented with various kinds of insulting writing such as: "Nazi" and "Killer" (Harrett, 2021a). This means that the crimes and atrocities of war were inherent in the soldiers who had just set foot in the Netherlands after returning from the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). They (the critics) only hope to see what they want. This means they don't want to admit anything else that is considered to show a negative



Figure 1. Raymond Paul Westerling in 1948 (source: beeldbank.nimh.nl)



Figure 2. Westerling's Character in *The East*
Note. Screen capture from *De Oost* [The East] (Taihuttu, 2021).

image of Westerling. That's more or less Jim's criticism back to his critics (*Putri Kapten Westerling*, 2021).

Sander Verdonk sees that the polemic that occurs in this film actually gives a positive aura, where this will create a renewed discussion between Indonesia and the Netherlands regarding past conflict events, so that no one opinion is considered the most correct (Amelia, 2021). In the memory principle, there could be a 'short-term memory' situation that occurs in each person's mind. According to Seamon, this occurs because there is a memory system that is responsible for short-term storage, namely working memory, which is temporary in nature, so it is very vulnerable to forgetting and frustration (Seamon, 2015).

One of the sources of literary research in this film is *In Holland, Nobody Believes Me* (*Thuis geloof niemand mij* [Zuid-Celebes 1946-1947]). This

book is the result of research by Maarten Hidskes, a son of a Westerling special forces soldier named Piet Hidskes (*Maarten Hidskes Ungkap*, 2018). Maarten Hidskes felt that what he conveyed in the book was quite valid because during his research in Indonesia, he had spoken with many live witnesses and veterans of the Sulawesi war, obtained various sources of information from 11 universities, including interviews with thousands of students and dozens of lecturers (Hidskes, 2018). Apart from that, Dutch political journals and intelligence archives are also part of the literature (*Maarten Hidskes Ungkap*, 2018).

Specifically, what Hidskes wants to explore is finding out about his father's role in the Westerling special forces team. The results of this research are what he wrote in the book (Riansyah, 2018). According to Hidskes, his father turned out to be one of 20-30 Dutch people (a total of 123 people, of which the rest were local Dutch East Indies soldiers called KNIL) who made up Westerling's initial troops (*Maarten Hidskes Ungkap*, 2018). In his notes, the father initially thought that their departure to the Dutch East Indies was to free the Dutch Indies people from the Japanese. However, what happened was that they were ordered to kill the people of Sulawesi (Riansyah, 2018).

Contested Memories, Colonial Violence, and Historical Responsibility

A story can actually change the way we think about one thing, by allowing us to glimpse life through a character's point of view (Seamon, 2015). Palmyra Westerling's account reflects family memories, not a comprehensive historical understanding of her father's military activities. Her close relationship with Westerling gave her special access to her father's personal identity, but this did not always provide direct insight into his actions in South Sulawesi. Therefore, her portrayal of Westerling as a caring and respectful figure should not be viewed as inaccurate, but rather understood as a memory shaped within the private sphere. Conflict arises when these domestic memories are used to challenge cinematic and historical representations that focus primarily on Westerling's public role as a military commander.

Personal and military representations are not always at odds with one another. A person may be remembered as a loving figure within their family, yet at the same time be historically responsible for acts of violence in other social and institutional contexts. Therefore, the analytical question is not which representation reveals Westerling's "true" self, but

rather how each representation selects a different sphere of his life and uses it to make a claim about his overall historical identity.

Of course, Hidskes also experienced the same thing through his biological path, when he discovered facts through a number of primary and secondary data he collected about his father, who had joined the Westerling troops. Historically, Hidskes is more accepting that his father was inevitably "trapped" in military behavior, so that the act of killing was something that happened and had to be accepted as a reality. So, the facts formulated by Hidskes regarding his father are representative of the entire Westerling army, and of course Westerling himself. Hidskes's perspective differs from Palmyra's not only because both have biological ties to historical figures. Palmyra remembers Westerling directly as her father, whereas Hidskes reconstructs her father's involvement in Westerling's unit through research, testimonies, and archival evidence. Therefore, his story is best understood as an intergenerational reconstruction of a military past, rather than as a direct family memory of Westerling. This comparison shows that family relationships do not give rise to just one form of memory. Family closeness can lead to efforts to protect a relative's identity, or, conversely, to a critical examination of inherited responsibilities.

The narrative of the Indonesian nation's political interests in the form of nationalist sentiment was the next thing put forward by Palmyra regarding the emergence of this film (although no data could be found regarding accusations that Indonesians were behind this film with a number of political motives). The responses from Dutch veterans' organizations indicate an effort to protect their collective military identity from portrayals they consider demeaning. Nevertheless, the available evidence does not automatically prove the existence of a coordinated political motive. Their objections can be interpreted more cautiously as a form of defensive collective memory, shaped by concerns regarding reputation, recognition, and historical responsibility.

In other words, there will be an assumption that historical actors must hide something regarding the actual facts for the sake of their national interests. Moreover, in some data it was found that Westerling was rescued from escaping from Indonesia by a number of parties within the formal structure, including that a war trial was never held against Werterling.

Westerling's visual portrayal in the film has also been the subject of debated interpretations.

Through his dark military uniform, thin mustache, controlled mannerisms, and dominant positioning within the frame, the film depicts him as a disciplined, charismatic, and menacing figure. Palmyra and other critics interpret some of these visual elements as associating Westerling with Nazi imagery. However, since there is no direct evidence suggesting that the filmmakers intentionally modeled the character on Hitler, these similarities should be regarded as a debated audience interpretation rather than a definitive intention on the part of the production.

More importantly, this portrayal does not rely solely on physical resemblance. Westerling's authority is constructed narratively through Johan's initial admiration and his subsequent moral rejection. Johan serves as an ethical entry point for the audience: his gradual shift in perception transforms Westerling from a heroic commander into a figure associated with extrajudicial colonial violence.

In the view of historian, Bonnie Triyana - head of Historia magazine, considers the presence of this film to be a progressive act by reopening past history with a number of more contemporary facts. Moreover, this film was made by a Dutch filmmaker. This means that they consciously want to correct themselves for the possibility of their country's negative behavior in the past in Indonesia (*The East: Film yang Membuka*, 2021). The same thing was acknowledged by Kees Ribbens, Professor at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC). Ribbens saw that Dutch people often ignored the history of the war after Indonesian independence. Because for Dutch people, the war was quite controversial and too sensitive to be discussed in Dutch historical literature. Therefore, many people "shut their mouths" about this period (Sukmana, 2021). According to Ariel Heryanto, this film could perhaps be called the first Dutch film to voice the Dutch national "taboo", about the human tragedy in the war after Indonesia proclaimed its independence (Iswara, 2021a).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the controversy surrounding Westerling in the film *The East* is not merely a clash between historical facts and cinematic fiction. It is a conflict among various perspectives on how history is remembered. Palmyra Westerling portrays her father through family memories, emphasizing his personal identity and family life. Meanwhile, Dutch veterans' organizations respond through collective memory and concerns about the public reputation of Dutch soldiers. The Indonesian historical narra-

tive remembers Westerling primarily through military violence in South Sulawesi, while the filmmakers transform historical documentation, veterans' testimonies, and dramatic conventions into a cinematic figure who is both charismatic and brutal.

These constructions differ because they are based on different relationships with the past. Family memory provides intimate knowledge but remains limited to the realm of specific experiences. Veterans' memory is shaped by collective identity and the need for social recognition. Historical research evaluates Westerling through documentary evidence and the consequences of military operations, whereas cinematic memory condenses these materials into a morally structured narrative presented through Johan's shifting perceptions.

Therefore, this film does not merely reproduce an established historical narrative. It reintroduces Dutch colonial violence into public discourse and challenges forms of memory that separate personal agency from public responsibility. At the same time, its dramatization demonstrates that cinema cannot be treated as neutral historical evidence. Its significance lies in its ability to make conflicting memories visible and to uncover unresolved questions regarding shared colonial responsibility within Dutch and Indonesian memory cultures.

The main contribution of this study is the finding that no single representation of Westerling operates independently. Family, veteran, national, historical, and cinematic memories interact with one another by confirming, rejecting, or correcting each other. Therefore, the controversy surrounding *The East* must be understood as a struggle over who holds the authority to define Westerling's historical identity and how colonial violence should be remembered today.

REFERENCES

- Ajinugroho, S. (2018, July 3). *Kisah operasi intelijen TNI buru Kapten Westerling si pelanggar HAM berat pembantai rakyat Indonesia*. Grid.ID. <https://www.grid.id/read/04892237/kisah-operasi-intelijen-tni-buru-kapten-westerling-si-pelanggar-ham-berat-pembantai-rakyat-indonesia?page=all>
- Amelia, D. E. (2021, August 7). *The East: Film yang membuka perspektif baru sejarah Indonesia-Belanda*. VIVA. <https://www.viva.co.id/showbiz/film/1393725-the-east-film-yang-membuka-perspektif-baru-sejarah-indonesia-belanda>
- Andarningtyas, N. (2017, August 1). *Jay Subyakto klarifikasi soal film "Banda"*. Antara News. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/644019/jay-subyakto-klarifikasi-soal-film-banda>
- Arfianty, D. (2020, May 9). *De Oost (The East) sebuah film sejarah kerja sama Belanda-Indonesia, bercerita tentang kekejaman Westerling*. Kanal Kalimantan. <https://www.kanalkalimantan.com/de-oost-the-east-sebuah-film-sejarah-kerja-sama-belanda-indonesia-bercerita-tentang-kekejaman-westerling/>
- Arif, M. (2019). Menelusuri potensi obyek wisata sejarah Kota Makassar. *Jurnal Rihlah*, 7(1), 43–52.
- Asril, S. (2014, January 21). *Rachmawati: Film "Soekarno" telah membunuh karakter Bung Karno*. Kompas.com. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2014/01/21/0808428/Rachmawati.Film.Soekarno.Telah.Membunuh.Karakter.Bung.Karno>
- Bramantyo, H. (Director). (2013). *Soekarno* [Film]. MVP Pictures.
- Cahyani, E. S. A. (2018). Ekspedisi lintas laut Jawa-Sulawesi oleh ALRI Divisi VI Pasukan Seberang tahun 1946–1947. *Jurnal Prodi Ilmu Sejarah*, 3(6), 747–760.
- The East: Film yang membuka perspektif baru sejarah Indonesia-Belanda*. (2021, August 8). Republika. <https://ameera.republika.co.id/berita/qxihbr224000/the-east-film-yang-membuka-perspektif-baru-sejarah-indonesia-belanda>
- Edward, J. (2014, July 2). *Multivision Plus Pictures menang atas kasus film Soekarno*. Liputan6.com. <https://www.liputan6.com/showbiz/read/2071870/multivision-plus-pictures-menang-atas-kasus-film-soekarno>
- Endra, Y. (2021, August 11). *Sinopsis The East, film tentang pembantaian Westerling di Indonesia*. Matamata.com. <https://www.matamata.com/life/2021/08/11/220000/sinopsis-the-east-film-tentang-pembantaian-westerling-di-indonesia>
- Febrian, A. (2021, August 17). *The East, kisah Westerling dari sutradara Belanda, berakhir di panggung opera*. Kontan.co.id. <https://lifestyle.kontan.co.id/news/the-east-kisah-westerling-dari-sutradara-belanda-berakhir-di-panggung-opera?page=all>
- Film The East: Kisah tentara Belanda yang galau saat jajah Indonesia*. (2021, August 7). Kumparan. <https://kumparan.com/kumparanhits/film-the-east-kisah-tentara-belanda-yang-galau-saat-jajah-indonesia-1wH1C6wF8cf/full>
- Harrett, M. (2021a, June 12). *Sutradara Jim Taihutu di De Oost: 'Tentu saja Anda tidak akan membayangkan sesuatu bersama'*. Bali Citizen. <https://balicitizen.com/sutradara-jim-taihutu-di-de-oost-tentu-saja-anda-tidak-akan-membayangkan-sesuatu-bersama/>
- Harrett, M. (2021b, October 28). *Surat terbuka dari putri Kapten Westerling tentang De Oost*. Bali Citizen. <https://balicitizen.com/surat-terbuka-dari-putri-kapten-westerling-tentang-de-oost/>
- Herman. (2014, March 11). *Gugatan Rachmawati terhadap film "Soekarno" dikabulkan*. Berita Satu. <https://www.beritasatu.com/hiburan/170740/gugatan-rachmawati-terhadap-film-soekarno-dikabulkan>

- Hidskes, M. (2018, October 31). *The meaning of history is to be found in exchanges*. Ind45-50. <https://www.ind45-50.org/en/node/118>
- Hughes-Warrington, M. (2007). *History goes to the movies: Studying history on film*. Routledge.
- Iswara, A. J. (2021a, May 24). *Kontroversi De Oost, film Belanda yang berani mengorek kejahatan Westerling*. Kompas.com. <https://www.kompas.com/global/read/2021/05/24/151900870/kontroversi-de-oost-film-belanda-yang-berani-mengorek-kejahatan?page=all>
- Iswara, A. J. (2021b, August 6). *Film De Oost, simbol keberanian anak muda Belanda yang picu kontroversi*. Kompas.com. <https://www.kompas.com/global/read/2021/08/06/213625870/film-de-oost-simbol-keberanian-anak-muda-belanda-yang-picu-kontroversi?page=all>
- Kapten Westerling membantai di Sulawesi Selatan saat berusia 27 tahun, begini kesaksian para mantan pasukannya. (2022, July 11). tvOnenews.com. <https://www.tvonenews.com/berita/nasional/52848-kapten-westerling-membantai-di-sulawesi-selatan-saat-berusia-27-tahun-begini-kesaksian-para-mantan-pasukannya?page=all>
- Keightley, E., & Pickering, M. (Eds.). (2013). *Research methods for memory studies*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Keil, J. A. (2021). The hypocrisy of Dutch actions in Indonesia. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 15(2), 8–23. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ARJASS/2021/v15i230253>
- Kuntowijoyo. (2018). *Pengantar ilmu sejarah*. Tiara Wacana. (Original work published 1995)
- Kurniawan, A. (2021, August 7). *Sambut Hari Kemerdekaan, film The East yang menceritakan kejahatan Westerling layak ditonton*. Kompas.com. <https://www.kompas.com/hype/read/2021/08/07/130100366/-sambut-hari-kemerdekaan-film-the-east-yang-menceritakan-kejahatan>
- Maarteen Hidskes ungkap peran ayahnya dalam peristiwa Westerling di Sulawesi Selatan 1946–1947. (2018, September 27). Departemen Sejarah Universitas Diponegoro. <https://sejarah.undip.ac.id/2018/09/27/maarteen-hidskes-ungkap-peran-ayahnya-dalam-peristiwa-westerling-di-sulawesi-selatan-1946-1947/>
- Maharani, A. E. A., Hernawati, & Janisriwati, S. (2021). Script skenario film yang dibuat tidak sesuai dengan naskah. *Calyptra*, 9(2), 1–10.
- Matanasi, P. (2021, May 18). *Film De Oost dan bagaimana Palmyra Westerling membela ayahnya*. Tirto.id. <https://tirto.id/film-de-oost-dan-bagaimana-palmyra-westerling-membela-ayahnya-gf3n>
- McGregor, K. E. (2014). From national sacrifice to compensation claims: Changing Indonesian representations of the Westerling massacres in South Sulawesi, 1946–1947. In B. Luttikhuis & A. D. Moses (Eds.), *Colonial counterinsurgency and mass violence: The Dutch empire in Indonesia* (pp. 282–307). Routledge.
- Misno, I. M. G. R. (2020). Building national and state awareness in Indonesia: A reflection. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research*, 4(9), 319–323.
- Moller, S. (2018). Experiencing history in film: An empirical study of the link between film perception and historical consciousness. *Research in Film and History*, (1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/14783>
- Mutawally, A. F. (2021). *State of East Indonesia (1946–1950) from Netherlands puppet state and return to Indonesia* [Preprint]. SocArXiv. <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/ag9e2/>
- Oostindie, E. A. G. (2012, June 19). *Onderzoek geweld Nederland in 'Indië'*. de Volkskrant. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/onderzoek-geweld-nederland-in-indie>
- Osc. (2021, August 7). *Mola sajikan The East, kisah pergolakan batin tentara Belanda*. CNN Indonesia. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/hiburan/20210807130834-225-677671/mola-sajikan-the-east-kisah-pergolakan-batin-tentara-belanda>
- Pamungkas, M. F. (2020, March 31). *Enam hal penting tentang Westerling*. Historia. <https://historia.id/militer/articles/enam-hal-penting-tentang-westerling-Db2A9/page/3>
- Putri Kapten Westerling serukan boikot film De Oost. (2021, May 16). Rekayorek. <https://rekayorek.id/putri-kapten-westerling-serukan-boikot-film-de-oost/>
- Ratnasari, Y. (2017, August 1). *Tanggapan atas protes penolakan film dokumenter "Banda"*. Tirto.id. <https://tirto.id/tanggapan-atas-protes-penolakan-film-dokumenter-banda-ctKP>
- Reinhart, C. (2021, June 30). *The knowledge gap filled by 'De Oost' film*. VOI. <https://voi.id/en/memori/63178/the-knowledge-gap-filled-by-de-oost-film>
- Riansyah, W. (2018, October 4). *Marteen Hidskes ungkap sejarah korban 40.000 jiwa di Makassar*. Profesi UNM. <https://profesi-unm.com/2018/10/04/marteen-hidskes-ungkap-sejarah-korban-40-000-jiwa-di-makassar/>
- Rosenstone, R. A. (2018). *History on film/film on history* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Seamon, J. (2015). *Memory and movies: What films can teach us about memory*. The MIT Press.
- Setyawan, A. E. (n.d.). *Tragedi Bandara Cililitan, sosok Westerling dimata seorang prajurit Suriname*. KaryaKarsa. <https://karyakarsa.com/adysetyawan/tragedi-bandara-cililitan-sosok-westerling-dimata-seorang-prajurit-suriname>
- Subiakto, J. (Director). (2017). *Banda, the dark forgotten trail* [Film]. Lifelike Pictures.
- Sugiantoro, H. (2021, May 20). *Lolos dari maut Westerling*. Matapadi. <https://www.matapadi.co/2021/05/20/lolos-dari-maut-westerling/>

- Sukmana, F. (2021, June 1). *Uproar about De Oost: 'Westerling is a war criminal, that is my truth'*. Erasmus Magazine. <https://www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2021/06/01/uproar-about-de-oost-westerling-is-a-war-criminal-that-is-my-truth/>
- Taihuttu, J. (Director). (2021). *De Oost* [The East] [Film]. New Amsterdam Film Company; Salto Films; BASE Entertainment.
- Tak terima sejarah Banda dilecehkan, puluhan warga demo sutradara film Jay Subiyakto. (2017, August 1). Cakrawala. <https://www.cakrawala.co/peristiwa/pr-7755087027/tak-terima-sejarah-banda-dilecehkan-puluhan-warga-demo-sutradara-film-jay-subiyakto>
- Triyana, B., Isnaeni, H. F., & Mukhti, M. F. (2012a). Atas nama ketertiban. *Historia*, (7), 42–44.
- Triyana, B., Isnaeni, H. F., & Mukhti, M. F. (2012b). Dan Westerling pun tersenyum. *Historia*, (7), 35.
- Triyana, B., Isnaeni, H. F., & Mukhti, M. F. (2012c). Drama sebabak lelaki Stambul. *Historia*, (7), 36–38.
- Triyana, B., Isnaeni, H. F., & Mukhti, M. F. (2012d). Kongs dagang meneer komandan. *Historia*, (7), 49–50.
- Triyana, B., Isnaeni, H. F., & Mukhti, M. F. (2012e). Teror subuh di timur matahari. *Historia*, (7), 45–48.
- van der Veer, A. (2019). Conciliation or confrontation: Chinese responses to anti-Chinese violence in North Sumatra during the Indonesian revolution, 1945–1949. *Seminar Series in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1–12.
- Wahyu. (2011). Peranan aparat hukum dalam penanggulangan terorisme di Indonesia. *Jurnal Wawasan Hukum*, 25(2), 411–427.
- Warga protes film dokumenter Banda The Dark Forgotten Trail. (2017, July 31). Liputan6.com. <https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/3041772/warga-protes-film-dokumenter-banda-the-dark-forgotten-trail>
- Wijanarko, Y. (2021, August 11). 5 fakta film The East atau De Oost, babak sejarah bangsa soal aksi Westerling yang dinilai lebih jujur. *Pikiran Rakyat*. <https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/entertainment/pr-012377596/5-fakta-film-the-east-atau-de-oost-babak-sejarah-bangsa-soal-aksi-westerling-yang-dinilai-lebih-jujur>
- Wijaya, C. (2021, June 6). *De Oost: Film tentang aksi pembantaian Westerling di Indonesia disebut 'simbol keberanian anak muda Belanda' tapi picu kontroversi*. BBC News Indonesia. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah-57269647>
- Wildan, M. (2021, August 8). (Review) *The East* (2020). Kincir. <https://www.kincir.com/movie/cinema/review-film-the-east-belanda-QbMFdNiJQ7ih>
- Yusuf, R. Z., Melay, R., & Bunari, B. (2017). Pembantaian Raymond Pierre Paul Westerling di Sulawesi Selatan sebagai upaya Belanda mendirikan Negara Indonesia Timur (1946–1947). *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Riau*, 4(1), 1–10.
- Zweers, L. (2014). Sukarno's art collection. *The Newsletter*, (67), 6–7. <https://www.iiias.asia/the-newsletter/article/sukarnos-art-collection>