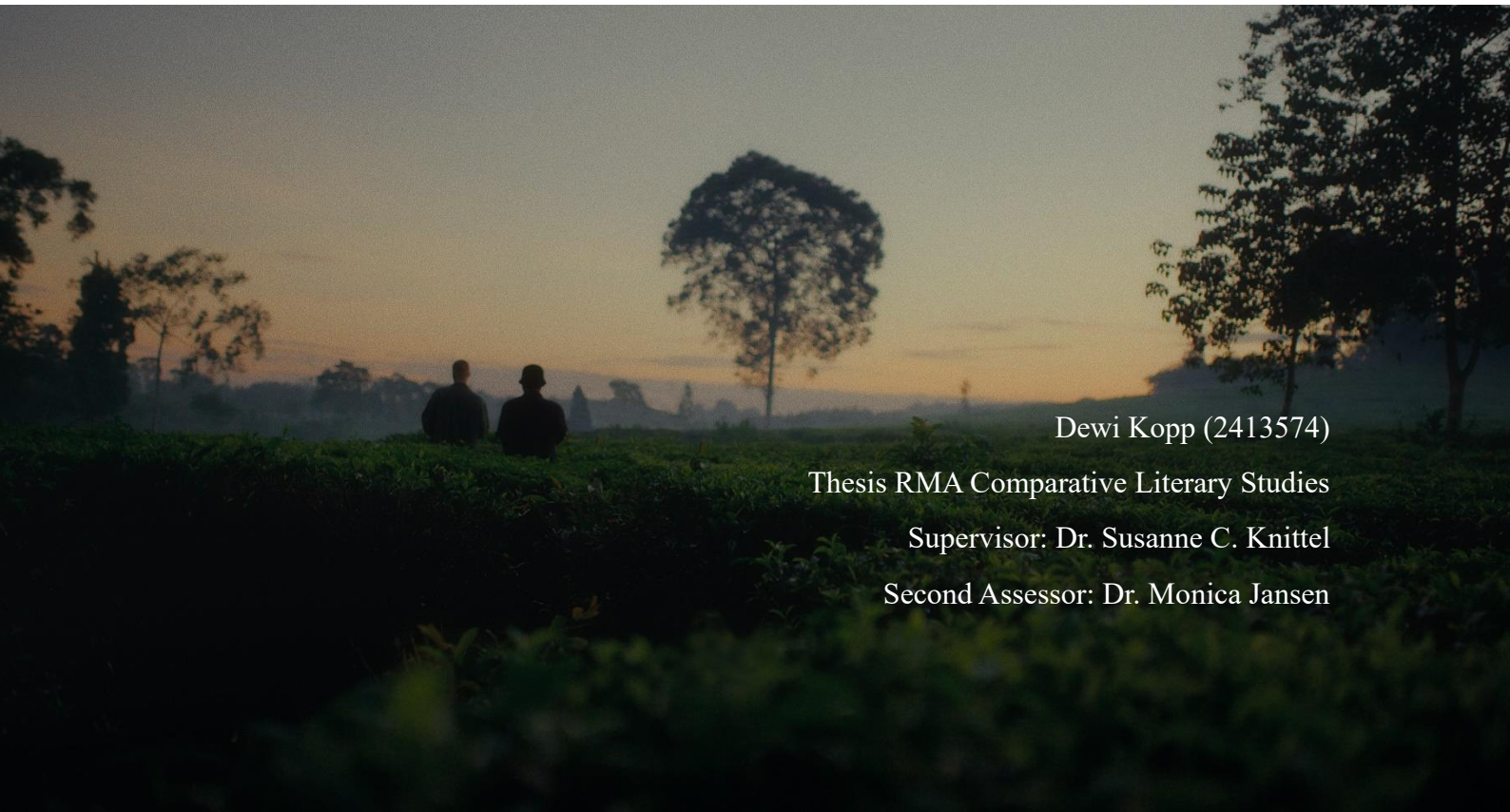
Vertolking van De Oost: Intergenerational Memories of Dutch Perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence in *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost*.



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The pictures on the cover are stills from *De Oost* (above) and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* (below).

Summary

This thesis examines the representation of intergenerational memories of Dutch perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence in *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost*. Through comparative analysis, this study explores how these cultural artefacts reimagine the past and confront the complexities of colonial perpetration, subsequent trauma and its inheritance while taking inspiration from familial memories of the war. Chapter 1 investigates the representation of perpetration and its inheritance and draws on literary research on *Väterliteratur* to examine how the creators reflect on their ancestors' experience in the war and how they construct their own connection to the violence. Chapter 2 delves into the (post)colonial dimension of memory, exploring how colonial practices affected the memories of different ethnic groups, *Indische*, Moluccan and Dutch, within the case studies, alongside their resonance wit the broader Dutch national cultural memory of the conflict. This thesis finds that, facilitated by the incorporation of archival materials, the novel, feature film and documentary explore perpetrator trauma and intergenerational consequences through tropes of burden and guilt while presenting different generational and ethnic perspectives. They demonstrate that colonial practices such as discrimination and segregation heavily influence the remembrance of perpetration by minorities who constantly resist this oppression and who, as soldiers on the Dutch side, experience forms of colonial violence, while simultaneously perpetrating violence. Consequently, this thesis finds that these case studies to different extents complement the current Dutch cultural memory of the war by building on inter- and transgenerational memory. This research thus illuminates how these cultural representations articulate postmemory narratives of Dutch colonial perpetration, contributing to the understanding of the remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence within Dutch cultural discourse and its engagement with its complex historical legacies through inter- and transgenerational memory transmission. This analysis into the (post)colonial dimension of these

narratives additionally attributes to the field of perpetrator studies, specifically the investigations of intergenerational memory of perpetrator pain, as it examines a colonial context. By exploring how colonial oppression intertwines with the remembrance of war and its inheritance, this thesis emphasises how colonialism has an enduring impact on perpetrators and their descendants, thus giving insights into how the workings between memory, trauma and historical accountability complicate within a (post)colonial context.

Keywords: Cultural Memory, Perpetrator Studies, (Post)Colonialism, Indonesian War of Independence

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Preface

Vertolking van de Oost. I named my thesis after a combination of the titles of the novel and films I discuss in this thesis, *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost*. I decided to keep this title in Dutch because there is something untranslatable about the words and the colonial history they refer to. *Vertolking* means translation but more accurately interpretation. In the Netherlands, *de Oost* does not simply signify a compass point; it also stands for the former Dutch East Indies, a place that ceased to exist when the former colony proclaimed its independence as Indonesia in 1945. Certainly, *de Oost* is an orientalist construction that refers back to when the Asian archipelago fell under Dutch colonial rule up until the Japanese occupation during World War II. After the Japanese capitulation, the Netherlands were set on reoccupation of its biggest and most profitable colony and sent armed forces to *de Oost*, where they violently endeavoured to recapture land from the Indonesians. Until 1949, the newly founded republic was the battleground of the Indonesian War of Independence. This thesis focuses on this particular period of the Indonesian War of Independence and investigates how *De Tolk*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen* are contemporary cultural interpretations, *vertolkingen,* of this period in time.

The origin stories of these works attracted me to them. All the makers have a personal connection to the war, since their (grand)fathers fought in it, or to the former Dutch East Indies, since their families hail from there. Their background is similar to mine. As a Dutch-Indonesian girl, with a father born in Indonesia and grandparents born in the former Dutch East Indies, I grew up surrounded by stories set in a warmer climate but tainted by war and colonialism. My grandparents left Indonesia in 1962, seven years after the new republic proclaimed its

independence. My grandparents, who were *Indisch*[1], thus of mixed Indonesian and European descent, had been *buitenkampers* during the Japanese occupation. This means that they were considered Indonesian enough according to the Japanese quota to avoid the infamous so-called *jappenkampen*, internment camps for the Dutch, during the Japanese occupation. They had, however, lived in camps after World War II, when Indonesian aggression against Westerners made it safer for Eurasians to live in camps. These were generally guarded by Japanese and British soldiers but Indonesians themselves guarded the camp of my grandparents. While my grandparents lived outside the internment camps, multiple male relatives had been sent to the Birma railroad as prisoners of war. One of them was sent to Japan to work in coal mines and after the Japanese capitulation, he joined the Dutch Red Elephant brigade that would be responsible for multiple massacres on Bali.[2] Another one escaped from the Birma railroad and learnt Thai. When he returned to Indonesia, he became an interpreter and was then part of another military brigade.

My family's history during the War of Independence is diverse but also not unique. Between 1946 and 1968, 400.000 people, Dutch and *Indisch*, moved from Indonesia to the Netherlands (Beets et al. 58). Nowadays, two million people with roots in the former Dutch East Indies live in the Netherlands (Commissie 3). Many of them, like me, have grown up with stories about the former colony and the war for its independence. One of my friends once showed me a picture of her grandfather as a boy in a garden full of palm trees. He had grown up in the former Dutch East Indies but moved to the Netherlands at a young age. Another friend had a grandfather who had held an administrative function for the Dutch army and the father of my aunt had been a soldier during the Indonesian War of Independence. The amount of stories

[1] The term *Indisch* has changed with time. Whereas it was used to signify all people from the Dutch-Indies, white and mixed, nowadays it is mostly used for those of mixed Dutch-Indonesian descent (Captain). I will follow the latter definition of *Indisch* and its synonym *Indo*.

[2] See Anne-Lot Hoek's *De Strijd om Bali* for more on the Indonesian War of Independence on Bali.

about *de Oost* is infinite. As a granddaughter of *Indische* people who experienced the Indonesian War of Independence, I know from lived experience how the colonial past influences the present. Hence, I feel an urgency to investigate and share these stories. Through this thesis, I luckily can explore a few of them, even though they are tainted by the violence of war and the oppression of colonialism. I hope that in turbulent times like today, stories of past perpetration can guide us – persons and nations – not to repeat previous mistakes.

I want to thank my supervisor, Susanne Knittel, for her guidance and support. Your extensive knowledge of perpetrators and your precise, helpful feedback guided my thesis in the right direction. I also want to thank my friends and family, the invisible building blocks of this thesis. My parents for everything, for your love, your stories and your trust in me. My sister, whose dedication on and off the field inspires me every day. Daphne, Nadia and Paula for the loveliest home. Koko for the study sessions and more importantly the breaks. Joosje for her tireless astral support, *amma fa e tarantell*?

Dewi Kopp

Amsterdam, 2024

Introduction

The Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949) and especially Dutch violence during the war have received a lot of attention in the Dutch public arena in recent years. On a state visit in 2020, King Willem-Alexander officially apologised for Dutch post-WWII violence and in 2022, the National Remembrance Day committee included victims of colonial warfare in their memorandum. In 2022, the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH) and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies published an academic report on the excessive violence perpetrated by the Dutch during the War of Independence. They concluded: "The Dutch government and military leadership deliberately condoned the systematic and widespread use of extreme violence by the Dutch armed forces in the war against the Republic of Indonesia" ("Independence").

This focus on the Dutch perpetration of violence during the Indonesian War of Independence is relatively new. Traditionally, this war has been remembered in the Netherlands as a straightforward conflict in which the Dutch sent their army to restore order, help develop their colony and free it from Japanese influences (KITLV et al. 12). However, the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger, KNIL) perpetrated a lot of violence during an unequal fight, leading to almost twenty times more casualties on the Indonesian side than the Dutch one (Limpach, "Gemaaid Koren" 49). Only recently, the Netherlands have begun to acknowledge that they were instigators of this war and perpetrators of mass violence.

Cultural production on this topic has preceded the official acknowledgement. For instance, Alfred Birney's award-winning novel *De Tolk van Java* (*The Interpreter of Java*, 2016) recounts the lives of a Dutch-Indonesian-Chinese marine and his son, while Jim Taihuttu's controversial war movie *De Oost* (*The East*, 2020) portrays the moral battle of a

young Dutch soldier in 1946. Both portray narratives from the perspectives of Dutch perpetrators in the Indonesian War of Independence and both received a lot of public attention. *De Tolk van Java* won the biggest Dutch literary prize, the Libris Literatuur Prijs, in 2017 and became a bestseller. In contrast, *De Oost* retrieved its fame through controversy, as KNIL veterans reacted critically to the release of the movie trailer and disputed the historical accuracy of the movie (Beekman, "Strijdpunten"; Blokhuis; Hoetmer). The production of works on the war continues until this day. A very recent example is the 2023 documentary *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* (*Grandchildren of the East*) in which two friends investigate their grandfathers' past as KNIL soldiers. In any case, Dutch perpetration in the Indonesian War of Independence has been a prevalent topic within the Dutch public arena during the last ten years, due to official governmental recognition but also due to the recent publication of various cultural artefacts that have this historical period as their subject matter.

The difficult memory of the war and the role that cultural artefacts about this war play in the Dutch public arena can be explained through memory scholar Aleida Assmann's conceptions of political and cultural memory. In "Memory, Individual and Collective," Assmann proposes four formats of memory – individual, social, political and cultural – to more fully engage with memory's complexity beyond a dichotomy between the individual and collective. She defines 'political memory' as the long-term stabilisation of individual memories through commemoration practices, like memorials, education and more. This type of memory is thus "mediated" and functions in a "top-down" manner to address specific collectives, such as a nation (216, 215). She takes national memory as the prime example of political memory and explains that it is often constructed along "a heroic or martyrological narrative" (218). She notes that because of this, national memory mostly excludes "moments of shame and guilt" and specifically, "examples of perpetrator's memory were, until recently, practically nonexistent" (218, 219). Assmann finds an example of how perpetrator memory is coming to the fore in the

remembrance of the Holocaust: “the long-term effects of traumatic historical events are beginning to be acknowledged by both victims and perpetrators and are addressed in the public social arena” (219). This acknowledgement thus occurs through the transgenerational workings of political memory through mediated commemorative practices.

Assmann also identifies cultural memory, which, like political memory, concerns mediated, crystallised memories that function beyond interpersonally communicated social memory. In contrast to the other memory formats, cultural memory is “triadic,” as it does not only encapsulate forgetting and remembering but also what is in between (220). This in-between is archival storage from which memories can be pulled at any moment. Consequently, cultural memory functions on a broader level than political memory, since it includes memory evoked by commemorative practices and dormant – or repressed – memories yet to be activated. She opposes archival memory with active memory and adds: “The active memory refers to what a society consciously selects and maintains as salient and vital items for common orientation and shared remembering” (220-221).

In “Cultural Memory and Cultural Identity,” memory scholar Jan Assmann also explains that identity formation within society depends on cultural memory as its “connective structure” (36). Additionally, he identifies that two types of transitions structure the workings of cultural memory (39). Firstly, cultural memory originates in the transforming mediation of communicative memory, which people directly share and “reaches not farther back than 80 years” as the witnesses of an event die (37). Assmann uses the concept of the “floating gap” by anthropologist Jan Vansina to mark the transition from communicative to cultural memory (38). Vansina defined the floating gap as the period between what was remembered through interpersonal communication and what was remembered through cultural institutionalisation. Secondly, Assmann recognises that cultural memory entails the movement of memories from

and to the background, corresponding to Aleida Assmann's theory on active and archival memory.

Both these cultural memory movements are at work in the Dutch remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence. First of all, approximately 80 years have passed since the war ended. Consequently, the memories of the event are about to enter the floating gap where they could potentially be forgotten or institutionalised. Secondly, the recent official practices and cultural objects mediating the memories of the war demonstrate that these memories are becoming cultural memory. The cultural artefacts on the war also represent the workings of the floating gap in their dependence on intergenerational transmission of memories. The creators of *De Tolk van Java, De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* all have a personal link to the history of the Indonesian War of Independence. *De Tolk* is a retelling of Birney's and his father's lives and *De Oost*'s director Taihuttu found inspiration in his grandfather's past as a Moluccan soldier in the Dutch colonial army ("De Film"). Similarly, director Daan van Citters and actor Joenoes Polnaija retrace the past and their grandfathers' involvement in Dutch perpetration in *Kleinkinderen van De Oost.* In the form of cultural artefacts like the novel or the film, these passed-down memories of the war can escape the expiry date of communicative memory and are eligible to become cultural memory.

The question arises of *how* the Indonesian War of Independence is remembered within the Netherlands. Looking at the recent developments, it is clear that memories of perpetration are being activated. Previously silenced uncomfortable memories are brought into the light in the cultural artefacts that revolve around post-war Indonesia. They mediate and activate memories of perpetration and consequently inform the Dutch public social arena. Their activation intervenes in the political national memory of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia, specifically of the remembrance of the War of Independence. Therefore, investigation of cultural artefacts and their transmission of stories about Dutch violence during the Indonesian

War of Independence can give insight into how the Netherlands and its citizens deal with a perpetrating past. My thesis tries to answer the question: How do *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* represent intergenerational memories of Dutch perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence? In Chapter 1, I consider the following sub-questions: How do subsequent generations represent the perpetration of their (grand)fathers? How do they illustrate the traumatic consequences of perpetration? And how do they construct their own connection to it? What literary and cinematic tools and tropes do they feature to explore the themes of perpetration, its subsequent trauma and its intergenerational transmission? In Chapter 2, I investigate the (post)colonial dimension of memory through the questions: How do colonial practices influence the (intergenerational) remembrance of the perpetration? How do the memories of perpetration differ per ethnic group? How do they align with the broader Dutch national narratives and historical understandings of the Indonesian War of Independence?

The relevance of this research is found in uncovering how literary and cinematic representations of intergenerational memory try to break the silence on the Dutch perpetration of extreme violence during the Indonesian War of Independence. This thesis makes visible how next-generation writers and directors draw from their own (family) histories in their depiction of Dutch perpetration and intergenerational trauma and how they utilise specific tools to shape their narratives. While literary research exists on postmemory and perpetration,[3] most notably on the Holocaust, no research combines these specific angles to comparatively analyse the representation of the Indonesian War of Independence, specifically in *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost*. Thus, this thesis takes a comparative, interdisciplinary and

[3] Most literary scholarship on inherited memories of perpetration investigates the Holocaust. For example, *Second-Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration* by Erin McGlothlin, *Phantoms of War in Contemporary German Literature, Films and Discourse: The Politics of Memory* by Anne Fuchs, "Holocaust Narratives: Second-Generation "Perpetrators" by Joanne Pettitt and *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma* by Gabriele Schwab.

intermedial approach in which literary analysis provides insights into the inter- and transgenerational remembrance of perpetration and trauma from the Indonesian War of Independence within Dutch cultural memory.

Historical Context

> Proclamation
>
> We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare the independence of Indonesia. Matters which concern the transfer of power and other things will be executed by careful means and in the shortest possible time.
>
> Djakarta, 17 august 1945
>
> In the name of the people of Indonesia
>
> Sukarno—Hatta[4]

Two days after the surrender of Japan, Indonesian nationalist Sukarno proclaimed independence with this concise message and thus became the first president of the Republic of Indonesia. Seeds for independence had started growing for a while but the Japanese occupation had increased the urgency for independence, as the Japanese had shown the Indonesians that Westerners were not invincible. The surrender of the Dutch to the Japanese on 8 March 1942 effectively ended 350 years of Dutch colonial presence (Reybrouck 188). Officially, the Netherlands had only been ruling what they called the Dutch East Indies since 1799. However, Dutch merchants set foot on Java as early as 1569 (Reybrouck 38) and from 1602 to 1799, the

[4] Translation found in "Sukarno's Proclamation of Indonesian Independence" by George McT. Kahin. He notes that this translation had been done by staff of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before he was given a copy of the *proklamasi* by Haji Agus Salim, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in October 1948.

Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindië Compagnie, VOC) colonised various areas of the Indonesian archipelago, taking over from the Portuguese (Reybrouck 40).

During World War II, the Dutch lost their colony to Japanese occupation. Once that war ended, the Dutch did not want to let go of their biggest and most profitable colony, instead, they sent armed forces to reoccupy it (Scagliola 238). In a colonial patronising manner, the Netherlands deemed Indonesia unfit for independence and decided that they would 'aid' the archipelago until it was ready. Consequently, the Netherlands ignored Sukarno's *proklamasi* and instigated a war, the Indonesian War of Independence, also known as the Decolonisation War, called *Revolusi Nasional* (National Revolution) in Indonesia.

After the surrender of the Japanese, the liberation of the Indonesian archipelago became the responsibility of the British, specifically Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (Lessmeister 64-65). Consequently, British and British-Indian troops had been present before the KNIL arrived in December 1945 (Swirc 80). In his dissertation, *De Brandende Kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (*The Burning Villages of General Spoor*, 2016), on the excessive violence during the war, historian Rémy Limpach separates the war into four periods. The presence of the British forces typified the first part and ended with their departure (54). The following second part led up to the first large-scale offence from the Dutch (54). This euphemistically called *politionele actie*[5] (police action), operation Product, was nevertheless expected by Indonesian opponents and countered with guerilla techniques. During the third phase of the war, the United Nations pressured the competing parties to a cease-fire with a demarcation line, the Renville agreement with the Van Mook or Status-Quo Line, in mid-August 1947 (56). After a while, the Indonesians took up their guerilla warfare again and the Dutch reacted with counterinsurgency sweeps, also known as cleansings.

[5] In Indonesia, the *politionele acties* are known as *Agresi Militer Belanda*.

At the end of 1948, the second *politionele actie*, operation Kraai, instigated the fourth phase of the war. The Dutch had become more apt at counter-guerilla warfare and booked successes. However, international diplomatic pressure, especially from the United Nations and the United States, led the Dutch government to stop their offence (57). Thereafter, the Dutch were unable to gain significant territory as they underestimated the Indonesians' long-term exhaustion strategies. On 7 May 1949, the Indonesians and Dutch signed the Van Rooijen-Roemovereenkomst in which they agreed on Indonesian independence in the shape of an Indonesian federation with the Dutch queen as monarch. Afterwards, the Dutch retreated and on 27 December 1949, the transfer of sovereignty took place officially ending the Indonesian War of Independence (58-59). On the 5th anniversary of Indonesian independence, 17 August 1950, Sukarno officially rejected the proposed idea of a Dutch-Indonesian union as he proclaimed Indonesia a unitary state.

During the Indonesian War of Independence, the Dutch army formed a united front against various Indonesian splinter groups, but its soldiers came from various backgrounds in the Netherlands and the former Dutch East Indies. The KNIL was founded in 1830 (Limpach 63). So, the first group of soldiers were those already active in the Dutch East Indies before the war, most of whom had been prisoners of war during the Japanese occupation (64). The KNIL also recruited local soldiers, especially Moluccans (75). At the end of 1945, the Dutch government also made it possible for Dutch men in the Netherlands to volunteer through the *Koninklijke Landmacht* (Royal Netherlands Army, KL) (80). This group became known as OVW'ers, after *oorlogsvrijwilliger* (war volunteer). From 1946 onwards, the government drafted 120.000 men, as volunteering quickly decreased in popularity (88). In addition to the KNIL and KL, various Dutch military intelligence services, such as the Marines, were actively engaged in the war (99-101).

The main Indonesian military opponent was the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), the Indonesian National Armed Forces, representing the Republican nationalist authorities (Limpach 119). Decentralisation and regional autonomy characterised the TNI but the army was initially ill-equipped and badly trained. The TNI also fought against other significant Indonesian groups, such as the Islamic Hizbullah and militias from the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Communist Party of Indonesia, PKI), but at times these groups joined forces to form a front against the colonizer (123). Next to the TNI, militias and nationalistic *pemuda* (youth) battle groups were significant players (122). These paramilitary groups mostly consisted of young men who had been proficient in Japanese martial arts and acted autonomously from each other. All these militias represented the different ideological groupings that were entangled in an internal struggle while fighting the Dutch.

Despite the ideological differences on the Indonesian side, the Dutch did not differentiate between them (136). The Netherlands described both politicians such as Sukarno, and pemudas as extremists of Japanese and/or fascist origin. Additionally, the Dutch image of the enemy was mostly based on the pemudas, who they saw as irresponsible anarchist gangs who violently terrorised the population (123).

This image of pemuda violence remained persistent in Dutch cultural memory. Dutch people might also know the first part of the Indonesian War of Independence as the *Bersiap* period, which generally refers to the period between August 1945 and the end of 1946. Bersiap means ‘get ready’ in Indonesian and was a call to arms for young Indonesians. In 2022, the Rijksmuseum decided not to use this term in their exhibition *Revolusi, Indonesië Onafhankelijk*. In an opinion piece in the NRC, Indonesian historian and guest curator Bonnie Triyana explains that this name is racist because it simplifies a crucially complex and violent period. Because of the connotation of ‘bersiap’ as a call to arms by young Indonesians, using the term for this

centres the Indonesian violence against the Dutch and thus highlights a racial divide while concealing the exploitative colonial system underlying it (Triyana).

Another contested term is the aforementioned *politionele acties*, police actions. Governmental press declarations named the Dutch military operations police actions, a term coined in the ministers' council (Jansen-Hendriks 72). This way, they avoided calling the Dutch interference a war. Already in 1947 with the launch of the first military offence, the term was criticised. The newspaper *Parool* included an editorial in which they rejected the term (Doolan, "Collective Memory" 34). However, *Parool* was a small newspaper and most others portrayed the war in support of the Dutch intervention. In *De Gecensureerde Oorlog: Militairen versus Media in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1949*, art and photography historian Louis Zweers concludes that the Dutch media mainly published pro-Dutch stories that highlighted social-cultural subjects and humanitarian activities (353). In addition to self-censure, professional intelligence services censured the news output (357). Nowadays, the term *politionele acties* is generally seen as euphemistic (Reybrouck 291).

The abundance of contested terms around the Indonesian War of Independence also prompted me to think of what terms I wanted to use. I have decided to use the term 'Indonesian War of Independence.' The Indonesian term, *Revolusi Nasional* or National Revolution, centres on the internal national struggle between different Indonesian ideological groups. This name feels discrepant to use in my thesis as I focus on the war between the Indonesians and the Dutch aggressor with a focus on the Dutch perpetration. I acknowledge that this focus does not attend to the Indonesian perspective. Firstly, language and scope limit my endeavour, and my personal heritage also makes me partial to investigating Dutch perpetration and its inheritance. Most importantly, I have chosen to home in on the role of the Dutch as it serves as a suitable example to explore colonial perpetration, a field still largely unexamined.

Cultural Memory of the former Dutch East Indies

The remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence is part of a larger cultural memory tradition about the formerly Dutch East Indies. In *Bitterzoet Indië: Herinneringen en Nostalgie in Literatuur, Foto's en Films*, cultural memory scholar Pamela Pattynama discusses how various cultural artefacts deal with the former Dutch East Indies and she finds that they have become a contested and multifaceted location of remembrance shaped by the projections of the identity and needs of certain groups (18). She concludes that eclecticism and recycling characterise the memories around the former Dutch East Indies, making them appeal to those with and without roots in the former colony (224). She identifies a certain nostalgia at work but states that it differs from the *tempo doeloe* past that was central to the cultural memory up until recently (10). *Tempo doeloe* means 'time of the past' in Indonesian and refers to the tendency to romanticise the colonial past and to long for life in the former Dutch East Indies (29).

Tempo doeloe refers to the time before the Second World War but there are also specific memories of the war period that have persisted within the Dutch cultural memory. After WWII, people in the Netherlands were very uninterested in the Japanese prison camps and the Indonesian War of Independence, as the Dutch collective memory focussed on the local German occupation (Doolan, "Collective Memory" 64). This changed gradually and especially the memories of Dutch captivity during World War II have gained traction over the 50 years since the events. In "Dutch Memories of Captivity in the Pacific War," historian Remco Raben finds that while the German occupation remains the most important memory, the war memories from the former Dutch East Indies take a significant place in Dutch memory culture, expressed through memorials, education and literature (94). He argues that these memories gained weight because they form a parallel narrative to the memories of the European wartime that is typified by Dutch innocence against foreign occupation (94). He also stresses that these memories became part of Dutch national memory because many Dutch citizens from the former Dutch

East Indies moved from the former colony to the Netherlands after the war and brought their memories with them (94-95).

For instance, the "Indië" episode from the informative kids series *13 in de Oorlog* (2009) is exemplary of the national transmission of the war memory that centres on Dutch suffering under the Japanese. The show engages with the experiences of kids during World War II to educate its young viewers. The inclusion of the "Indië" episode demonstrates that the war in the East had become a significant part of the national memory by 2009, as the *13 in de Oorlog* is part of the nationwide educational programme *schooltv* and screened on the national kids channel NPO Zapp with reruns every year. The "Indië" episode explains how the Japanese occupied the archipelago and features the story of a Dutch boy who has to enter a Japanese internment camp ("Indië"). Additionally, the episode highlights the fate of Dutch soldiers who became prisoners of war and had to build the Burma railroad. The episode focuses on the suffering of the Dutch, which reiterates Raben's notion that remembrance of this period depends on Dutch victimhood, as a parallel to the Dutch war experience in Europe.

Victimhood is also central to the remembrance of the early period of the War of Independence. As I explained before, the period used to be called *Bersiap* referring to the violence perpetrated by Indonesian *pemudas*. The recipients of this violence were mainly *buitenkampers*, (Indo-)Europeans that were living outside of the camps (Oostindie 77). In *Postcolonial Netherlands*, Gert Oostindie explains that "this period seems to play a far smaller part in the collective memory. This may be because it is more strongly associated with the difficult story of decolonization than it is with the clear-cut and morally unburdened story of the Second World War" (77). He also argues that *totoks,* white Dutch, dominate the post-war discourse. Since this early violent period did not affect the white Dutch as much – *buitenkampers* were generally mixed *Indos* – this period has received less attention than the

internment camps. Still, the memory of this early period focuses on the suffering on the Dutch side.

Eventually, the Dutch cultural memory related to the former Dutch East Indies moved away from the romanticisation of *tempo doeloe* and the victimhood associated with the internment camps during World War II and the early period of the War of Independence. Pattynama points to the pivotal role of the 1969 television interview with veteran J.E. Hueting, who exposed Dutch war crimes during the Indonesian War of Independence to a wider public (12). This interview marked a turning point in Dutch cultural memory, bringing the violence in the former Dutch East Indies to the fore. The revelation was particularly startling as it shifted the role of the Dutch from victims of the German and Japanese occupation in World War II to perpetrators in Indonesia. The KITLV, NIMH, and NIOD report also highlights this interview as crucial in drawing public attention to Dutch violence (13). The report explains that a transformation took place after Hueting's revelations, where the violence was initially perceived as incidental but later recognised, as the report concludes, as systematic.

Multiple scholars have specifically researched the cultural remembrance of Dutch colonial violence. For example, memory scholar Paul Bijl investigates the recurring memory work around colonial violence through photographs of the 1904 Aceh War in his book *Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance*. He introduces the concept of "emerging memory" to move away from the binary opposition between remembering and forgetting. Emerging memory describes a type of contested, often identified as forgotten, memory that emerges in the public arena and later disappears, only to be cyclically rediscovered (41). Bijl analyses how specific photographs of the Aceh War have disappeared and reappeared in the Dutch media and he finds that through reproduction and reframing they "have become battlegrounds on which different groups can mark their position both with respect to the Dutch colonial past and the Dutch postcolonial present" (223). These positions range

from supporters of the idea of the Dutch as educators of the colonised to critics of imperial exploitation and violence.

Other scholars, such as historian Paul Doolan and KITLV researcher Meindert van der Kaaij, research more specifically the cultural reception of the violence perpetrated between 1945 and 1949. In *Collective Memory and the Dutch East Indies: Unremembering Decolonization*, Doolan investigates how the decolonisation of the former Dutch East Indies has been represented in Dutch culture (13). He finds that "unremembering," which he defines as the disappearance from the public discourse of a specific memory which can be reactivated, characterises the cultural treatment of decolonisation (20). In *Een Kwaad Geweten: De Worsteling met de Indonesische Onafhankelijkheidsoorlog vanaf 1950*, Van der Kaaij also traces the public struggle with Dutch colonial perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence through the analysis of political concerns, judicial practices, historiography, journalism, witness testimonies, and cultural interpretations. He concludes that the Dutch remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence evolved from complete silence to recognition of perpetration in a discontinuous manner, marked by specific events that momentarily garnered attention for the war (12).

The analyses by Bijl, Doolan and Van der Kaaij identify a common trait in the memories of violence in the former Dutch East Indies: these uncomfortable memories tend to disappear from the Dutch cultural arena, until some event revives them, usually with controversy ensuing. Hueting's TV interview was the first event that brought the Dutch perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence into the limelight. Doolan identifies Loe de Jong's 1987 rewriting of his volume on the War of Independence as part of the historiographic *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* as another one of these reviving events (200), as well as the Boomsma and Poncke Princen affairs in the 1990s (233). In 1993, Poncke Princen, who had deserted the Dutch army to fight on the Indonesian side and had become an

Indonesian citizen, had been denied a visa for the Netherlands, after which controversy ensued about the war. The year after, veterans sued novelist Graa Boomsma for libel because he compared the Dutch troops in Indonesia with the German SS. Doolan additionally mentions the 1995 visit of Queen Beatrix to Indonesia, where she held a speech a few days after the 50th anniversary of Indonesian independence in which she referred to the colonial past without making excuses for it. Van der Kaaij finds this visit together with the Princen affair a turning point in thinking about Dutch responsibility and perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence (312). Van der Kaaij also includes as important events: the 2005 excuses by Foreign Affairs Minister Bernard Bot and the 2011 Rawagede juridical case that holds the Netherlands responsible and liable for compensation for the 1947 massacre in the Indonesian town of Rawagade (312-313).

I argue that another memory boom concerning the Indonesian War of Independence has been taking place during the last ten years. As the timeline below demonstrates, many works on the Indonesian War of Independence and adjacent subjects were published during these years. 2020 was the year of the 75th anniversary of Indonesian Independence. Not only the government and the king dwelt on this significant date, but writers, historians, film directors and other creatives did too, exemplified by the production of works surrounding and following 2020. Especially popular was the non-fiction book *Revolusi* by Belgian historian David van Reybrouck, which had spin-offs as a TV documentary and a podcast. Nevertheless, publications on the war preceded the anniversary date of Indonesian independence. Particularly notable is the *Tolk van Java*, which won the prestigious Libris prize. As Libris winners garner a lot of readers, the book thus introduced the extreme violence during the Indonesian War of Independence to a broad public. Additionally, 2016 was the year that *De Brandende Kampongs van Generaal Spoor* was published, which also received a lot of public attention and prompted the Rutte II cabinet to commission research by KITLV, NIMH and NIOD (Koenders et al.).

Because of these two influential publications, *De Tolk* and *Brandende Kampongs*, in 2016, I start my non-exhaustive timeline of cultural productions and significant events with this year.

Timeline of Dutch Cultural Productions and Events about the Indonesian War of Independence

14 Oct. 2016	Dissertation *De Brandende Kampongs van Generaal Spoor* by Rémy Limpach
4 Nov.	Novel *De Tolk van Java* by Alfred Birney
2 Dec.	Rutte II decides to finance a large-scale research project by the KITLV, NIMH and NIOD on Dutch violence during the Indonesian War of Independence in response to Limpach's *Brandende Kampongs*
8 May 2017	Libris price *De Tolk van Java*
2018	Republication comic book *Rampokan* (Java 1998, Celebes 2004) by Peter van Dongen
Mar. 2019	Republication non-fiction book *Ontsporing van geweld: Het Nederlands-Indonesisch Conflict* (1970) by J.J.A van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix
Nov.	Documentary series *Onze Jongens op Java* by Coen Verbraak
Nov.	Tv-documentary *Rawagede – Hoe Manage Je de Beeldvorming rondom een Massamoord* by Argos Medialogica
Nov.	Play *De Tolk van Java* by Hummelinck Stuurman Theaterbureau
26 Nov.	Non-fiction *Kapitein Raymond Westerling en de Zuid-Celebes-affaire (1946-1947): Mythe en Werkelijkheid* by Bauke Geersing
10 Mar. 2020	Excuses for excessive violence from the king
17 Aug.	75th anniversary of Indonesian Independence
2 Oct.	Governmental appeal by Federatie Indische Nederlanders (FIN) with objections to the historical inaccuracy of *De Oost* and its educational module in response to the film's trailer and questions on the partiality of the *Independence, Decolonization, Violence, and War in Indonesia, 1945-1950* research project
10 Nov.	Non-fiction *De Wraak van Diponegoro* by Martin Bossenbroek
26 Nov.	Non-fiction *Revolusi* by David van Reybrouck
4 Dec.	Commissiebrief by Paul Blokhuis in response to FIN appeal
Jan. 2021	Documentary series *Revolutie in Indonesië* with David van Reybrouck
4 May	Podcast *Revolusi* with David van Reybrouck

13 May	Film *De Oost* by Jim Taihuttu
14 May	Non-fiction *De Molukkers: Een Vergeten Geschiedenis* by Coen Verbraak
May	Documentary series *Molukkers in Nederland: 70 Jaar op Weg naar Huis* by Coen Verbraak
15 Aug.	Alfred Birney in tv-show *Zomergasten*
16 Aug.	First edition of the decolonial Indië commemoration organised by Benjamin Caton
8 Feb. 2022	Non-fiction *De Indische Doofpot* by Maurice Swirc
11 Feb. - 5 Jun.	Exhibition *Revolusi! Indonesië Onafhankelijk* in Rijksmuseum
13 Feb.	Podcast *Als Geschiedenis in Je Opstaat* by Marjolijn Heemstra and Iris van Santen
14 Feb.	Non-fiction *Merdeka* by Henk Schulte Nordholt and Harry Poeze
15 Feb.	Documentary series *Andere Tijden: De Indische Rekening* by Hans Goedkoop
17 Feb.	Research report *Independence, Decolonization, Violence, and War in Indonesia, 1945-1950* by KITLV, NIMH and NIOD
	Excuses for excessive violence from Prime Minister Mark Rutte
7 Mar.	Non-fiction *Zoeken, Aangrijpen en Vernietigen! Het Nederlandse Militaire Optreden in Indonesië, 1945-1949* by Christiaan Harinck
4 May	Inclusion of victims of the colonial war in Indonesia in the memorandum of Remembrance Day
	Play *De Oost Bevrijdt?* Carré by Theater na de Dam
2 Jun.	*Een Goudbruine Huid, Brieven uit 1941-1951 uit Indië* by Sacha Happee
Aug.	Play *Het Indisch Interieur* by Bo Tarenskeen
17 Aug.	Podcast *Oorlog in het Paradijs: De Strijd om Bali* by Arco Gnocchi and Anne-Lot Hoek
5 Oct.	Podcast *De Ranchi Baby's – een Koloniale Erfenis* by Joost Wilgenhof
25 Oct.	Non-fiction *Indië, Betovering en Desillusie: Een Persoonlijke Zoektocht naar een Verborgen Geschiedenis* by Thom Hoffman
7 Nov.	Non-fiction *De Strijd om Bali* by Anne-Lot Hoek
2 Feb. 2023	Documentary *Sporen van Indië* by Hans Goedkoop
8 Feb.	Governmental advisory rapport *Deel en Verbind: Nederland, Nederlands-Indië, Indonesië* by Commissie Versterking kennis geschiedenis voormalig Nederlands-Indië
6 Apr.	Documentary *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* by Daan van Citters

1 Sep.	Documentary series *Andere Tijden: Indonesië roept!* by Hans Goedkoop
21 Oct.– 1 Apr. 2024	Exhibition *De Grote Indonesië Tentoonstelling* in De Nieuwe Kerk
1 Nov.	10th Rudy Kousbroek lecture by Adriaan van Dis
11 Jan. 2024	Documentary *Indië Verloren… Selling a Colonial War* by In-Soo Radstake
17 Jan.	Essay publication of 10th Rudy Kousbroeklezing as *De Kolonie Mept Terug: Over Witte Arrogantie en Voortschrijdend Inzicht: Een Denkoefening en Leesreis* by Adriaan van Dis
27 May	Podcast *Radio Pedis* by Neal Petersen and Malou Holshuijsen

Theoretical framework

Within cultural memory studies, the interdisciplinary field of perpetrator studies provides a framework for investigating the representation of Dutch perpetration and violence. Perpetrator studies emerged from academic research on the Holocaust (Knittel & Goldberg 2), but more recently, the field has also started to engage with perpetration in different contexts. To obtain a better understanding of perpetration, it remains vital to study the figure of the perpetrator in its historical, socio-political, and cultural (memory) dimensions. In the editor's introduction of the *Journal of Perpetrator Research*, Critchell et al. state that perpetrator studies is also significantly concerned with cultural representation – "about how such representations are produced, disseminated, and received in the media and in popular culture" (21). Representations of the perpetrator thus tell us something about the cultural significance of the perpetrator as they relay how a particular group or society relates to such a figure.

In "Perpetrators and Perpetration in Literature," Stephanie Bird argues that fictional representations of perpetrators increase our understanding of perpetration, as they make us consider moral ambiguities, complicity in violence, and our response to the figure of the perpetrator (302). Similarly, in *The Mind of the Holocaust Perpetrator in Fiction and Nonfiction*, scholar of German and Jewish studies Erin McGlothlin demonstrates that fictional

and non-fictional narratives employ certain "filtering strategies" to confront the reader with the portrayed perpetrators of the Holocaust (14). These filtering techniques simultaneously encourage and obscure identification with the perpetrator to reveal the anxieties that underlie the representation and consumption of these narratives. She concludes that such investigation into the strategies of representation of the perpetrator's mind gives insight into our understanding of evil and violence and "*how* we understand it" (307).

A specific area of perpetrator studies that is useful for my research focuses on the relation between perpetration and trauma. The term trauma has traditionally been reserved to talk about victims' experiences. In "Perpetrator Trauma," Erin McGlothlin criticises this tendency and uses the psychological insights from research on combat veterans and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to examine trauma suffered by perpetrators of extreme violence. She argues that the cause of perpetrator trauma differs from PTSD while the consequential symptoms might be the same. The cause of "unprocessable and thus unintegratable" perpetrator trauma is the act of killing, a transgression that shocks the perpetrator into "a new dimension of human experience, one that not only violates powerful social and moral taboos but also must transcend cognitive and psychological barriers" (105). She concludes that trauma should be decoupled from moral questions, like guilt and responsibility, but that a better understanding of violence can only be reached by also considering the effects of perpetration on the perpetrators.

Literary scholar Joshua Pederson zooms in on the relation between trauma and morality in his book *Sin Sick: Moral Injury in War and Literature.* He argues that "the psychic pain associated with wrongdoing" remains underanalysed within trauma theory, apart from the observation that perpetration pains resemble but also differ from trauma (1). He intervenes by introducing the psychological term "moral injury." Moral injury is "the enduring psychic pain that may afflict someone who either commits or witnesses a significant moral transgression"

(8). Pederson also contends that moral injury affects literary style (2). Whereas absence characterises the literary representation of trauma, moral injury appears through excessiveness (22). Pederson also mentions that through its consideration of morality, moral injury builds on century-old questions of shame and guilt as "emotional response to wrongdoing" (14).

Questions of guilt and culpability become more complicated when considering the intergenerational transmission of perpetrator memory. In "Holocaust Narratives: Second-Generation "Perpetrators" and the Problem of Liminality," comparative literature scholar Joanne Pettitt investigates these questions in literary and cinematic narratives about Nazis, also known as *Väterliteratur* (father literature). Pettitt takes issue with some of the second-generation who identify themselves as victims of their perpetrator parents, as they consequently displace their parents' true Jewish victims (296). Regardless, she finds the investigation of *Väterliteratur* a worthwhile endeavour as it explores a specific aspect of the Holocaust's legacy that informs our understanding of the Holocaust today. Through Jacques Derrida's *hauntology* and Hirsch's postmemory, Pettitt suggests: "*Väterliteratur* … operates on a multi-temporal plane where the past is of equal—if not of greater—importance than the present in the overall structure of the narratives" (289). The literary evocation of artefacts and voices causes this temporal implosion and facilitates a "narratological haunting" through which the second generation explores their inherited guilt and trauma (293).

In *Second-Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration*, McGlothlin also explores *Väterliteratur*, even though she critically notes that the term runs the risk of reducing the generational conflicts around the Holocaust to the realm of the family (19). She finds that the experiences of descendants of survivors and perpetrators differ significantly but also that they similarly use their imagination to investigate and inscribe how the Holocaust has affected them (10). The children of perpetrators, McGlothlin argues, often engage with guilt through "the parents' own refusal to admit responsibility for their complicity" (24). They equate

this refusal to sin and figure themselves as bearers of this inherited sin, as scapegoats or as carriers of a hereditary mark of Cain (25-26). McGlothlin finds that "marking" functions as a trope in second-generation literature, as these writers: "access badges, stigmata, and brands that signify Holocaust memory in an attempt to find a language to express the writers' sense of rupture, as well as to build a bridge over the division between the parents' experience of trauma and violation and its effect on the children" (30). There is a crisis of signification and second-generation writers use marks to make sense of it. Additionally, McGlothlin reiterates Pettitt, as she identifies that these writers feel a separation between their experience and those of their parents and use their imaginative powers to bridge it.

While investigating how the second generation understands their parents' past, McGlothlin and Pettitt also express indebtedness to the concept of *postmemory*. Comparative literature scholar Marianne Hirsch coined the term postmemory to describe the functioning of intergenerational remembering. In "The Generation of Postmemory," she defines postmemory as "a *structure* of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience" (106). She explains that trauma reaches the next generation through "stories, images, and behaviors" that they encountered while growing up (106). Hirsch makes a difference between "familial" and "affiliative" postmemory to delineate who is indirectly affected by someone else's trauma (114). Familial postmemory is transmitted vertically from parent to child and affiliative postmemory is transferred horizontally between contemporaries who adopt a memory by choice. Consequently, "public" images are affiliatively adopted and intertwine with familial transmitted memories (114). On this process, she warns: "postmemory risks falling back on familiar, and unexamined, cultural images" (108). Hirsch argues that such established "cultural images" function to project links to traumatic pasts and protect those of the postgeneration by creating "screens that absorb the shock, filter and diffuse the impact of trauma, diminish harm" (124-125). Hirsch introduced postmemory to examine trauma

experienced and expressed by the children of victims of the Holocaust. Postmemory has since then been adapted to other historical contexts, and also to legacies of perpetration. Pettitt and McGlothlin have incorporated the concept to investigate how the children of Holocaust perpetrators engage with their parents' traumatic pasts of perpetration through literary tools, such as ghosts and marks.

In my thesis, I intend to examine how the inheritors of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence use similar tools to deal with their intergenerational memories. I draw on and adapt the work done on perpetration and postmemory in the context of the Holocaust to analyse the cultural representation of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. Within cultural memory studies, literary research on the inheritance of perpetrator memory within a postcolonial context is still in its early stages. Consequently, my thesis aims to cover new ground by utilising insights on perpetration and postmemory that come together in the research on *Väterliteratur* and adapting them to the post-colonial context of the Indonesian War of Independence.

Case Studies

Building on the theories mentioned above, my research investigates how *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* break the silence around Dutch perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence through their postmemory work. These three works were all released in the last ten years and thus illustrate contemporary narratives that are characteristic of the latest memory boom on the war.

Firstly, I consider the 2020 feature film *De Oost* (*The East*) which was directed by Jim Taihuttu, a descendent of a Moluccan KNIL soldier. Inspired by his roots, Taihuttu wants his movie to bring the difficult history of post-war Indonesia to the broader Dutch public ("De

Film"). The movie is also accompanied by educational material: a website and didactic lesson packages. Taihuttu's sister Jazzy Taihuttu created the lesson plans, which are designed for high schools and secondary vocational education (MBO) and address topics such as victimhood/perpetratorship, fiction and sources, film analysis, multi-voiced timelines and history. *De Oost*'s protagonist, Johan de Vries, played by Martijn Lakemeier, is a Dutch soldier who volunteers to fight in Indonesia in 1946 and whose father was a prominent member of the National Socialist Movement during WWII. De Vries eventually becomes part of an elite military mission led by infamous commander Raymond Westerling, played by Marwan Kenzari, to exterminate Indonesian nationalist guerrilla fighters on the island of Celebes. The film also includes flashforwards which show De Vries after his return to the Netherlands, where he has trouble reintegrating because of his war trauma.

Secondly, I have chosen the novel *De Tolk van Java* (*The Interpreter from Java*) by Alfred Birney, who is of Dutch-Indonesian-Chinese-Scottish descent. The book was published in 2016 and won the Libris Literature Prize in 2017. Inspired by Birney's own life, this auto-fiction novel recounts the life of the Dutch-Indonesian-Chinese Arend Nolan, also known as Arto, who was an interpreter/soldier/torturer in the Dutch marines during the Indonesian War of Independence. Arto's testimony is framed by his son Alan who narrates his own youth under the yoke of his heavily traumatized and abusive father and also incorporates conversations with his mother and emails from his brother. Because of their father's violent behaviour, Alan and his siblings eventually spend most of their youth in boarding schools. Additionally, Alan often describes pictures that prompt him to narrate about his family.

My last case study is the 2023 documentary *De Kleinkinderen van de Oost*, directed by Daan van Citters. The documentary follows van Citters and Joenoes Polnaija, a Dutch-Moluccan actor. The two met as actors on the set of *De Oost,* became best friends, and found out that both of their grandfathers, like their movie characters, had fought on the side of the

Dutch during the Indonesian War of Independence. Daan's grandfather, Wilhelm Jan van Citters, was the commander of the reconnaissance brigade, while Joenoes' grandfather was one of the many Moluccan soldiers who were recruited to fight for the Dutch. The film traces their journey along locations that Daan's and Joenoes' grandfathers visited during the war but also their journey through time, as the documentary touches upon the history of Moluccans in the Netherlands and Daan's noble family's ties to the VOC.

All three cultural artefacts approach Dutch violence during the Indonesian War of Independence through a personal angle of intergenerational remembering since all creators descend from soldiers. The novel *De Tolk van Java* has been researched through the cultural memory perspective on intergenerational memories (Doolan, "Remembering"; Missinne; Stoltz) and expression of national memory (Lammers; Vliet). Almost no scholar has considered insights from the field of perpetrator studies, even though *De Tolk*'s story is partly narrated by a perpetrator of excessive violence and partly by his son. Only Linde Lammers has investigated the topic of perpetration, as her master thesis *Postkoloniale Herinneringsmakers: De Representatie van de Indonesische Onafhankelijkheidsoorlog (1945-1949) in Alfred Birney's De Tolk van Java en Jim Taihuttu's De Oost* investigates *De Oost*'s and *De Tolk*'s representations of violence and different political perspectives. Scholars have mainly discussed the film *De Oost* in terms of its historical accuracy. For instance, Orchida Balfas and Fajar Muhammad Nugraha argue that Taihuttu has portrayed the infamous Dutch commander Westerling rather objectively in his cruelty but also in his friendliness towards his own soldiers (549). As of yet, no scholarship has approached *De Oost* and *De Tolk* through the concept of postmemory in combination with perpetrator studies, especially not with a focus on the representation of personal trauma as a result of perpetration. No research has yet been done on the documentary *Kleinkinderen van de Oost*. As mentioned, *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* features the grandchildren of perpetrators, who have very different links to the Indonesian War of Independence. In the

film, they investigate and compare their heritage and its contemporary personal and social significance. This intergenerational perspective on Dutch perpetration in post-war Indonesia compares to that of *De Tolk* and *De Oost*, since its creators also, as (grand)children of men who fought in the war, set out to explore their inherited memories of perpetration.

Methodology

Through close reading and comparison of my case studies, I will investigate how they portray Dutch perpetration and violence during the Indonesian War of Independence through their narratives and characters. Due to the different natures of media, close reading entails something else for each case study, as the medium influences the story that is being told (Ryan). Formal analysis of literature mainly concerns the use of language, as writing is bound to the two-dimensionality of the page. Film, however, contains the additional dimensions of sound and moving images. Consequently, formal analysis of film considers visual elements, such as lighting and cinematography, as well as sound and montage. All these formal elements can affect and emphasize the narrative represented in the films.

Because of the medial difference between documentary, feature film and novel, a comparative analysis of these three works can illuminate how cultural memory narratives on Dutch violence exist multimodally. Rigney relays how scholarship in cultural memory studies, such as Hirsch's, has shown "how the choice of material (sound, image, or performance) and of platform (broadcast or interactive) is extremely important for the way a story about the past can be told and how it will connect people as members of the same mnemonic community" (69). Therefore, cross-medial analysis of the representation of Dutch perpetration is vital to gain a better understanding of contemporary narratives of this past.

Visual media, such as reproduced photos and archival documentary footage, as well as descriptions of photos, play an important role in my case studies. Hirsch's and Bijl's conceptions of photographs as screens for memory projection provide a basis for investigating other types of visual media and how they mediate stories on perpetration. Hirsch is especially interested in the role of photographs that "function as ghostly revenants from an irretrievable lost past world" (115). She argues that the postgeneration relies heavily on photography, as it can reanimate an unknown past by authenticating it while also offering a location for projection and imagination (117). In *Emerging Memory*, Paul Bijl also identifies photos as places of projection, as he finds that specific groups attach their values to pictures of the Aceh War (223). Bijl investigates the broader social framing of and identification with the photos of violence in contrast to Hirsch, who examines the personal engagement of the post-generation with photographs. Bijl finds that the reproducibility of photographs facilitates how people constantly reframe and reestablish their relation to them, as well as how they function as emerging memory carriers (223).

As *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen* are films, their visuality is inherent to their media. The novel *De Tolk* also heavily relies on visuality, but represents these visuals through text by including descriptions of photographs. Such verbal interpretation of an image is called *ekphrasis*. Generally, this term is used to describe an artwork (Heffernan 36). However, literary scholar James Heffernan argues that the increase in digital and visual media has made the term more flexible than ever before (48). He defines ekphrasis as: "a kind of writing that turns pictures into storytelling words" (48). The ekphrasis thus has visualizing abilities that enable me to compare the novel with the film. As such, I can investigate how next-generation writers and directors employ visual media in different ways to fill in the gaps between their inherited memories.

Since the creators of my case studies have been inspired by their own (family) histories, I will use insights from research on moral injury and *Väterliteratur* to explore the literary tools and tropes that case studies use to make sense of inherited memories of perpetration. Additionally, I will investigate how stories of perpetration differ per ethnic group, specifically *Indo*, Moluccan and Dutch, to answer how they remember perpetration differently. I will examine how the colonial racially segregated society of the former Dutch East Indies influenced the Indonesian War of Independence as a (post)colonial conflict and how the case studies reflect how colonial practices impact the inherited memories of this war. Consequently, this thesis investigates colonial sensibilities and how they underlie the war and continue through intergenerational remembering.

Here, my research takes place at the crossroads of cultural memory and postcolonial studies. In "Remembering Back: Cultural Memory, Colonial Legacies, and Postcolonial Studies," cultural memory scholar Michael Rothberg stresses the importance of connecting postcolonial and cultural memory studies, as he finds that the multidirectionality of memory recognises the cultural and political complexities resulting from colonisation. He even likens the workings of memory to that of empire, as they are "both disjunctive and combinatorial" (372). More importantly, he states: "Taking into account the transnational and transcultural dynamics of empire disrupts models of memory premised on the boundedness of groups and nations and provides a 'displaced angle' on the canons of cultural memory" (376). He urges us to consider the intercultural encounters at the basis of the colonial endeavour, as such an approach intervenes in stationary national canonical memory and more aptly recognises the reality of memory and empire. I aim to do just that, to investigate how these different groups remember the Indonesian War of Independence differently.

This thesis is organised thematically, rather than divided per case study. In each chapter, I focus on a specific theme and relate this to all the case studies. In Chapter 1, I investigate how

De Tolk, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen* represent the pain of perpetration that originates in the Indonesian War of Independence and how the next generation deals with that legacy. I address the extent to which the creators draw from their own family histories in their depiction of Dutch perpetration and how this influences their representations. I specifically examine how the incorporation of various media influences the structure of their narratives and explore the different tropes employed to signify perpetrator trauma and its intergenerational memory. In Chapter 2, I delve into the (post)colonial dimension of memory, exploring how colonial practices shape the remembrance of perpetration across generations. I examine the varying memories of the Indonesian War of Independence and the identity configurations of different ethnic groups represented in the case studies. I investigate to what extent their memories of the war resonate with broader Dutch national cultural memory of the conflict.

In sum, my research tries to elucidate how the novel, film and documentary convey postmemory narratives of Dutch (post)colonial perpetration, give insight into the remembrance of this perpetration in the Dutch cultural arena and illuminates how a country grapples with its perpetrating past through the inter- and transgenerational transfer of memory. In exploring how colonial perpetration is remembered, transmitted, and negotiated across generations, this thesis attempts to enhance understanding of how the legacy of colonialism continues to shape contemporary societies.

Chapter 1

The Representation of Perpetration and its Inheritance

The makers of my case studies each have a personal connection to the Indonesian War of Independence motivating them to create their works. Birney, whose father was a translator for the navy, states that he wrote *De Tolk* to understand his father and whether his madness came from his war experiences (Berkeljon). Taihuttu also expresses that his background stimulated him to create *De Oost* (Beekman, "Ontbrekende beelden"). However, he did not intend to make a movie about his Ambonese great-grandfather, a sergeant for the KNIL, but about the war he fought in. Polnaija, whose grandfather was a KNIL soldier, also names his heritage as his reason to star in *De Oost* (Deure). For Citters, his participation in the *De Oost* prompted him to investigate his grandfather's role in the war, eventually leading to *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* in collaboration with Polnaija. The makers channelled their interest in their fathers' and grandfathers' experiences during the Indonesian War of Independence into the creation of their cultural artefacts. These experiences of Dutch perpetration are also the subjects of these works. This chapter examines the different ways in which the creators portray this perpetration and explores how they construct the intergenerational connection with these memories. The chapter tries to answer the following questions: How do these case studies represent perpetration through literary and cinematic tools? And how do they portray its inheritance?

This chapter, therefore, elucidates how the case studies portray perpetration and how they portray the challenges faced by perpetrators in coming to terms with their actions and integrating their violent past into their lives. This struggle often extends to subsequent generations, who grapple with their parents' reenactment of trauma or with an inherited sense of responsibility. The case studies endeavour to confront these issues and reconcile the past with the present, frequently employing existing objects from the family archive as means of understanding and connection.

Representations of Perpetration and its Intergenerational Memory

The depiction of perpetrators has consistently been a contentious issue due to the discomfort associated with the figure of the perpetrator and the diversion of focus from victims. McGlothlin for example finds that Holocaust literature on perpetrators attempts intimacy and imposes a distance between the reader and the portrayed perpetrator at the same time reflecting the ethical dilemmas attached to perpetration representation (*Mind* 21). Especially suspect is the subject of the pain that comes with exerting acts of violence. However, scholars like McGlothlin and Pederson argue that this dimension should be investigated precisely to attain a better understanding of perpetration and its repercussions. Pederson defines the perpetrator's pain caused by the breaching of their own ethics as "moral injury" (8). He finds that literature that engages with moral injury reflects an inability to integrate this wrongdoing through tropes of excess (22). McGlothlin also identifies that literary representations often relay the suffering from perpetration as unintegratable and recognises dissociation and "avoidance" as mechanisms to cope with the "recurrent intrusion" of this pain ("Perpetrator Trauma" 107).

The intergenerational memory of perpetrator pain also expresses this unintegratablity because of the inherent distance that accompanies the memories that are not one's own. This separation complicates feelings of guilt. According to McGlothlin, children of Nazi perpetrators often express that the Holocaust past feels like a burden connected to inherited shame and guilt originating in "the parents' own refusal to admit responsibility for their complicity" (*Second Generation* 24). Thus, the parents' inability to acknowledge their perpetrating past transfers to their children. McGlothlin recognises that second-generation writers represent this through tropes of marking and narratives revolving around sin, in which the child, as innocent, has to atone for their parent's sin (24-25).

Joanne Pettitt observes that in their literary expressions, children of Holocaust perpetrators exhibit a sense of liminality and internal conflict concerning their parents' history

of perpetration (296). She finds they incorporate "haunting presences," especially relics and different voices, to represent these feelings, which turn their work into "a site of multi-temporality" (291). Pettitt argues that the blending of temporal boundaries allows the dead to reappear in ghostly forms and be held accountable by the younger generation (293). Pettitt notes that postmemorial films and texts about perpetration often use relics to bring the past into the present: "[T]he past is brought into the present through relics that give voice to it. Here artefacts operate as material embodiments of history and assist in the characterisation of figures of the past, allowing them a distinct presence in the narrative" (291). These relics represent the past, enabling the makers to confront their legacy within their cultural production. Anne Fuchs also identifies this trend in *Väterliteratur* in which intergenerational writers often use personal objects, such as photos, diaries and letters to engage with the question of how their parents' past influences the present and especially postwar family dynamics (44). Besides the use of personal objects or familial memories, the next generation often adopts imagery from already mediated interpretations to make sense of their family's history and trauma (Hirsch 112). Hirsch calls this structure of horizontal memorial transference between contemporaries "affiliative postmemory" (115).

De Tolk van Java

De Tolk van Java revolves around the lives of Dutch-Indonesian-Chinese Arend Noland, also known as Arto, and his eldest son Alan. During the Indonesian War of Independence, Arto becomes a translator for the Dutch marine. His responsibilities include interrogating political prisoners and prisoners of war and acting as a soldier during missions such as the Dutch "police actions." *De Tolk van Java* is a semi-autobiographical account closely resembling the lives of writer Alfred Birney and his father Adolf. Like Birney's father, the character of Arto has written a manuscript about his life, which eventually comes into the possession of his eldest son. The

fictionalised memoir is framed by Alan who recounts his childhood under the yoke of his traumatised and abusive father who eventually loses custody of his five children. After being placed out of home, Alan and his siblings grow up in boarding schools and have difficult relationships with their parents and each other.

The novel does not only include Alan and his father as narrators but also his mother and his twin brother Phil as explained by the novel's subtitle: "Waarin de herinneringen van een kamerolifantje, de memoires van een oorlogstolk gehamerd op een schrijfmachine, onderbroken met verhalen, brieven en gemopper van de oudste zoon, becommentarieerd door zijn broer." Dutch literature scholar Lut Missinne states that *De Tolk* is "a good example of a plurivocal autobiography," as the different narrations also differ in style and often enter into dialogue (84). The composition of the book intertwines these voices. The novel consists of five parts – "Spekkoek," "Samoerai," "Spekkoek," "De Tolk van Soerabaja" and "Spekkoek" – that each contain a multitude of chapters. Like the sweet Indonesian cake Spekkoek, the book has a layered structure and the "Spekkoek" chapters are particularly characterised by a diversity of voices and a high degree of fragmentation. For instance, the first "Spekkoek" chapter includes extensive exchanges between Alan and his mother in direct speech as well as parts of Arto's memoir. The last "Spekkoek" chapter primarily comprises Alan's correspondence with Phil via e-mail and chat, interspersed with Alan's reflections on their father's past. In contrast, "Samoerai" and "De Tolk van Soerabaja" represent parts of Arto's memoir, occasionally interrupted by comments by Alan. "Samoerai" recounts Arto's youth and ends on August 16, 1940, one day before the Indonesian independence. Arto's memoirs chronologically continue in "De Tolk van Soerabaja" after the second "Spekkoek" chapter in which Alan recalls his youth until the moment that he acquires his father's manuscript. "De Tolk van Soerabaja" begins on the first day of independence and ends in 1950 when Arto leaves Indonesia on the ship "De

Groote Beer." Through this plurivocal and fragmented form, *De Tolk's* story covers multiple generations and their relation to the Indonesian War of Independence.

Arto's voice is mostly represented in the parts that make up his manuscript. "De Tolk van Soerabaja" especially includes the most vivid and detailed description of his perpetration, recounting his life from the onset of Indonesian independence. As mentioned, Pederson identifies excessiveness as a characteristic portrayal of moral injury and notes that this is often represented through "the tireless monologist" who exhaustively discusses their wrongdoing (55). Son Alan affirms Arto's talkative character early on in the novel: "Hij sprak aldoor over de oorlog" (Birney 52). Arto's manuscript formally exemplifies his talkativeness through its excessive depiction of detailedness. Arto recounts specific orders, guns, enemies, places, dates, divisions, and manoeuvres. For example, he recounts all the towns his division passes during the first 'police action': Pasir Poetih, Panaroekan, Sitoebondo, Prajekan, Bondowoso, Djember, Tenggaran and many more. Arto is also not sparing with gruesome details during many instances of perpetration as he recounts his life in military service, as well as his under-the-radar murders of 'enemies' outside of working hours. However, the details read mostly like a report of the military campaign. While the memoirs thus express an excess of information they do not display "everything about the transgression in question," which is another trope Pederson identifies in perpetrator literature (55). Missinne notes that Arto's manuscript is "written in a rather unaffected style" (88). Additionally, Lammers states that the dry style displays a numbness towards the perpetrated violence (55). Arto's manuscript describes his perpetration matter-of-factly, not at all emotionally. Consequently, the detailedness emphasises Arto's dissociation from his perpetration, which McGlothlin observes in Nazi perpetrator literature ("Perpetrator Trauma" 107). Therefore, the detailedness of Arto's manuscript underscores his detachment from his actions of perpetration and masks his emotions.

Occasionally, Arto does reflect on his role as perpetrator. When he does so, his character demonstrates an inability to integrate his memories due to their traumatizing nature while still refraining from displaying emotional investment. During a particularly gruesome episode during the first 'police action,' Arto gives one of these rare insights, unlike in other violent moments where he merely describes his own brutal actions. His division receives the order to go to a small train station and he follows a guerrilla (the *pemoeda*) who uses a woman and her child as human shields:

> Ik rende het perron op en zag nog net hoe een pemoeda dekking zocht achter een vrouw met haar baby op de arm. Hij richtte zijn geweer op mij en had zijn linkerarm om de nek van die vrouw. Het kind huilde hartverscheurend. Ik nam een snoekduik en tijdens die sprong schoot ik op die onschuldige vrouw. Mijn kogels gingen dwars door dat kind, de moeder en de pemoeda heen. Ik kon niet anders dan zo handelen. Het was *to kill or to be killed*. Ik zag de drie doden liggen en werd er beroerd van. Die moeder en dat kind hadden er niets mee te maken. Ik had een wrede beslissing genomen, maar ik kon niet anders. Ik zal dit bloedige moment nooit meer vergeten voor de rest van mijn leven. Soms schrik ik er wakker van en rol ik uit bed en sta ik weer in die houding, totdat de contouren van de slaapkamer zichtbaar worden, waar ik ook ben. (363)

In this excerpt, Arto describes in minute detail how he killed a pemuda and a mother and child. Even though he justifies his behaviour, stating he had no other choice, he feels physically unwell, "beroerd." His perpetration thus affects him physically. Still, the language is very sober and rational with no trace of the emotional toll that the event takes. Arto only implies the emotional impact by stating that he will never forget the moment. Additionally, he recounts how the event wakes him up at night and replays itself. He references his future insomnia in the present tense, stressing how his act of perpetration has ongoing effects. In "Perpetrator Trauma," McGlothlin identifies that "a key symptom of perpetrator trauma is recurrent

intrusion, which refers to the involuntary, often highly distressing disruption of thought by undesired cognitive content, particularly memories that relate to the traumatic event" (107). Arto's memory of this triple murder corresponds with this symptom as it recurs in such a way that he automatically adopts a fighting stance whenever the memory wakes him up at night. His past actions thus evoke an involuntary traumatic reaction of paranoia long after the events take place. In conclusion, Arto's detailed recounting of his actions and their traumatic aftermath underscores the enduring impact of his role as a perpetrator with the language used to describe these events highlighting his inability to accommodate this past and reflecting the workings of trauma.

Besides such rare self-reflective episodes, other characters voice the severity of Arto's perpetration within his manuscript. For instance, when Arto returns home after the first 'police action' when his family believed him dead, his mother says with concern: "Adoe, jij bent nu nog wreder dan toen jij bij de politie was. Ik ben diep geschokt door jouw gedrag. Hoe kun jij zo wreed zijn? Hoeveel mensen heb jij al gedood? (Birney 381). In this direct comment, Arto's mother expresses concern for her son and his violent behaviour. However, Arto does not answer, which displays how he rather isolates himself from the actual gravity of his perpetration. Such direct comments by other characters in the manuscript are rare and because of it they strikingly break up Arto's monologue. The direct speech therefore highlights how Arto's narration in the manuscript overtly focuses on himself and his perspective. Pederson finds that "over-reliance on the first person" reflects the isolation of the morally injured (72). In Arto's memoir, his singular voice echoes how his character disconnects from his perpetrating actions.

Outside Arto's manuscript, Alan is the main voice of the next generation constructing the meaning of his father's perpetration. He displays how difficult it is to integrate inherited memories of the perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. As mentioned before, his father traumatically relives the war not only by waking up at night but also by exerting

violence, which his children fall victim to. For example, when Arto recounts how a Japanese officer almost broke his fingers as punishment for delivering bad work in the factory, Alan interrupts the memoir and recalls how his father would use the same method of smacking his fingers on the side of a table to punish him for not being able to tie his shoes (Birney 147-148). Arto thus directly reproduces the violence he experienced to punish his son. Alan also relates that his father probably traumatically reexperience the previous violent experience: "*Wie zag je voor je, die eerste paasdag in de keuken met je oudste zoon? Die Japanse beul?*" (149). Alan's comments into the Arto's manuscript express how the violent past of the Indonesian War of Independence infiltrates the later life of his children through domestic violence. In *Second-Generation Holocaust Literature*, McGlothlin explains that the children of perpetrators are marked by "the family's unintegratable history of violation and brutality" (10). McGlothlin argues that these second-generation writers use tropes of bodily expressed and embodied signs to signify how they "have no choice but to bear, one that is laden with both the real and imagined crimes of their parents and the additional sense of being somehow tainted by their parents' violent past" (24). McGlothlin identifies that the children carry marks caused by the parents' perpetrating past that looms over their lives. For *De Tolk*, however, the father's violent past directly infiltrates the lives of his children through the domestic violence through which he reenacts his trauma and tries to prepare his children for war. Consequently, the bodily scars and marks of Alan and his siblings are the results of domestic violence. Domestic violence is rather an extreme example of how memories are passed down through behaviour, which Hirsch has established as formative next to stories and images (106). Doolan also connects postmemory to Arto's violent abuse of his children, as he identifies that it originates in "the trauma of the historical wound their father had experienced during decolonization" ("Remembering"). Consequently, any bodily marks that Alan has are products of his father's behaviour rather than

a psychosomatic outcome of his mental inability to integrate his father's past but it remains that his father's violence profoundly influences his life.

Furthermore, Alan's narrative often equates his father's aggression with ghosts. Pettitt recognises that children of Holocaust perpetrators frequently use literary images of "haunting presences" to express feelings of liminality and conflict regarding their parents' history of perpetration (296). In Alan's case, he relays how his father's war trauma manifests like a ghost: "Mama had het over 'spoken in zijn kop'. Dat soms een geest bezit van hem nam, zodat hij niet meer wist wie hij was en ook niet meer zag wie wij waren. Dat hij dan niet als vader sloeg, maar als marinier in de oorlog" (Birney 182). The ghost of Arto's trauma blinds him to the extent that he relives the violence he perpetrated during the war. Here, the image of the ghost symbolises Arto's internal trauma but his aggressive reenactment also manifests as a haunting presence in the lives of his children. When Alan is eight, he and his siblings are afraid of the "Wielewiel" ghost that lives in the hallway (179). The Wielewiel is avoidable but the siblings can always feel his presence, much like the ever-present fear of their father. Alan and his twin Phil are even more anxious about the "Tultuh" whom their siblings do not know about: "Tultuh was onzichtbaar en kon in één keer de hele gang vullen, zodat je bevroor van angst" (180). Tultuh is more unpredictable than Wielewiel and his tendency to suddenly appear mirrors how their father would unpredictably burst out in a flash of aggression. The siblings' fear of these ghosts seems to be a coping mechanism to deal with the terror that their father's trauma imposes on their lives. In sum, the trope of the ghost encapsulates the haunting influence of Arto's trauma on his children within *De Tolk*.

Alan also reflects through photographs on how his father's perpetration impacted his life. The pictures are not reproduced in the novel, instead there are vivid written descriptions of them, *ekphrases*. Ekphrasis bridges and complicates the materiality of both photography and literature. Literary scholar Gabriele Rippl explains, based on Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag:

"One important difference between photography and literary text seems to be that the former serves as visual evidence, we tend to trust it easily, while we believe the latter, due to its linguistic materiality, to have the potential to distort and spin reality" (144). Therefore, the literary incorporation of photography through ekphrasis challenges the medium's assumed neutrality and objectivity. Additionally, Rippl finds that ekphrasis presents a location of "reimagining" (151). The practice of reimagination in ekphrasis resembles how Hirsch explains how photographs are locations of postmemorial imagination. This implies that, while ekphrasis differs from an actual photograph, it can still function as a canvas for projection.

In *De Tolk*, Arto often describes photos and then narrates elements of the past that are not depicted in his ekphrastic description, highlighting how an ekphrasis can lend itself to projection. For example, pictures of one of Alan's childhood homes prompt him to reflect upon his childhood under the yoke of his father:

> Maar van de Melis Stokelaan, de hel aan numero 1394, heb ik nog een schoenendoos vol foto's: zwart-wit, veel in het standaardformaat van toen – 9x9 cm – met een uitschieter naar een groter formaat, al dan niet gekarteld. Op vrijwel elke foto die jij daar intra muros nam, zie ik wél die gitaar van je hangen …
>
> Veel speelde je niet op je gitaar. Ik herinner me maar één avond waarop ik met de anderen rond jou op bed zat om samen te zingen van de stencils die je in een strenge grijze ordner met een zwarte linnen rug bewaarde. Het was zo'n zeldzame avond waarop je een vader was in plaats van een kampcommandant. (59-60)

The passage signals that the narrator, Alan, is looking at the pictures in the shoebox at a later time than they were taken. This difference in temporality emerges from Alan's description of events not portrayed in the pictures. Alan describes that each photo of his childhood home's interior includes a guitar suggesting that the instrument had a prominent role in his youth.

However, Alan explains that his father would rarely touch the guitar. He thus reveals to have more knowledge of the past than the pictures depict, detracting from the assumed objectivity of photography's medium. The pictures prompt Alan to engage with the past and relate to his father's behaviour, as he recalls a rare day the family would sing to his father's guitar next to the regular days when his father was like a camp commander. Here, Alan reaches back in time to connect his childhood to his father's war past by likening his father's behaviour to a strict and authoritative military leader. The photos thus serve as a place for Alan to project upon an earlier moment in time to construct how he relates to his father and his perpetration.

Simultaneously, the pictures and Alan's reflection comment on one-sided perspectives of the past as the ekphrastic representations of photography inherently question the neutrality of the medium. Alan notes the photos' size and colours emphasising their materiality and also disproves their presumed objectivity by elaborating on what the pictures do not tell: that the guitar was never played. This passage thus implies that some representations of the past are biased and do not tell the whole story. This indirectly serves as a critique of Arto's manuscript that only follows his perspective. The description of photographs thus underscores the selective nature of memory, highlighting how certain details are emphasised while others are omitted, ultimately questioning the reliability of singular narratives. Here, the ekphrastic photos serve as an example of how the plurivocality of *De Tolk van Java* offers a multifaceted understanding of the intergenerational impact of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence.

In sum, *De Tolk van Java* utilises different objects that allow the voices of different generations to relate to the trauma of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. Through the use of a fictionalized manuscript, *De Tolk van Java* resembles the *Väterliteratur* in which Fuchs often finds that second-generation writers employ personal objects to engage with their parents' perpetration. Arto's detailed and detached recounting of his wartime experiences in his manuscript highlights his inability to emotionally process his actions,

illustrating the isolation and ongoing trauma that follow acts of perpetration. This isolation is further emphasised by his over-reliance on the first-person narrative and the rare interventions of other characters within his memoir. Alan's second-generation reflections, through both his direct narration around the manuscript and ekphrastic descriptions of photographs, provide a critical perspective on his father's legacy, illustrating how the traumatic past has pervaded their family. He reveals how his father's reenactment of his trauma through domestic violence marked his childhood. In addition, Alan's frequent association of his father's aggression with ghostly images underscores the haunting presence of Arto's perpetration. Furthermore, ekphrases of photographs constitute another location for Alan to reimagine the past while exposing the subjectivity of his father's narrative. Through its layered narrative, *De Tolk van Java* captures the complexity of the pain of perpetration and its impact on the subsequent generation that struggles as much as their parent to integrate and confront their inherited memories of a violent past. Because of all its voices and elements, the novel's exploration of the intergenerational echoes of trauma exemplifies the enduring struggle to reconcile with the painful history of the Indonesian War of Independence within the Netherlands.

Kleinkinderen van de Oost

Daan van Citters directed the documentary *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* in which he and his best friend Joenoes Polnaija explore their grandfathers' roles as soldiers in the Indonesian War of Independence. The two friends met as actors on the set of *De Oost* in which they played soldiers like their grandfathers had been. Van Citters' grandfather, Willem Johan van Citters, had been an *oorlogsvrijwilliger* and the commander of the reconnaissance brigade. Polnaija's grandfather had been one of the many indigenous Moluccan soldiers recruited to fight for the Dutch and had even been part of the elite *Korps Speciale Troepen* (Special Forces Corps, KST), which was commanded by Raymond Westerling. In *Kleinkinderen*, Polnaija and Van Citters travel to

present-day Indonesia to visit locations where their grandfathers had been during the Indonesian War of Independence. They endeavour to reconstruct the past through memories of their grandfathers and documentation material and to understand what the war and the colonial past mean today. Consequently, the documentary includes archival footage with voice-overs to explain historical events alternated with scenes in which Van Citters and Polnaija discuss their personal interpretations of the past.

Kleinkinderen intricately intertwines past and present in its exploration of inherited memories and affirms this visually by including footage from various moments in time. The opening scene immediately reveals that inherited memories take centre stage in this documentary. This scene consists of black-and-white footage of lab rats in a labyrinth (0:00:48-0:01:38). The voice-over by Polnaija explains research in which rats were given electric shocks when they would smell cherry blossoms and their descendants would squeal at the smell of the flowers. The scene sets the premise for the movie as an investigation into the inheritance of pain. The pain *Kleinkinderen* focuses on derives from perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. Van Citters and Polnaija explain this in the scene right after, which explains the premise and background of the documentary:

DvC Een van de weinige verhalen die ik over mijn opa ken, gaat over een oorlog aan de andere kant van de wereld. Een oorlog waar ik niets van wist. Tot het moment dat ik zelf in die oorlog terecht kwam. Ik speelde een soldaat in de speelfilm *De Oost*, zoals mijn opa ooit soldaat was in de Oost. Tijdens de voorbereidingen op de opnames leerde ik Joenoes kennen.

JP Ik ken veel verhalen over mijn opa. Dat hij had gevochten voor de Hollanders. (0:01:48-0:03:20)

They reveal that they have intergenerationally transmitted memories of the Indonesian War of Independence because of their grandfather who fought in that war. The preceding rat experiment scene implies that Van Citters and Polnaija have inherited pain from their grandfathers' wartime experiences like the rats inherited trauma from their parents. Here, they relate the wartime past to the present, which they emphasise through the visuals. Accompanied by this voice-over, different types of footage alternate each other: archival material from the 40s showing KNIL soldiers in Indonesia, film and behind-the-scenes footage from *De Oost* and documentary footage depicting Van Citters and Polnaija in present-day Indonesia. In the archival footage, we see many KNIL soldiers march, shoot, drive, and burn down a village. When Van Citters says, "Tot het moment dat ik zelf in die oorlog terecht kwam," the documentary transitions to shots from *De Oost* in which the actors perform similar actions as the real soldiers that are represented in the archival footage. When Polnaija speaks, we see him and then a black-and-white shot of an unknown Moluccan soldier. Just before the title page, present-day shots of Van Citters and Polnaija alternate with historical footage of soldiers. This montage of archival, documentary and film footage exemplifies what Pettitt calls "a site of multi-temporality" (291). Pettitt suggests that the writing by children of Nazis "operates on a multi-temporal plane where the past is of equal—if not of greater—importance than the present in the overall structure of the narratives" (289). This conflation of past and present is also at work in *Kleinkinderen*, since its narrative revolves around the reflections of Van Citters and Polnaija upon the past, here represented through the voice-over and emphasised cinematically through the montages of archival and present-day footage.

This montage also can be seen in light of Hirsch's theory on photography and postmemory. Hirsch argues that photography can reanimate the past for the next generations by authenticating it while offering a location for projection and imagination (117). The archival war footage in *Kleinkinderen* similarly authenticates the reality of Van Citters' and Polnaija's

stories by situating them within history. Next to the footage from *De Oost* and its preparation, the combination of different excerpts emphasises how video, as moving image, can facilitate projection. In *De Oost* prep footage, the actors embody their ancestors dressing up as soldiers and performing military drills. This is an interpretation of the past but the association with old footage of unknown soldiers implies that they have studied the old war footage to learn how to act like a soldier. Not only does the footage of soldiers inspire *Kleinkinderen* but also the personal stories that Van Citters and Polnaija name in the voice-over. This applies especially to Polnaija, as in contrast to Van Citters' grandfather, no footage of his grandfather during the war exists. We know there is footage of Van Citters' grandfather because Van Citters mentions it after which footage shows his grandfather in military outfit on an airport (0:03:48-0:04:18). However, no such footage is announced of Polnaija's grandfather. Consequently, an unnamed soldier with brown skin serves as a stand-in for his grandfather, as this shot features when he talks about his grandfather. This scene thus relates how footage of the past provides a place to project one's inherited stories upon but also how such footage infuses present fictions of this past, such as *De Oost*.

Besides archival footage, the documentary relies on other material remnants to represent and reflect on the past. Pettitt identifies that postmemorial films and texts about perpetration often use relics to represent the past (291). The frequent use of archival footage in *Kleinkinderen* naturally functions in this way. Some, for example, show the violence the soldiers exerted during the war – shooting, pillaging and arson to name a few – as a visual way to illustrate the past. *Kleinkinderen* does not only use old film footage to characterise the past but also incorporates other material objects. Firstly, documents, such as photos and military reports, play a role. For instance, a secret report that Van Citters' grandfather wrote as exploration commandant of the first 'police action,' which Van Citters reads out to recall an image of the military campaign and to reflect upon his grandfather's role in the war (0:08:39-0:10:40).

Secondly, places form significant "embodiments of history" throughout the documentary (Pettitt 291). Van Citters and Polnaija visit multiple locations where their grandfathers had fought, for example, the beaches of Madura, where the Dutch army landed (0:18:55; 0:56:31). Even though these locations have naturally changed with time, they still assist as material reminders within *Kleinkinderen*'s narrative. Showing a couple of war photos of his grandfather, Van Citters refers to the function of relics: "Door de foto's die mijn opa nam, zie ik Indonesië zoals hij het heeft gezien" (0:17:38). The photos allow him to imagine what that time must have been like. While this quote only refers to photos, this sentiment applies to the other relics I mentioned. These relics help Van Citters and Polnaija to imagine the past.

These relics help to reconstruct the past through what Pettitt calls "narratological haunting" (293). While I've explained how *De Tolk* features images of ghosts to express this haunting, *Kleinkinderen* depends on confrontations between present and past in which the next generation calls upon the previous one to take account. Pettitt explains this as follows:

> This dissolution of temporal boundaries facilitates the voiced resurrection of the dead in which present/absent, past/present binaries are deconstructed and reified into more liminal – that is to say, ghostly – forms. Built into the very structure of these narratives, therefore, is a kind of narratological haunting in which the dead resurface so that they may be called to account by the younger generation. (294)

The narrative of *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* depends on precisely this "dissolution of temporal boundaries" that Pettitt describes. The relics – places, photos, reports and such – bring the past to life for Polnaija and Van Citters to engage with. For example, at the beach of Branta Pesisir on Madura, Polnaija asks Van Citters reflects how they resurrect their grandfathers: "Hoe denk je dat jouw opa zich gevoeld heeft?" (0:21:19). Here, the location prompts Polnaija to ask Van Citters to inhabit his grandfather by imagining what he might have felt when he landed there. This resurrection of the grandfather enables Van Citters and Polnaija to confront him and his

past. In *Kleinkinderen*, relics thus reflect the past and provide a starting point for the next generation to reflect on this past in relation to the now, specifically to engage with the meaning of their grandfathers' perpetration.

Kleinkinderen, for example, engages with past perpetration by considering the myth of the good soldier and its connection to perpetration, an issue prompted by a military report. Polnaija reads a patrol report from 1948 of the *Korps Speciale Troepen*, which his grandfather had been part of. After realising that "pacificeren" means killing enemies, Polnaija is taken aback and says:

> Ik ben me er altijd van bewust geweest dat mijn opa's een goed soldaat zijn geweest. En dat dat ook inhoudt dat ze bloed aan hun handen hebben, omdat ze hebben moeten doen wat ze hebben moeten doen. … Dus weet ik ook dat hij… Dat beide opa's van mij hoor… Als we het hebben over onze opa's en over moordenaar zijn. Dan weet ik dat mijn beide opa's daar ook voor hebben geboet. Tot de laatste dag van hun leven. (0:14:00- 0:15:02)

Here, Polnaija reimagines the past, for he initially thought his grandfather was a good soldier, even though he knew that meant there was blood on their hands. Now he realises that being a good soldier includes the "act of killing," which McGlothlin identifies as the cause of perpetrator trauma ("Perpetrator Trauma" 105). He later explicitly rejects the killing and violence his grandfathers were responsible for: "Ik kan daar eigenlijk helemaal niet trots op zijn" (0:22:35). Additionally, Polnaija refers to the traumatic consequence of this perpetration as a burden that his grandfathers shouldered for their whole life. Essentially, he reframes the image of the 'good soldier' to lay the focus on the exerted violence but also emphasises the traumatic personal repercussions. The relic from the past thus retrieves a different meaning in the present, since the report first testified to the 'good' soldiership of a completed mission but now serves as evidence of perpetration.

Van Citters follows a similar changing narrative about his grandfather's role in the war and also relates how this haunts him as he conveys that he feels responsible and ashamed. First, he expresses pride towards his grandfather's capabilities as commandant (0:10:44), but finally, like Polnaija, he renounces his grandfather's perpetration. Over a montage of the mouse experiment, war, and contemporary footage of Van Citters and Polnaija, Van Citters talks about how he feels about this perpetration: "Ik voel iets maar heb het zelf niet meegemaakt. Het is als een pijnlijke echo. Een schok uit het verleden. Is dat schaamte? Mijn opa deed wat hem werd opgedragen. Een oorlog is zwart of wit. Het is jij of ik. Maar met de kennis van nu, voel ik schaamte" (0:23:10-0:24:09). Van Citters has inherited a memory of something he has not experienced but that painfully echoes into his life from the past. He still situates his grandfather as a 'good soldier' who was doing as he was told. However, with contemporary knowledge, Van Citters feels shame about the war. The multi-temporal montage visually reinforces Van Citters' voice-over, linking past and present and highlighting how the perpetration reverberates in today's world. Van Citters' quote illustrates how the children of perpetrators feel responsible for past actions that they were not involved in. According to McGlothlin in *Second Generation Holocaust Literature*, children of Nazi perpetrators often express that the Holocaust past feels like a burden. She adds that this burden is connected to guilt and that this "guilt is more directly connected with the parents' own refusal to admit responsibility for their complicity (24). Van Citters' reflection on his grandfather's actions during the war illustrates this burden. He acknowledges his grandfather's obedience to orders and the binary nature of wartime decisions ("Een oorlog is zwart of wit. Het is jij of ik."). However, with contemporary understanding, he feels ashamed of the atrocities committed by the Dutch. This shame is indicative of the inherited guilt McGlothlin describes, where the second generation feels the weight of their ancestors' actions, exacerbated by the lack of open acknowledgement or responsibility from the preceding generation.

The refusal to acknowledge perpetration features in *Kleinkinderen* through discussion on the image of the 'good soldier' and the silence surrounding the war. The image of the good soldier frames the actions taken during the war as dutiful and honourable, thereby deflecting personal responsibility and moral scrutiny. In *Kleinkinderen*, Van Citters and Polnaija repeatedly talk about their grandfathers as proper soldiers but ultimately reject this view of their deeds. The focus on behaving as a good soldier silences and denies the perpetration which is also part of the job. Van Citters and Polnaija realise this act of silencing and they discuss this at the start of the documentary in the first scene after announcing the Indonesian War of Independence as subject of the film:

DvC Het is een geschiedenis waar de generaties voor mij over zwegen.

JP En waarover de generaties voor mij het zwijgen is opgelegd. (0:01:48-0:03:20)

For Van Citters and Polnaija, the history of the Indonesian War of Independence is shrouded in silence. Van Citters highlights how silence permeated the social memory within his family, while Polnaija states that his family has been silenced. Van Citters' family never spoke about the war or about his grandfather who committed suicide (1:05:15-1:06:11). In contrast, Polnaija grew up with stories, "Ik ken veel verhalen over mijn opa," but these stories were not allowed to circulate (0:02:49). Consequently, the silences that Van Citters and Polnaija relate to the war differ as one has affected social memory and the other cultural memory. Still, both silences imply that the past has not been integrated. Silence contrasts with the excessiveness that Pederson identifies in representations of unintegrated pain of perpetration (55). However, as McGlothlin states, the next generation confronts "the parents' own refusal to admit responsibility for their complicity" and staying silent about it is an apt way to refute complicity (*Second Generation* 24). Then, reflecting on this silence, the documentary attempts to reconcile with the past of perpetration and its inheritance.

All in all, *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* attempts to break the silence on Dutch perpetration during the Indonesia War of Independence by providing a personal examination by Daan van Citters and Joenoes Polnaija of the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Through the use of archival footage, personal relics, and significant locations, they explore the roles of their grandfathers during the war and give new meaning to these relics and the past. Both Van Citters and Polnaija grapple with their grandfathers' legacies, ultimately rejecting the myth of the 'good soldier,' expressing shame and confronting the silences surrounding their families' histories. By intertwining past and present, the documentary underscores how inherited memories shape contemporary understandings of historical events, such as the Indonesian War of Independence. This narrative additionally highlights the complexity of postmemory and the enduring impact of wartime perpetration on the next generations.

De Oost

De Oost differs from *De Tolk* and *Kleinkinderen*, as its narrative does not reflect the director's life or his grandfather's. Instead, the film is set in 1946 and the protagonist is the young Dutch soldier Johan de Vries from Arcen, Limburg. De Vries is an *oorlogvrijwilliger* who gradually loses his faith in his role as soldier. Stationed in Semarang, he and his fellow soldiers see little action besides the occasional patrolling, until Commander Raymond Westerling takes De Vries under his wing. As Westerling's confidant, De Vries joins retaliatory actions and social outings with his commander, who eventually recruits him to be part of an elite anti-guerilla mission to South Celebes. There, De Vries finally denounces the violent tactics of the army, when Westerling has people executed without trial. As a reprisal for De Vries' objection to his methods, Westerling organises a hunt in which other soldiers chase De Vries through the jungle. The movie also relays how De Vries upon return to the Netherlands struggles with reintegration and traumas originating from his war experience. *De Oost* begins with De Vries' return to the

Netherlands, subsequently flashing back to the war, thereby employing a non-linear narrative. This structure intertwines De Vries' post-war life with extensive flashbacks to his military employment during the Indonesian War of Independence. At the end of the movie, De Vries visits Westerling's opera performance and after the show, shoots his former commander and himself.

While the film's narrative is fictional, the character of Raymond Westerling is based on a historical figure and his inclusion is one of the methods that Taihuttu employs to imagine and interpret the past.[6] He uses the character of Westerling to move his plot forward and represents many characteristics of this historical figure in the process. Because Westerling was of Dutch-Greek descent and born in Constantinople, his nickname was "De Turk." In 1946 and 1947, he was the commander of *Depot Speciale Troepen* (Special Forces Depot, DST) and in that function, he led the South Celebes campaign. Westerling was notorious for his ruthless anti-guerilla methods, *methode-Westerlin*g, which included summary executions.[7] After the war, Westerling became an opera singer. Balfas and Nugraha argue that Taihuttu portrays Westerling similar to his depiction historical documents, as the film captures both his cruel war tactics and his friendliness towards his own soldiers (549). All these characteristics of Westerling feature in *De Oost* and Taihuttu uses the real-life trajectory of Westerling to construct the fictional narrative of *De Oost*. Westerling becomes De Vries' mentor, encouraging his participation in the war, and eventually punishes De Vries for his rejection of violence, contributing to his trauma. However, Taihuttu also bends history to his will. In real life Westerling died at age 68 of heart failure (Balfas & Nugraha 554), but in *De Oost* De Vries shoots his former commander

[6] More on the historical accuracy of Westerling's character in *De Oost* in Balfas & Nugraha. They analyse the depiction of Westerling in *De Oost* and based on historical documentation, argue that Taihuttu presents the Dutch commander and his personality in an objective manner by highlighting both his cruelty and his camaraderie with his soldiers (549).

[7] See Raben & Romijn, esp. Chapter 6 "Zuid-Celebes, 1945-1948"; Geersing *Kapitein Raymond Westerling en de Zuid-Celebes-affaire (1946-1947): Mythe en werkelijkheid*; Arps, "Een Omstreden Koloniale Beroemdheid: Het Geweld en de Reputatie van Raymond Westerling in de Dekolonisatieliteratuur" for analysis of Westerling's representation in Dutch literature.

Figure 1: Lieutenant Jonker executes people based on a list. Dongen, Peter van. *Rampokan*, Vrije Vlucht, 2018.

after an opera performance as reprisal for his war trauma (2:12:59-2:14:22). Consequently, Taihuttu incorporates certain aspects of Westerling's life to guide his narrative, while at other times, he modifies elements of Westerling's life. By creating *De Oost*'s narrative around the figure of Westerling, Taihuttu projects his imagination upon the historical events and characters, blending factual history with his creative interpretation to convey an understanding of the Indonesian War of Independence.

In addition to the use of a historical figure, Taihuttu takes earlier representations of the Indonesian War of Independence to construct the past. *De Wereld van de Oost* website states that Taihuttu used the comic novel *Rampokan* as inspiration for *De Oost* ("Bekijk ook"). The comic novel *Rampokan* (Part 1 *Java* 1998, Part 2 *Celebes* 2004) was made by Peter van Dongen and follows the story of Dutch soldier Johan Knevel during the Indonesian War of Independence. In particular, Westerling's procedure to eliminate rebels resembles a scene in the comic novel. Westerling decides who to execute based on a list with names (1:41:34-1:44:41).

While the lists were a known counterterrorist tactic of Westerling (Raben & Romijn 277), the procedure represented in *De Oost* resembles a scene from *Rampokan* in which Lieutenant Jonker does the same (fig.1). In both representations, the army has gathered the local population on the ground in the centre of their village and the commander reads out names from a list with unknown origin that supposedly contains all the terrorists (Dongen 86). Those who are named are executed without trial. In *De Oost*, Westerling sits behind a table emphasising his status as jury, judge and executioner while Jonker in *Rampokan* remains standing. However, in both, the scene is visualised from multiple angles and the Indonesians are portrayed crouching as an almost indistinguishable group. Another noticeable element that *De Oost* shares with *Rampokan* is the warm colouring that reminds of old sepia pictures. Hirsch explains that to make sense of inherited trauma the postgeneration also adopts memories transferred horizontally between contemporaries (115). Taihuttu's dependence on *Rampokan* reflects the workings of such affiliative memory. While the film does not represent his grandfather's life, Taihuttu did make it to understand his past (Beekman, "Ontbrekende beelden"). Thus, the use of elements from *Rampokan* demonstrates that Taihuttu employs existing images and memories to reconstruct the past, particularly the perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. Unlike *De Tolk* and *Kleinkinderen*, *De Oost* does not use personal items to explore and imagine the perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence but uses existing historical and mediated images to do so, particularly *Rampokan* and the figure of Westerling.

De Oost also differs from the other case studies in the way it represents the pain of perpetration. In *De Tolk* and *Kleinkinderen*, personal relics facilitate intertwinement between the past and the present, allowing the next generation to reflect on the perpetration of their ancestors and their inheritance. Conversely, even though *De Oost* has a non-linear narrative, multi-temporality is not facilitated by relics. In *De Oost,* temporal crossing through flashbacks and flashforwards functions to explore the ramifications of perpetrator pain for the character of

De Vries. Particularly brutal instances of violence during the war often instigate a flashforward to De Vries' post-war life, depicted in cool-toned colouring and representing him as traumatised. During one such scene, De Vries kills a horse with a broken leg in cold blood, demonstrating how numb and dissociated he is as a result of his war experience (0:58:40-1:00:05). Here, he expresses the "lack of affect," which McGlothlin mentions as a symptom of perpetrator pain ("Perpetrator Trauma" 108). Just before this particular scene, a long flashback of the war ends with Westerling and De Vries interrogating and electrocuting a prisoner (Taihuttu 0:56:00-0:58:40). Because such a scene containing a violent act of perpetration precedes a post-war scene representing De Vries and his traumatised numbness, the film implies that the perpetration during the war is directly linked to his later emotional detachment and trauma. The scenes also mirror each other to a certain extent, as both conclude with De Vries participating in a violent act: he pushes the button to electrocute the prisoner, and he pulls the trigger to kill the horse. Both scenes also culminate in shots that centre De Vries. This symmetry enhances the causal relation that the order of the scenes implies and reflects the tendency of trauma to recur when one is unable to integrate it. Thus, *De Oost* connects past and present through its flashbacks and flashforwards consequently exploring the psychological consequences of perpetrator trauma for the De Vries' character, such as dissociation.

Additionally, *De Oost* frames De Vries' pain of perpetration as originating in the breach of morals. The movie therefore affirms Pederson's theory that "a significant moral transgression" can cause traumatic pain to those who commit or witness it (8). In the case of De Vries, it takes multiple such transgressions, as most of the movie De Vries unquestionably follows orders and joins in the perpetration. For an unclear reason, De Vries only changes his perspective on the army's violence during the South-Celebes mission. This happens once Westerling arbitrarily executes presumed rebels in a village. De Vries goes to Westerling with his doubts: "Ik merk dat ik er moeite mee heb dat we de mensen hier niet berechten of ook maar

uit te horen. Hoe weten we zeker dat deze mensen verantwoordelijk zijn voor de daden waarvoor we ze straffen?" (1:45:43-1:46:49). De Vries' concerns express that he finds it morally unjust to execute prisoners without a sufficient trial. Westerling, however, dismisses his concern and asserts that his intelligence is accurate simply because he claims it to be so. Here, the moral compasses of Westerling and De Vries do not align. Pederson and McGlothlin both identify that not all perpetrators experience pain as a result of their actions (19; "Perpetrator Trauma" 108). The difference between De Vries and Westerling exemplifies this. The film affirms that their varying moral attitudes and justifications are at the base of their psychological well-being later in life, when Westerling enjoys a life as opera singer but De Vries is heavily traumatised.

De Oost not only addresses the pain associated with acts of perpetration but also explores inherited memories of such acts. However, the film focuses on World War II memories rather than the colonial violence that occurred during the Indonesian War of Independence. Namely, the character of De Vries deals with his father's past as a collaborator. De Vries' father was a member of the *Nationaal Socialistische Beweging* (NSB), the Dutch National Socialist movement. Other characters confront De Vries with his father's perpetration, reflecting how Pettitt argues that the second generation often employs different voices to narratively represent how their parents' past haunts them (292). The cinematic framing in *De Oost* additionally emphasises how his father's perpetration haunts De Vries inescapably, even though he tries to evade it.

We only learn about De Vries' uncomfortable backstory once he runs into an acquaintance from home who is surprised to see him and asks what he is doing in Indonesia (0:33:41-0:34:11). De Vries answers uncomfortably: "Ik doe gewoon mijn plicht net als iedereen." The acquaintance replies: "Dan hebben jullie nog heel wat te doen. Dat ze je al hebben aangenomen is me alleen al een raadsel…" De Vries cuts him off and says he has to go, avoiding any revelations about his past. The scene is set at night with only low warm light from

lanterns. This lighting adds a sinister tone to the conversation, reinforcing that De Vries hides a dark secret. Only later, the reason why De Vries might not have been accepted to the Dutch army is revealed once soldier Eddy Coolen gets mad at De Vries for losing ammunition during an ambush by Indonesians. Coolen angrily grabs Johan at his throat:

EC Als je me nog een keer in de nesten werkt, snij ik je strot 's nachts door terwijl je slaapt. En geloof mij niemand kijkt om van een dooie verrader.

JdV Waar heb jij het over?

EC Dacht je dat niemand het wist? Ik sprak iemand uit je stad die wel het een en ander te vertellen had over jou en die NSB-pa van je. (0:51:50-0:52:06)

Coolen threatens De Vries and calls him a collaborator because his father was an NSB'er. During this confrontation and the previous one, Johan is visibly uncomfortable and expresses denial: in the first, he does not reply to his old acquaintance; in the second, he feigns ignorance ("Waar heb je het over?"). The director's choice to leave out De Vries' and his father's past in

Fig. 2: Coolen confronts De Vries about his father's past. Taihuttu, Jim. *De Oost*. New Amsterdam Film, 2020.

the first scene emphasises how Johan tries to suppress his inherited perpetration highlighting his inability to cope with the matter. However, during the altercations with Coolen, De Vries can no longer escape his father, which is represented visually through the scene's framing. The scene has both soldiers in the frame: Eddy, who broaches the topic of De Vries' father, holding De Vries up to the wall (fig. 2). This visual represents how the father's acts of perpetration similarly corner his son. It additionally depicts a change from the previous scene in which De Vries evades his acquaintance's attempt to confront him with his past. During that conversation, alternating shots between De Vries and his acquaintance created a distance, reflecting how Johan separated himself from his troubled history. In the confrontation with Coolen, this separation is dismantled signifying Johan's inescapable entanglement with his father's legacy. Still, on both occasions, others, the acquaintance and Coolen respectively, confront De Vries with his inheritance of perpetration and the framing emphasises how this progressively haunts him.

In addition to portraying the haunting quality of inherited perpetration, *De Oost* constructs the guilt that De Vries feels about his father's past as a sin. Prompted by the apparent inescapability of the past, De Vries eventually ventures to address his father's perpetration and approaches the chaplain, Janssen, to talk about it. He asks:

JdV Hoe zit het eigenlijk met de zonde van een ander?

J Hoe bedoel je?

JdV De zondes van iemand van wie je houdt, bijvoorbeeld? Als jij die zondes pas heel laat als zondes hebt gezien? Zijn dat dan ook jouw zondes?

J Ik ken dit specifieke geval niet… maar dat lijkt me niet.

JdV En andersom? Kun je door goed te doen de zondes van een ander vergeven krijgen? (0:52:28-0:53:18)

The scene is set up as a confession: De Vries and the chaplain sit on a bench in the golden evening light while a translucent cloth separates them. De Vries formulates his father's involvement in Nazi perpetration as a sin and worries if this has passed onto him. He even inquires if it is possible to absolve his father's sins. In *Second-Generation Holocaust Writing*, McGlothlin argues that the next generation often figures their parents' guilt as a sin that they have inherited and that they have to atone for (25). Johan talks about his father's perpetration in a similar way, assuming responsibility for actions he did not commit, while the imagery of confession enhances how De Vries gives his burden religious signification. In combination with the earlier confrontation on the market in which De Vries states he has come to Indonesia to do his "plicht," the conversation with the chaplain consolidates that De Vries hopes that doing his duty as a soldier can serve as a means to atone for his father's sins.

In his attempt to absolve his father's sin, De Vries orientates towards Westerling as a model and a new father figure. Lammers also notes that Westerling becomes a substitute for De Vries' father (80). However, she does not consider that Taihuttu particularly visualises this development through religious imagery, building on the trope of sin. Westerling involves De Vries in a mission when Johan brings him an informant who the Camp Commandant did not want to consider (Taihuttu 1:00:13-1:08:35). During this mission, De Vries is initiated in the "act of killing" (McGlothlin, "Perpetrator Trauma" 105). The film represents his initiation into perpetration as a baptism. The score changes to Ave Maria and Westerling baptises De Vries in the sea (1:09:28). Johan's baptism suggests that he is now free from his father's sins. Hereafter, Johan dedicates himself to Westerling, following all his orders and becoming his driver. He even tears up the photo of his family, severing himself from his father (1:10:18). He becomes devoted to his new father figure, Westerling, and does not question their violent actions. Ironically, in an attempt to absolve his father's sins, De Vries becomes complicit in atrocities he sought to redeem himself of. This illustrates another complex dimension to the question of

culpability, reflecting the difficulty of integrating inherited perpetration, as it prompts De Vries to participate in perpetration himself.

In conclusion, *De Oost* presents a narrative that intertwines historical fiction with the psychological exploration of perpetration and inherited guilt. The film's exploration of Dutch violence during the Indonesian War of Independence builds on the inclusion of the historical figure of Raymond Westerling and reference to other cultural representations, particularly the comic novel *Rampokan*. Through the character of Johan de Vries, the film delves into the trauma induced by violating moral codes and the inherited burden of his father's past. By employing a non-linear narrative, Taihuttu juxtaposes the protagonist's wartime experiences with his post-war struggles, emphasising the recurring nature of trauma, especially underscored by narrative symmetry between temporarily different scenes. In addition, the film's formal aspects, such as its colouring – cool-toned for post-war scenes and warm sepia for wartime flashbacks – visually accentuate how De Vries is unable to integrate his war trauma. Additionally, the use of religious imagery emphasises the protagonist's internal conflict, where De Vries constructs his father's NSB past as sinful but also looks for redemption in following Westerling as a new father figure. By entangling inherited guilt with participation in perpetration, *De Oost* explores another complicating dimension of the inheritance of perpetration. Through this intertwinement and connection to the German occupation, the film demonstrates that historical events are not isolated situating the Indonesian War of Independence within Dutch history. Additionally, Arps and Vince find that the opening scene in which protesters greet the homecoming soldiers with slogans equate them to Nazis entangles Nazism and colonialism and argue that this is an Dutch example of multidirectional memory, as defined by Rothberg (19). Through connecting Nazism and Dutch colonial violence, Taihuttu's film imagines this past event, in which his great-grandfather was involved, as an essential part of national memory, while simultaneously exploring the personal traumatic consequences of the war through the character of De Vries. *De*

Oost, thus, serves as an exploration of how historical events of national significance, particularly of perpetration, have personal repercussions.

Comparison & Conclusion

The makers of *De Tolk van Java, Kleinkinderen van de Oost* en *De Oost* construct and consider their ancestors' perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence by incorporating existing materials that represent and revive a past they have not experienced. However, they depend on such materials to different extents depending on their medium and their narratives' fictionality that implies a different proximity of the makers to the past that they try to reimagine. *De Tolk van Java* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* depend more on personal objects, than *De Oost*, while also representing a narrative that follows more closely their familial memories of the war.

In *Kleinkinderen's* reconstruction of the past, historical events are projected on archival footage and Van Citters and Polnaija also use reports, places and pictures to delve into the histories of their grandfathers and gain a deeper understanding of the past. Through these relics, the documentary becomes what Pettitt calls "a site of multi-temporality" in which the boundaries between past and present are constantly breached as these objects resuscitate the past (291). *De Tolk* reactivates the past similarly through the fictionalised manuscript in which the character of Arto recounts his life and through the written descriptions of photographs, which son Alan uses to elaborate on his youth under the yoke of his father and his trauma. The structure around the manuscript particularly enables multiple voices to reflect on Arto's role in the perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence and its repercussions for the next generation. The novel's plurivocality stresses the inconsistency and complexity of the intergenerational transference of perpetrator memories. *De Oost*, however, uses different

strategies to reimagine the Indonesian War of Independence in its fictional narrative. Instead of incorporating personal relics or memories, the film borrows from existing cultural images, as its narrative depends on the historical figure of Raymond Westerling and the mediated representation of the war in the comic book *Rampokan*. *De Oost* also takes formal inspiration from the comic. Thus, *De Oost* can still be seen as a representation in which the director reconstructs a past that his great-grandfather experienced, as Taihuttu uses affiliative memory of existing material to imagine the Indonesian War of Independence. In sum, *De Tolk*, *Kleinkinderen*, and *De Oost* each incorporate techniques to reimagine and represent the complexities of the past, utilising personal relics, archival footage, fictional manuscripts, and existing cultural images to explore the enduring impact of wartime perpetration.

The medial differences between my case studies and the materials they incorporate also have different effects on their narratological representation of the Indonesian War of Independence, especially with regards to visual media. In *De* Tolk, the plurivocal structure is emphasised by ekphrastic descriptions of photos that comment on the subjectivity of its medium and one-sided perspectives. Meanwhile, *Kleinkinderen* utilises many multi-temporal montages to facilitate Van Citters' and Polnaija' projections of the past. *De Oost* visualises historical fiction in a cinematographic manner while its narrative considers perpetration and its inheritance, where visual elements, such as lighting, composition and setting, accentuate the emotional and psychological states of the characters, thereby deepening the exploration of the inherited trauma and moral ambiguities associated. All the works thus demonstrate that images, whether written or directly represented, serve as powerful tools for representing and interpreting the inherited trauma and memories of historical events, while effectively underscoring their narratives on the past.

For the representation of perpetration and its inheritance, my case studies display different tropes through which the next generation relates to the perpetration that their ancestors

committed. *De Oost* demonstrates how its protagonist's trauma originates in violation of his moral code. Similarly, *Kleinkinderen* identifies the act of killing as the cause of perpetrators' pain but Van Citters and Polnaija also recognizes that killing is inherent to being a soldier. However, they reject the glorified narrative of the 'good soldier.' Furthermore, both *De Oost* and *De Tolk* demonstrate how the pain of perpetration manifests itself through dissociation and the recurrent nature of trauma. *De Oost* emphasises the repeating motions of trauma by including visually and narratively similar scenes in different timelines. In *De Tolk*, Arto's character reenacts his perpetration through exerting violence within his family. *De Oost* depicts the psychological damage of perpetration as numbness by portraying the future De Vries as dissociated, which is emphasised by the cold colouring in the flashforwards. *De Tolk* also covers dissociation as the excessively detailed style of Arto's manuscript with its limited perspective masks the emotional toll that perpetration takes. In sum, the case studies elucidate the multifaceted ways in which the pain of perpetration is represented. Through various narrative and visual techniques, they highlight how perpetrator pain is intertwined with the violation of moral codes and the violence of military life, and the subsequent dissociation and recurrent nature of traumatic experiences.

The case studies demonstrate that the inability to integrate past perpetration resounds in the lives of next generations. In *De Tolk*, the influence of the father's perpetration is not only shown through domestic violence but also through the trope of ghosts that haunt his children reflecting how the past infiltrates the present. *Kleinkinderen* displays how the next generation feels shame and guilt about actions they did not experience. *De Oost* also illustrates a struggle with inherited guilt, not of Dutch violence during the Indonesian War of Independence but of World War II collaboration. It explores this and De Vries' eventual perpetration of violence through questions of sin and redemption depicted in his interactions with the chaplain and his evolving relationship with Commandant Westerling, which are both infused with religious

imagery. In each case study, different tropes, such as ghosts, sins and shameful burdens, express the difficulty of the next generation to relate to inherited memories of perpetration.

To conclude, the narratives of *De Tolk, Kleinkinderen* and *De Oost* demonstrate how the pain of perpetration is difficult to integrate for those who experience it and those who inherit it. As inheritors of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence, the makers, attempt to understand the past by reimagining the historical period within their works. They do so by incorporating existing material – direct representations or mediated memories – often relying on visuals that underscore their narratives and leave possibilities for projection. The creators of *De Tolk van Java*, *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* and *De Oost* oscillate between past and present in their explorations of their familial histories of perpetration. By representing the Dutch violence perpetrated during the war and drawing from their family's biographies, they attempt to embed the memories of perpetration in the history of the Dutch nation. They endeavour to signify the perpetration in the future, intergenerationally, socially and societally. In their search for this signification, these works cross temporal boundaries to confront the past with the present.

Chapter 2

Ethnic Difference, Colonial Practices and its Memorial Repercussions

This chapter investigates how the novel and films under discussion in this thesis portray the difference in remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence depending on ethnic group. My case studies include narratives from *Indische*, Moluccan and Dutch soldiers and the influence of colonial practices on their memories differs greatly. This chapter finds that for non-white minorities fighting on the Dutch side their memories of war are overshadowed by colonial oppression, discrimination and other practices that pit different population groups against each other. In contrast, the white narratives mostly focus on perpetration. Consequently, the case studies reflect or complement the current discourse on perpetration in Dutch memory culture.

Given that the Indonesian War of Independence was a colonial conflict, examining the colonial society that preceded it and shaped its trajectory is essential to understanding how colonialism affects its remembrance. In *Revolusi*, David van Reybrouck compares the society of the Dutch East Indies to a "koloniale pakketboot" that would have been separated into three socio-economic classes (72). In the same way such a ship was divided by class, Dutch colonial society was segregated before the Second World War. However, these classes were not only separated by wealth but they were also racially coded. The constitutional law of 1925 separated the population into three groups: Europeans, Foreign Orientals and Indigenous (79). While Van Reybrouck remarks that these groupings did not necessarily restrict one to a social class, most wealth and social standing lay in the hands of the Europeans (82). Additionally, the different groups had different courts. In sum, he finds the former Dutch East Indies a fundamentally segregated society (83).

Remco Raben takes a different stance and argues that the interactions and exchanges between ethnic groups were more complex and interwoven than a simple segregationist model

suggests. In "Colonial Shorthand and Historical Knowledge: Segregation and Localisation in a Dutch Colonial Society," he demonstrates through three case studies how many ethnic, religious, class and legal groups interacted and intermingled in the early-modern city of Batavia moving away from the tendency to depict Dutch colonial society as strictly segregated. Raben argues that historians have often overlooked the amalgamation within colonial societies due to their focus on segregation (178). However, he does admit that segregation as well as divisions between indigenous groups were colonial tactics that structured society (178). He warns historians not to reiterate a binary colonial lens and urges them to investigate the power structures instead (182).

To evade simplification, it is key to investigate the remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence in all its complexity as a conflict where different groups with different stakes came together, even on the side of Dutch perpetration. As I mentioned in my introduction, Pattynama finds that the former Dutch East Indies have become a contested and multifaceted location of remembrance shaped by the projections of the identity and needs of certain groups (*Bitterzoet* 18). These groups are also active shareholders in the remembrance of the War of Independence, as the war was an attempt for the Dutch to regain their empire.

De Tolk van Java

De Tolk van Java illustrates that the amalgamation of Dutch colonial society, which Raben identifies in Batavia, was also the case in Surabaya. Arto's mother is *peranakan*, an Indonesian-born Chinese, and his father is *Indisch*, making him an *Indo-peranakan*. Arto's heritage testifies to the creolisation in the city, as do his many interactions with people who belong to different social and ethnic classes such as Indonesian, *Indisch*, Chinese, Japanese and more. However easily interactions between groups occur, they often demonstrate colonial inequalities, such as

segregation and discrimination. Arto, for example, is legally Chinese, “ingeschreven bij de burgerlijke stand der Chinezen”, not European like his father, who did not recognise him and his siblings (111). However, they are “onder de aan Europeanen gelijkgestelden” (314). This means they fall under European jurisdiction and grow up relatively comfortable in a house with servants, also benefitting from European education. Because of his illegitimate status and the importance of lineage in Dutch colonial times, Arto gets bullied and maltreated by his teachers in primary school (97). Such discrimination continues throughout his life. Since he is frequently looked down upon because of his inferior status, his illegitimate lineage and his dark skin colour, Arto feels wronged by colonial society.

Arto’s background and his grievances about the colonial society directly influence his involvement in the Indonesian War of Independence and his choice to fight for the Dutch. Lammers identifies that conversations in which Arto’s Indonesian friends talk about their longing for Independence present how he grapples with his in-between position as a mixed-race person (46). Arto feels torn when Indonesian friends question his loyalty to the Dutch because he had been frequently discriminated against by them and Indo-Europeans (Birney 124, 288). Despite always being accepted by Indigenous circles, Arto replies: “Indonesië is niet mijn land. Al ben ik hier geboren, toch is dit land mijn *tanah air*, mijn vaderland niet” (124). He does not side with the Indonesians because he never felt at home: “Al sinds mijn prille jeugd had ik vaak het gevoel dat ik niet thuishoorde in Indië” (288). His feeling of displacement paradoxically comes from the discrimination he had to endure at the hands of other (Indo-)Europeans. However, Arto chooses to fight alongside them even though he despises their racism and feelings of superiority. In “Masculinities, Intersectionality and Transnational Memories,” political scientist Pauline Stoltz argues that by joining the navy Arto troubles the hegemony that does not treat him as equal because he is *Indo-Peranakan* (116). Becoming part of this military institution as translator is a struggle for Arto but when he does he counters the presumed

Dutchness of the navy and includes himself in it. In addition to Stoltz' argument, I find that being part of the navy enables Arto to perpetrate violence in the same way it had been used against him based on his inferior status. However, he chooses not to exert this violence on those who bullied him, as he still desires to belong to the Netherlands.

He particularly resents the *Indos*, despite being one of them, and this animosity demonstrates that he does not associate *Indos* with the Dutch state but with the Dutch colony of the East Indies. This comes forwards when Arto's Indonesian friends asks him why he will fight for the Dutch and he reflects on the fact that he will have to fight next to *Indos*:

> Ik had toen al niet veel achting voor de karakteristieke eigenschappen van Indischen en bovenal kenden Indischen totaal geen eendracht … want de ene Indische familie keek op de andere neer, of andersom: ertegenop. Er waren altijd meer ruzies tussen Indische families onderling dan tussen Indische en Hollandse of Javaanse families. Van kindsbeen af had ik veel moeten vechten tegen Indische jongens, vanwege mijn kale hoofd en mijn status van onwettig kind. Om zoiets sloten ze wél altijd een pact, die Indischen. Maar verder was het haat en nijd onderling. Anderzijds waren er Indische jongens die mij sterk het gevoel gaven dat ook ík tot de Indo-Europeanen behoorde … (125)

Arto identifies hostility within the *Indische* community, especially noting how particular the colonial Dutch society was about codified racial hierarchy. While some *Indos* include Arto, he finds that the majority of *Indische* people concern themselves so much with the colonial hierarchy that they undermine each other, especially those unrecognised like him. Arto thus describes a colonial society in which closeness to whiteness and being European is the highest achievable. While despising other *Indos* for their hierarchical behaviour, Arto also strives for Europeanness as he calls the Netherlands his "vaderland" implying his preference to affiliate with his legally European father (124). Arto's Western orientation also falls in line with an

observation by Lammers who notes that Arto's character often reproduces orientalist discourse, particularly in his distrustful reflections on *Indische* women (61) Although the discrimination originates from segregation imposed by the Dutch colonial state, Arto visualises his oppression as stemming from the *Indische* people and the Dutch East Indies, not to the Netherlands, leading him to side with the Dutch during the War of Independence.

Hence, Arto feels that the Netherlands is his promised land where he will not be treated as inferior. During the first 'police action', a Dutch fellow mariner recommends the Netherlands to Arto: "Hij vertelde mij dat bruine jongens zoals ik in Holland werden geaccepteerd als gelijken en gewild waren onder de meisjes." (349) Consequently, Arto thinks that in the Netherlands he will not be treated differently because of his ancestry and skin colour and he decides: "Daar moest mijn toekomst liggen" (382).

However, the Netherlands do not welcome Arto. First of all, Arto has many difficulties retrieving Dutch nationality, even though this had been promised to him. A major tells him: "jij bent in dienst van de Koninklijke Marine en dus ben jij Nederlands staatsburger" (457). When Arto rejects Indonesian citizenship which is offered to all *Indos*, he becomes "Nederlands onderdaan" and not a "staatburger" (467). Arto is "onverschilling" since he is still allowed to go to the Netherlands, as he is unsafe in Indonesia as a royalist (467). However, this particular juridical classification, "onderdaan", signifies that the Dutch state does not accept him to the same degree that he identifies himself as a Dutchman. He remains Chinese until he is finally naturalised (38). Secondly, the Netherlands also prove to be less colourblind than Arto has been made to believe. When Arto goes to meet his future wife in her father's shoe shop, he is led to the back because a black person was considered bad for business. His future wife explains to her son Alan this racist behaviour was normalised: "Alles wat niet blank was, dat waren zwarten" (32). Alan also criticises his mother for perpetuating such behaviour, for example, by apologising for her own mixed-race daughter (84). At the end of his life, Arto eventually calls

the Netherlands "*dat beroerde land vol rassenhaat*" (481). In addition, he has "plakboeken vol … over racisme in Nederland, waar hij nooit zijn draai heeft kunnen vinden" (481). He moves to Spain toward the end of his life because the discrimination has become too much for him. Eventually, he retracts his loyalty to the Netherlands because of the discrimination and inequality that he experiences once he lives there.

Arto's name change exemplifies his attitude towards the colonial Dutch East Indies and alludes to his breaking loyalty to the Netherlands. He has the name of his mother on his birth certificate: "Sie Arend" (86). Because he is an illegitimate child, he cannot legally bear his father's name, Nolan. However, Arto and his siblings can express their lineage through ""Sie" met tussen aanhalingstekens "Nolan" of officieel uitgedrukt "Sie, zich noemende Nolan" (314). His brother Jacob changes his name to "Nolans" to emphasise their status "onder de aan Europeanen gelijkgestelden" (314). Eventually, Arto follows Jacob's example but chooses "Noland" to start his own lineage (315). He reasons his name change as follows:

> Zo distantieerde ik me innerlijk van kolonialistische getinte Indo-Europeanen en dito blanke Indische Nederlanders. … Voortaan was ik een Oranjegezinde Indische Nederlander. Wat ik niet besefte was de betekenis van de naam, zoiets als de naam Zonderland. (437-438)

Through his name change, he distances himself from Dutch East Indies society and its *Indische* and white Dutch members, similar to the previously mentioned paragraph where he criticises other *Indos*. Additionally, he firmly confirms his position as a royalist on the Dutch side during the War of Independence. By dissociating himself from members of colonial society while calling himself an *Indische* royalist, he effectively differentiates between colonialism and royalism. This compartmentalisation reflects his loyalty to the Netherlands in which he negates how the Dutch state is partly responsible for the discrimination and segregation that directed his life. Lastly, the meaning of "Noland" alludes to Arto's later life when he finally realises that

the Netherlands will never become his home due to its pervasive racism. Thus, Arto remains without land. Hence, Arto's last name reflects the trajectory of feeling wronged by the colonial state in the former Dutch East Indies and eventually in the Netherlands due to segregation and discrimination.

Son Alan also demonstrates how such colonial division practices keep existing, particularly when he considers stereotypical images. The Palestinian American literary scholar Edward Said explained stereotyping as colonial practices when he coined the term "Orientalism" in 1978. Said defines orientalism as the way the West has constructed the Orient "as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (2). The West's constructed superiority and its representation of the Orient are intrinsically connected to power and authority structures to control and dominate the Orient (5). Alan demonstrates how orientalism is at work in the Dutch imaginary: "Het fenomeen 'de zwijgende Indische vader' is een mythe, of een literair motief dat niet deugt, een cliché dat terugvoert op het westerse romantische ideaal van de zwijgende, dan wel glimlachende dan wel bescheiden dan wel wijze oosterling." (182). Alan shows that "de zwijgende Indische vader" reduces *Indos* to a submissive, gentle identity, a western image to other and control the oriental subject. Alan rejects this myth, as he states that it is unfaithful and that his "vader vertelde, verhaalde, schreewde en schreef over de oorlog" (182). Stoltz argues that this passage demonstrates how Alan rejects that Dutch silence on mass violence is blamed on *Indos* who have stayed silent about it (111). In Chapter 1, I discussed how Arto's manuscript emphasises his dissociation from perpetration but it's detailedness also stylistically underscores how Arto was an *Indo* who was never silent about the war, thus supporting Alan's statement. By rejecting the silent *Indo* stereotype and pointing out its inaccuracy, *De Tolk* thus resists the colonial practice of orientalism and challenges a dominant narrative within Dutch memory culture.

Alan does not only reject stereotypes but also transforms them. Especially, he plays with the image of the "gitaarindo," gracing four chapters with that name. According to Alan every *Indo* needs to have a guitar: "Indo's zonder gitaar zijn als treurwilgen, Pa" (59). While Arto has one, he never plays it and does not let his children touch it. Alan wishes his father would fulfil the stereotype of playing guitar, so he would be silent and not tell "oorlogsverhalen" (62). Additionally, Alan uses a story about a guitar to question his father's narrative. Birney starts the book with a sentence that occupies more than one page in which Alan recounts many distinctive events of his father's life (13-14). The sentence ends with: "maar het ergst van alles vond hij dat tijdens de Politionele Actie de hals van zijn gitaar brak" (14). Here, Alan envisions his father as "gitaarindo" whose most prized possession was a guitar but he simultaneously questions the image, as he finds it almost absurd how much importance his father puts onto losing his guitar. Alan continues by questioning the reliability of his father's memory: "Of ben je dat laatste vergeten, Pa, omdat je het misschien verzonnen had?" (14). This question sets the tone for the rest of Arto's narrative as potentially fabricated. Here, Alan uses the 'gitaarindo' to question his father's narrative, as he simultaneously wishes for his father to comply with it and ridicules him when he does. He takes ownership of the stereotype and adapts and applies it at will. Consequently, *De Tolk* does not only resist orientalist stereotypes by rejecting them but also by appropriating them.

In conclusion, *De Tolk van Java* explores through Arto's narrative how different ethnic groups and social classes interacted amidst colonial inequalities such as segregation and discrimination in the former Dutch East Indies. Arto's mixed heritage and experiences of discrimination based on his colour and illegitimate status significantly shape his involvement in the Indonesian War of Independence, specifically his loyalty to the Dutch despite their mistreatment. Arto's ultimate disillusionment with the Netherlands underscores his perpetual displacement and the enduring presence of discrimination. His name change to "Noland"

reflects his ever-lasting struggle for acceptance and identity within the hierarchical colonial society of the former Dutch East Indies and the postcolonial context in the Netherlands. Furthermore, his son Alan continues to grapple with colonial legacies, particularly through the rejection and transformation of stereotypical images such as the silent *Indische* father and the "gitaarindo." Alan's critical engagement with these stereotypes highlights the ongoing resistance against colonial narratives and the reclaiming of identity. Together, Arto's and Alan's stories illustrate the lasting effects of colonialism on individual lives and memories, while also emphasising the need to understand and challenge the simplistic portrayals of ethnic groups within the broader context of postcolonial and cultural memory studies.

Kleinkinderen van de Oost

Central to *Kleinkinderen* is the story of the Moluccans, represented by Joenoes Polnaija, who is Dutch-Moluccan. Analogous to Arto's recollections in *De Tolk*, Moluccan memories of the Indonesian War of Independence are intricately intertwined with the colonial subjugation by the Netherlands. Moluccan migration and culture scholar Fridus Steijlen finds that Moluccan history cannot be separated from the Dutch colonial project: "Throughout the timeline of their stay in the Netherlands, this colonial adventure and experience reverberates" ("KNIL Chapter" 117-118). *Kleinkinderen* reiterates this and particularly demonstrates how the Indonesian War of Independence is one of the pivotal events that shaped Moluccan history. Throughout the documentary, Polnaija relays how the Dutch state caused the Moluccans many hardships which they reacted to through resistance. Polnaija echoes this resistance by repurposing existing images of Moluccans, confronting dominant narratives about his people.

Polnaija's grandfather is one of the many Moluccan men who were recruited for the KNIL (Citters 0:11:14-0:12:13). After the Independence War, the 5000 Moluccan KNIL soldiers

had to demobilise to the Netherlands (0:15:44-0:16:16). The reason for this demobilisation was their unsafety as KNIL soldiers in the newly proclaimed Indonesian Republic (Steijlen, "Transnational Relations" 556). During their boat passage to the Netherlands, however, they were discharged but promised to return home, to the Maluka islands (Citters 0:26:01-0:27:21). However, years passed without any prospect of returning home. At the same time, Moluccans were not allowed to work and integration was deemed unnecessary. Moluccans desired their own state but after independence, Indonesia laid claim on the islands. During the 20 years they had spent in the Netherlands, Moluccans had protested their situation appealing and pleading to the Dutch government but to no avail. The Moluccan discontent climaxed in the 70s with multiple violent protest actions. *Kleinkinderen* highlights 23 May 1977, when nine young South Moluccans hijacked a train at De Punt, while in Bovensmilde four others held a primary school hostage. Both hostage situations lasted three weeks until the armed forces broke them up. Polnaija's father was one of the hostage takers at Bovensmilde (1:03:31).

Kleinkinderen focuses on the resistance of the Moluccans to counter the stereotype of the loyal Moluccan soldier. In "Ethnic 'Ferociousness' in Colonial Wars: Moluccans in the Dutch Army in Indonesia, 1945-1949," Oostindie and Steijlen investigate the myths surrounding Moluccan soldiers during the Indonesian War of Independence through computational analysis of ego-documents and testimonies. Moluccans were often framed as "loyal and indispensable but at the same time somehow exceptionally prone to violence is a recurring theme in narratives of colonial warfare" (493). This stereotype existed long before the Indonesian War of Independence originating in the belief that KNIL soldiers recruited in Maluku were "potentially more sympathetic to colonial rule, because of their Christian creed and because of their minority status in a colony demographically dominated by (Muslim) Javanese" (494). While he does not explain where the stereotyping comes from, Joenoes names this image of the loyal Moluccan explicitly:

> Er heerst namelijk een beeld over de Molukkers dat wij altijd door de eeuwen trouw waren. Dat we altijd met de Nederlanders waren. … Altijd zo'n bepaalde stereotypering: De Molukkers waren altijd trouw. Dat was niet. In al die jaren van kolonisatie, al die eeuwen van kolonisatie, zijn er genoeg mensen geweest, van mijn volk, of het nou van de noord-Molukken was of van andere gedeeltes, die zijn opgestaan, die hebben gezegd: "Ik kap ermee." Die hebben gezegd: "Ik wil mezelf zijn. Ik heb recht om hier te zijn om te bepalen wat ik wil." (Citters 0:48:01-0:48:50).

Polnaija explains the persistent stereotype of the Moluccans that were loyal to the Netherlands. He also expresses that this is a faulty view since Moluccans often resisted during the 400 years that the Dutch colonised the area. Polnaija gives his "volk" a voice through direct speech and gives them the agency which the stereotype takes away from them. The documentary reiterates Polnaija's statement on resistance by illustrating many moments during which the Moluccans opposed colonial injustice.

Besides Polnaija's words, other elements in the scene also refer to Moluccan resistance and oppression. During the scene, Van Citters and he are visiting Fort Duurstede on Saparua, where Moluccans rebelled against the Dutch in 1817 by killing all the fort's inhabitants. All the rebels were eventually captured and their leader Thomas Matulesia, also known as Pattimura, was hanged. Additionally, Polnaija is wearing a t-shirt that says "1621." In 1621, the governor-general Jan Pieterszoon Coen commanded the Banda genocide. The Banda islands, situated below Ambon, are now part of the Moluccas and in Coen's time the only place where nutmeg and cloves grew (Ghosh 8-14). To secure a trading monopoly on spices, which the Bandanese refused to concede, Coen decided to exterminate and replace the entire population. Some escaped Bandanese continued to resist the Dutch from their outposts in the forests. However, after two months, the Dutch overpowered them and the extermination of the Bandanese was complete (Ghosh 29). Referencing both massacres from 1621 and 1817, the documentary shows

how Moluccans encountered and countered Dutch extreme violence long before the stereotype of the loyal Moluccan existed.

Additionally, *Kleinkinderen* demonstrates that the Moluccans' stay in the Netherlands is also signified by resistance. Polnaija illustrates this through the memories of his own family, presenting their resistance as a consequence of Dutch colonialism. Towards the end of the documentary, Polnaija says about his father's involvement in the hijacking: "ik [heb altijd] geweten dat dit niet een oorzaak was, maar een gevolg." (Citter 1:03:12). In line with Polnaija's words, *Kleinkinderen* constantly frames the Moluccans protest actions and those in which Polnaija's family was involved as consequences of Dutch oppression. For example, when Polnaija explains how Moluccan ex-KNIL soldiers were fed up with not being allowed to work and having no prospect of returning home, he concludes by recounting how his grandfather and nine of his fellow ex-soldiers raided a local supermarket as a result of frustration with their situation (0:26:01-0:28:41). Similarly, the documentary introduces discontent as the cause of the hijackings of 1977 by first showing footage of non-violent protests and governmental appeals of the Moluccan community. Polnaija summarises this discontent as a result of the dehumanisation of his people by comparing them to cattle: "Mijn volk is behandeld als vee. Vee dat verscheept, gedumpt en genegeerd kan worden" (0:38:13-0:38:37). He gives this dehumanisation by the Dutch state in combination with neglect towards Moluccan concerns as the reason for the Moluccan attacks at De Punt and Bovensmilde. Thus, *Kleinkinderen* simultaneously rejects the stereotype of the loyal Moluccan by focusing on their resistance and infers that their resistance is a consequence of Dutch colonialism.

Not only does *Kleinkinderen* express defiance through disproving the stereotype of the loyal Moluccan by recounting their resistance but also through the repurposing of the word "gijzeling", hostage. Polnaija reframes the connection between "gijzeling" and Moluccans while sitting on a bench in an Indonesian port with van Citters:

> Hoe noem je het als ik jou onvrijwillig meeneem naar mijn huis? Duizenden kilometers verderop? Hoe noem je dat? Dat is ontvoering, bro. Dat is gijzeling. De eerste gijzelingsactie van de Molukkers in Nederland en hun geschiedenis was hier. Door de Nederlandse staat zijn wij gegijzeld. (0:16:16-0:16:45)

He applies the meaning of "gijzeling" to the fate of Moluccans who had to demobilise to the Netherlands. Here, taking hostage is not only something done by the Moluccans in the 1970s but also something done to the Moluccans. Through reversing the Dutch and Moluccans, he frames the hijacking as a reaction that gave the Dutch a taste of their own medicine. As such, the Moluccan hijackings also become a result of Dutch colonialism.

In addition to the Moluccan story narrated by Polnaija, *Kleinkinderen* explores a white Dutch perspective through Van Citters and his family's involvement in the war and throughout colonialism. Van Citters endeavours to comprehend the contemporary significance of his grandfather's actions as a perpetrator. Through this exploration, he mirrors the current interest in Dutch cultural memory of questioning the violence perpetrated by the Dutch army and acknowledging the responsibility of the Dutch state. However, Van Citters delves deeper into his family's history to investigate their role in colonial perpetration. Not only did Van Citters' grandfather participate in the Indonesian War of Independence, but Van Citters' family also had a prominent and long-lasting role in the Dutch colonial project. Van Citters' ancestors were governing administrators of the VOC for three generations and this familial connection to Dutch imperialism goes as far back as his great-, great-, great-, great-, great-, great-grandfather (0:46:57-0:47:43). Thus, Van Citters' story represents that of Dutch colonialism and the white Dutch experience during the Indonesian War of Independence. His sense of responsibility extends beyond the current focus of Dutch cultural memory, reaching back further than the Indonesian War of Independence. Through Van Citters and his family history, the documentary

situates the Indonesian War of Independence within the long history of Dutch exploitation in the Indonesian archipelago.

Kleinkinderen demonstrates how Van Citters feels responsible and uncomfortable about his family's past and visually represents this through setting and montage. In a personal conversation between Van Citters and Polnaija, Polnaija remarks that his friend easily talks about his grandfather but not about the VOC and other earlier parts of Dutch colonialism (0:45:07-0:47:00). Van Citters laughs uncomfortably and admits that this is indeed true, as his ancestors were involved in the VOC and he feels ashamed about it. The settings of the conversation reflect his reluctance to address his ancestors' past. Polnaija and Van Citters are only filmed from the sides and the back, echoing how Van Citters finds it difficult to directly confront his ancestors' VOC history. Additionally, the scene takes place at dusk, shrouding the two men in shadows with only the purple and orange of the sky providing colour. The darkness of the scenes echoes how Van Citters' ancestors' past casts a shadow over his life.

Kleinkinderen also connects Van Citters' family history to the broader Dutch colonial project through its montage of images of Van Citters' ancestors and of paintings that depict the former Dutch East Indies. After the personal conversation, Van Citters' voice-over explains his lineage and its entanglement with the VOC over a montage of pictures and paintings. First, images of his ancestors, from pictures to paintings to etchings, pass by chronologically going back in time (0:47:01-0:47:07). Afterwards, the montage switches to paintings and drawings depicting colonial scenes from the Dutch East Indies, such as VOC ships and merchants (0:47:07-0:47:43). Many, if not all, hang in the Rijksmuseum[8] and have been made between the 17th and the 19th century. The paintings and drawing represent activities within the Dutch empire

[8] I was able to recognise a couple of the paintings from the Rijksmuseum, namely: *Het Kasteel van Batavia* (ca.1662) by Andries Beeckman; *Een Opperkoopman van de VOC met Zijn Vrouw en een tot Slaaf Gemaakte Bediende* (ca. 1650 - ca. 1655) by (circle of) Aelbert Cuyp; *Gezicht op de Gouden Bocht in de Herengracht* (1671-1672) by Gerrit Berchkeyde; and *De Arrestatie van Diponegoro door Luitenant-Generaal De Kock* (ca. 1830-1835) by Nicolaas Pieneman.

and thus the nation's history of colonialism. By connecting these visuals to Van Citters' ancestors, *Kleinkinderen* visually situates his familial history within the Dutch colonial past. The montage also reflects the shame that Van Citters' expresses. The montage constantly flickers to black, giving the impression that you are watching a broken tv. This effect gives an eerie and haunting feel to the montage mirroring Van Citters' discomfort about the past. Thus, through the montage, the documentary conveys how the burden of colonial history weighs heavily on Van Citters' conscience.

By entwining white Dutch and Moluccan perspectives *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* illustrates how diverse memories of the Indonesian War of Independence are among the perpetrators. The different narratives complement each other, revealing that neither alone can fully capture the complexities of the Indonesian War of Independence, Dutch colonialism and its aftermath, but together they offer a multifaceted view of the same historical reality.

In sum, *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* intricately weaves together narratives of defiance and historical reckoning through the lens of both Moluccan and white Dutch perspectives. Joenoes Polnaija's portrayal of Moluccan resistance challenges enduring stereotypes of passive loyalty, asserting instead the Moluccans' active resistance against Dutch colonial oppression. By reclaiming and redefining the term "gijzeling," Polnaija reframes historical events, emphasising how Moluccans were not only perpetrators but also victims of colonial violence and injustice. The documentary underscores Fridus Steijlen's assertion that Moluccan history is inseparable from the Dutch colonial project, highlighting pivotal moments like the 1970s hijackings, the 1817 Fort Duurstede rebellion and the 1621 Banda massacre as examples of decades of marginalisation and broken promises by the Dutch state. Moreover, Van Citters' engagement with his family's role in the Dutch colonial project situates the Indonesian War of Independence within broader colonial history and mirrors the contemporary attention in the Netherlands on Dutch colonial perpetration. Van Citters particularly expresses being ashamed

by his family's long active involvement in Dutch colonialism, which is emphasised by the setting and visual montage. By combining Dutch and Moluccan stories, *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* demonstrates how cultural artefacts can reimagine the past through different perspectives to offer broader and more inclusive understanding of the Indonesian War of Independence, its colonial origins and its aftermath.

De Oost

In contrast to *De Tolk* and *Kleinkinderen*, *De Oost* does not forefront the perspective of an ethnic minority soldier during the Indonesian War of Independence. Instead, we get the story of white Limburg soldier Johan de Vries and his moral doubts. Like Van Citters' narrative in *Kleinkinderen*, *De Oost*'s reflects the current focus of Dutch cultural memory. As I mention in the introduction, Dutch cultural memory, especially over the last ten years, exhibits a concern with Dutch perpetration during the war and repentance for it. Lammers also argues that *De Oost*'s focus on Dutch violence moves away from the Dutch war self-image as victims of German occupation, while also portraying the Indonesian War of Independence as Dutch history (97). Additionally, De Vries's character arc reflects how Dutch cultural memory shifted from a perspective in which the army's presence was first deemed necessary to viewing its actions as excessively violent. De Vries first wholeheartedly commits to his role of a soldier but later starts doubting the appropriateness of the violence he and his fellow soldiers have to perpetrate, climaxing in his refusal to carry out arbitrary executions under the command of Raymond Westerling.

The demonisation of Westerling also stands in line with the current Dutch view that condemns its historical use of violence. In *Talen van Geweld: Stilte, Informatie en Misleiding in de Indonesische Onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949,* historians Remco Raben and Peter

Romijn name Westerling and the Celebes affair as one of those cases that already caused a stir during the war (29). However, Westerling has often received an ambiguous portrayal of simultaneous glorification and vilification in Dutch decolonisation literature, finds scholar Arnoud Arps in "Een Omstreden Koloniale Beroemdheid: Het Geweld en de Reputatie van Raymond Westerling in de Dekolonisatieliteratuur" (464). However, last year's outcry about the presence of his daughter, Palmyra Westerling,[9] at the 15 August Indië commemoration in Amsterdam which led mayor Femke Halsema not to attend the event ("Halsema"), demonstrates that Westerling is generally not favourably looked at in the Netherlands.

While aligning with Dutch cultural memory in its disapproval of Dutch perpetration and Captain Westerling, *De Oost* only partly convinces in its message. Lammers finds that by focussing on Westerling, Dutch violence can still be dismissed as excesses, rather than structural behaviour as concluded by the *Independence, Decolonization, Violence, and War in Indonesia, 1945-1950* report (90). Additionally, I find De Vries's redemption arc insufficiently developed, as his change of heart is abrupt, lacking natural progression. First, he follows commands without question, for example, when commandant Mulder orders De Vries and Cohen to free an Indonesian prisoner but De Vries shoots him while he is running away (Taihuttu 1:12:00-1:14:28). Apparently, Westerling devised the situation to test De Vries's loyalty (1:15:35-1:15:54). De Vries passes the test behaving accordingly, having internalised Westerling's methods so much that he shoots the prisoner without having been given the order to do so. Only when De Vries has become part of the *Korps Speciale Troepen* and they start to burn down villages and arbitrarily execute inhabitants during the Celebes mission, does the violence become too much for him. This change of heart is strange considering he participated unquestionably in the violence earlier. The hunt that Westerling organises as reprisal for De

[9] Palmyra Westerling also wrote an open letter in which she argues that *De Oost* is historically inaccurate as it villainises her father and chooses an Indonesian perspective (Westerling).

Vries' disobedience also feels forced. De Vries interferes during one execution because he finds that Westerling unjustly accuses someone and calls for further investigation (1:57:51-2:11:38). As a punitive response, Westerling devises a chase in which other soldiers hunt De Vries. Why would the Dutch army waste its manpower on chasing someone who was already under their custody and was not even a deserter or spy? To summarise, *De Oost*'s portrayal of De Vries' transformation and the Dutch army's disproportionate response in pursuing him after his objection to injustice remains incomplete and somewhat problematic detracting from a nuanced picture of Dutch perpetration in general.

De Oost also falls short during the rare moments it attempts to highlight the experiences of ethnic minorities and their perspectives on perpetration. The film perpetuates orientalist stereotypes and lacks contextualisation of these narratives, notably omitting perspectives from victims of Dutch violence. Throughout the film, Indonesians are merely portrayed as recipients of Dutch violence. For example, the Indonesians during the South-Celebes DST mission form as an almost indistinguishable group that arbitrarily get executed by Westerling (1:41:34-1:44:41). Lammers also notes that *De Oost* does not specifically identify the enemies of the Dutch army, therefore generalizing the Indonesians (83). In addition, she argues that the portrayed Indonesians mainly function as extras without inner lives decorating the narrative around Johan's development (76). For instance, during the raiding of a village during the South-Celebes action, the scene focuses on De Vries: shots of his face and his expressions alternate with what he sees, mainly Indonesian in dirty clothes screaming and being pulled out of their homes (1:39:55-1:41:00). The violence against the Indonesians shocks De Vries, even though he participates in it. Regardless, the Indonesians solely serve as recipients of violence. In comparison to the Indonesians, most Dutch soldiers have backstories, some more elaborate than others: De Vries' father was a NSB'er; Mattias Cohen is Jewish and lost his father and his brother (0:48:31); Eddy Coolen was in the Dutch resistance (0:10:10); Werner and Tinus de

Valk are brothers (0:04:54). In contrast, *De Oost* provides barely any background information on the Indonesians it portays.

Only two scenes provide insight into the minority perspectives on the Dutch side. Both concern the character of Samuel Manuhio, a Moluccan KNIL soldier played by Joenoes Polnaija. In the first scene, the Dutch soldiers address him with orientalist and racist slurs. De Vries and his mates are having a drink after the funeral of soldier Werner de Val (0:47:14-0:49:15). Mattias Cohen spots a group of Moluccan KNIL soldiers and remarks that they would turn on them in an instant, while racistly calling them "Stelletje stinkapen" and "Die zwartjes daar." In his grief about his dead friend, Cohen lashes out at the portrait of Queen Wilhelmina deeming her responsible. Manuhio addresses Cohen about his blasphemy, to which Cohen replies: "Ga jij je met je eigen koningin bezighouden." Manuhio replies: "Ze is mijn koningin." Cohen does not acknowledge Manuhio's answer and decides to continue his racist remarks: "Weet je wat jij kan doen met je bruine apensmoel, je kan mijn pik likken, ja." Manuhio takes offence and a fight breaks out between the Dutch and Moluccan KNIL soldiers. This scene contains many racist slurs and therefore portrays the racial prejudice of the Dutch soldiers. Because the movie focuses on the experiences of these white Dutch soldiers, it frames the indigenous population through this Dutch orientalist lens. This perspective is reinforced by the film's minimal engagement with Indonesian narratives, often portraying the indigenous population as recipients of violence, savage freedom fighters or helpless citizens in need of the army's protection, thus perpetuating orientalist stereotypes.

Additionally, Lammers notes that De Vries does not participate in the blatant racism, taking a *white savior* position that the majorly white Dutch public can identify with (94). This then keeps the viewer at a safe distance from the orientalist outings of other characters. I agree that this positioning shields viewers from confronting the full extent of racism portrayed in the

movie but it also inhibits meaningful engagement with the racism depicted. De Vries' detachment hinders the viewer's engagement with any minority narrative portrayed in the story.

Furthermore, while the movie expects a majorly white Dutch audience, it assumes the viewer to know certain things, which only adds to a lack of contextualisation. The previously mentioned exchange underscores the Dutch soldiers' limited understanding of the origins of Moluccan KNIL soldiers. When Manuhio asserts his allegiance to Queen Wilhelmina, Cohen responds with further racism, indicating a broader ignorance among the Dutch soldiers about the identities of their Moluccan counterparts. Manuhio's background is later elucidated in the film, when, De Vries, who recognizes Manuhio as Indonesian, asks him if it feels strange to fight against his own people. Manuhio answers: "Dit zijn mijn mensen niet. Mijn eiland is van hier net zover als Amsterdam van Istanbul ligt. Jullie hebben hier één land van gemaakt. Ik ben net als jij, een christen. De mensen hier houden niet van christenen. Als jullie hier weg zijn, komen ze voor ons" (1:31:44-1:32:19). Manuhio clarifies that the Javanese are not his people, emphasising his Moluccan identity and Christian faith. Despite these nuances regarding the Moluccans, the portrayal of Indonesians as adversaries persists, as they are depicted not only as enemies of the Dutch but also of the Moluccans. Here, the film assumes audience familiarity with these distinctions without explicitly addressing them, underscoring its failure to provide adequate contextualization. In short, *De Oost* barely engages with ethnic minority experiences and perspectives on perpetration, perpetuating orientalist tropes and demonstrating a deficiency in contextualising these narratives.

In contrast to *De Tolk* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost*, *De Oost* does not foreground the perspective of an ethnic minority soldier during the Indonesian War of Independence. Instead, *De Oost* reflects the current focus of Dutch cultural memory, particularly the recent concern with Dutch perpetration during the war and the accompanying sense of repentance. The character arc of Johan de Vries encapsulates this shift in Dutch cultural memory, as he begins

to question the excessive violence and the command of Captain Raymond Westerling. However, *De Oost* only partially succeeds in conveying its message, as it portrays Dutch violence as isolated incidents rather than structural behaviour, with De Vries's redemption arc lacking natural progression and feeling forced. *De Oost* also does not engage with the experiences of ethnic minorities, as it perpetuates orientalist stereotypes and omits perspectives from victims of Dutch violence. The film's focus on white Dutch soldiers frames the Indigenous population through an orientalist and racist lens, portraying them as either savage freedom fighters or helpless citizens, thereby reinforcing stereotypes. The few scenes that provide insight into minority perspectives, particularly those involving Samuel Manuhio, a Moluccan KNIL soldier, are insufficiently contextualised, assuming the viewer's familiarity with certain historical nuances. Ultimately, *De Oost* fails to capture the complexity of identities and conflicts within its representation of the Indonesian War of Independence.

Comparison & Conclusion

Each of my case studies centres on a different ethnic group and their memories of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. While *De Tolk van Java* focuses on the experience of Dutch-Indonesian-Chinese Arto, *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* offers both a Dutch-Moluccan and a white Dutch perspective on the war. In contrast, *De Oost* does not highlight a minority's story but that of a Dutch soldier. For all these ethnic groups different issues are at stake during the war and the case studies reflect this. Besides perpetration, the minority narratives all deal with colonial oppression. Even though the characters are soldiers on the side of the Dutch, thus fighting in the name of the colonial oppressor, they express deep dissatisfaction with colonial practices that adversely affect them.

The colonial practices of division particularly affect these minorities. All three works address issues of racism, segregation, orientalism, and colonial politics, all of which are practices that create divisions and conflicts among various population groups. Especially, *De Tolk* illustrates the complexities and loyalties within the hierarchical colonial order of the former Dutch East Indies. For example, *De Tolk*'s character Arto feels wronged by the partially segregated colonial society, because other (Indo)Europeans treat him as inferior due to his illegitimate lineage and his skin colour. However, he remains loyal to the Dutch, compartmentalising the Netherlands and their colonial project. In comparison, *Kleinkinderen* demonstrates how the Moluccans fell prey to Dutch colonial politics. By recruiting Moluccan soldiers to the KNIL army, the Dutch pitted them against the Indonesians. Thus, when Indonesia claimed the Moluccas after independence, the Moluccans with their desire for an independent state were obstructed in their return to their home. Consequently, they had to remain in the Netherlands, where the Dutch state also segregated and ignored them. Similarly, *De Tolk*'s Arto ends up in the Netherlands due to his loyalty to the Dutch. However, he does so with great hope but eventually becomes disillusioned, as the Netherlands is not the colourblind welcoming place he expects it to be. Thus, the case studies demonstrate that the Dutch colonial project heavily influenced the memories of non-white ethnic groups discriminating and disappointing them, albeit in different ways.

Besides their entanglement with the Dutch colonial project and resulting disillusionment with the Dutch state, both works also highlight that minority soldiers do not passively accept their circumstances. Instead, they fervently oppose and resist the challenges they face. *Kleinkinderen* centres the many ways through which Moluccans have resisted colonial rule, from the resistance during the Banda massacre to the 1970s hijacking. The documentary particularly frames this resistance as a result of Dutch colonialism. Additionally, both *Kleinkinderen* and *De Tolk* particularly resist orientalist stereotypes imposed on their ethnic

groups, Moluccans and Indos respectively. Through exposing and deconstructing these images, the creators are rewriting existing colonial narratives attached to their minorities.

In contrast to *De Tolk* and *Kleinkinderen*, *De Oost* perpetuates orientalist stereotypes. Because its storyline revolves around white Dutch soldier Johan de Vries, the film only provides superficial perspectives on different groups involved in the war. The characters of Dutch soldiers make violently racist remarks and the portrayal of Indonesians as rogue guerillas or helpless victims sustains their racist commentary. Moreover, when the film briefly touches on the experiences of ethnic minorities, it fails to contextualise or delve deeply into their perspectives. To compare, *Kleinkinderen* also includes a white Dutch perspective through Van Citters' family but intertwines it with that of Polnaija's Moluccan story, offering a more nuanced view of Dutch involvement that is sensitive to the diverse experiences and memories of the Indonesian War of Independence. Additionally, *Kleinkinderen*'s narrative puts the Indonesian War of Independence in perspective by connecting it to more historical events of Dutch colonialism.

Still, all three works align with the broader Dutch memory culture, which examines perpetration and acknowledges the responsibility of the Dutch state. Whereas *De Oost* follows this trend rather uncritically, *Kleinkinderen* and *De Tolk* also bring in different ethnic perspectives, demonstrating how Dutch colonialism complicates the remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence. By doing so, their narratives intervene in the popular cultural memory of the war. Despite the problematic portrayal of *De Oost*, it has instigated the production of *Kleinkinderen* which offers a more nuanced exploration of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. This evolution underscores the ongoing discourse and dynamics in Dutch cultural memory surrounding its colonial past and its implications.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I aimed to answer the question: How do *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* represent intergenerational memories of Dutch perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence? Each of the case studies offers their own view on Dutch perpetration, subsequent trauma and its inheritance. Through their respective perspectives, they reimagine the past while taking inspiration from memories of their paternal ancestors who fought in the war. *De Tolk van Java* focuses on the personal and intergenerational consequences of perpetrating violence through a plurivocal structure that demonstrates how war trauma permeates and haunts a family, while also exploring questions of heritage and identity within a (post)colonial context. *De Oost* presents the internal conflict of a Dutch soldier, Johan de Vries, whose own involvement in violence and his inherited guilt highlight the convoluted workings of perpetration, however, its singular perspective evades a comprehensive exploration of the conflict's complexities. *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* portrays the journey of the grandchildren of Dutch soldiers who grapple with the long legacy of colonial perpetration and explore the intergenerational transmission of trauma and guilt but also of resistance.

These narratives illustrate the consequences of perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence by exploring the scars left on both the perpetrators and their descendants. These cultural artefacts demonstrate how perpetrators experience and express trauma and dissociation from their violent pasts. Subsequent generations, as depicted in these works, often deal with a complex mix of shame, guilt, and a desire for redemption while critically reflecting on their familial memories. These reflections are literarily and cinematically facilitated by the incorporation of existing materials, mainly archival objects and mediated representations. Additionally, narrative, visual and symbolic tools are employed to convey the themes of perpetration and trauma and to bridge the temporal gap between past and present, allowing the creators to engage with their inheritance of perpetration.

De Tolk van Java, *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* and *De Oost* also demonstrate that colonial practices heavily influence the intergenerational remembrance of perpetration. Their narratives illustrate how discrimination, segregation and oppression impact the collective memory and identity of both the colonisers and the colonised, as well as reflect how these varying groups participated in the Indonesian War of Independence with different interests. For instance, De *Tolk van Java* and *Kleinkinderen* highlight how racial stereotypes continue to shape the experiences and collective memories of *Indische* and Moluccan communities. In contrast, *De Oost* perpetuates an essentialist perspective of the minorities it represents. My case studies thus elucidate that the memories of perpetration differ significantly across ethnic groups, as they all acknowledge Dutch colonial perpetration but the minority accounts also represent victimisation by and resistance against Dutch colonial oppression.

If we take this novel, film and documentary as indicative of the Dutch memory culture on the Indonesian War of Independence of the last ten years, they align with the official recognition of Dutch colonial perpetration but also represent new angles on this violent past. To different extents, they present complex and reflexive narratives that explore inherited memories of perpetration and its trauma by including different perspectives from within the Dutch colonial army. Through their diverse representations that bridge past and present, *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost*, and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* reflect on and contribute to the ever-evolving remembrance of the Indonesian War of Independence in the Netherlands. The significance of this study lies in the insights gained on the impact of colonialism on contemporary society through this investigation into the literary and cinematic portrayals of intergenerational memory confronting (post)colonial perpetration.

Particularly, my thesis and the narratives that I have analysed show that in a colonial context, in this case, the Indonesian War of Independence, there are many layers of violence. Especially Chapter 2 demonstrates that minorities, even though they are soldiers fighting on the

coloniser's perpetrating side, experience forms of colonial violence, while simultaneously perpetrating violence. As Chapter 1 elucidates, they experience the aftermath of perpetration through trauma and pain like white Dutch soldiers. However, they also have to deal with colonial division practices, segregation and discrimination about which they express a sense of victimhood. The colonial oppression they experience thus intertwines with their experience of the war, complicating their memories of their perpetration which also transfers intergenerationally. Here, the concept of *postmemory* and investigation into *Väterliteratur* fall short because they solely focus on memories of either perpetration or victimhood and their intergenerational transmission. While they have enabled me to discuss the intergenerational transmission of perpetrator memory within a colonial context such as the Indonesian War of Independence, they fail to capture how colonial inequalities affect them. Considering the effects of colonial hierarchies and practices on (intergenerational) memories is essential for cultural memory studies on (post)colonial conflicts since these influences are always at work in such contexts. My case studies on the Indonesian War of Independence demonstrate that these colonial practices are even present within the perpetrating coloniser's side.

As I have argued in my introduction, my case studies are examples of the current memory boom in the Netherlands on the Indonesian War of Independence. As cultural memory production does not stop nor will it on the topic of the Indonesian War of Independence, I am curious to see in what ways new literary and cinematic works represent intergenerational memories of Dutch colonial perpetration. The new cultural production will definitely provide new opportunities to research the portrayal perpetration and its inheritance. Also, this topic remains unexplored in many existing artefacts, of which I have listed many from the last ten years in my "Timeline of Dutch Cultural Productions and Events about the Indonesian War of Independence." I hope that this broader corpus that I have assembled can serve as a starting point for other researchers on the topic.

One of the limitations of this thesis is that it only investigates one view on the Indonesian War of Independence, as my thesis deliberately focuses on the Dutch perpetrator perspective. Even though my case studies include *Indische* en Moluccan stories, this thesis does not explore the Indonesian view on colonial violence. As I mentioned in the introduction, scope and language prevented me from investigating Indonesian stories of this particular historical period. I realise that, because of the exclusion of Indonesian memories, this thesis provides only a limited exploration of the Indonesian War of Independence. A one-sided perspective always risks the essentialisation of a complex conflict and can lead to an incomplete understanding of the past. I have done my best to explain the complexity of the war and its context in the introduction but I also realise that I probably have overlooked certain sensitivities.

Additionally, my position as *Indo* means that I approach my thesis with a certain bias, even though my background also motivates my research. I feel a stronger connection to minority narratives, as they reflect the memories with which I grew up. My affiliation informs my inclination to highlight these stories but also means that I cannot approach them in a completely objective manner. Ultimately I hope my background provides valuable insights due to my familiarity with the subject, rather than leading to biased conclusions.

There is an opportunity for future research to delve into different cultural representations of the Indonesian War of Independence and to compare Dutch and Indonesian portrayals. Indonesia has a long tradition of cultural works that cover the Indonesian War of Independence, in contrast to the Netherlands. For example, films on the subject are named *film perjuangan*. *Perjuangan* means ‘fight’ in Indonesian. These films were made as early as 1954 and often reflect the political time they were made in (Heeren 82). I believe there is a lot of potential in exploring these Indonesian cultural representations and their contrasts with Dutch narratives. There is such comparative work being done in Indonesia but unfortunately I could not read this due to my lack of knowledge of the Indonesian language. The article “Representasi Sejarah

Dalam Citra Visual: Antara Tantangan Akurasi dan Potensi Distorsi" by Arda Muhlisiun is an example of transcultural comparative analysis as it compares the wartime representation of Indonesia in *De Oost* to an Australian and Japanese film. Similar comparative study could provide deeper insights into how different nations remember and interpret their shared history and its legacy.

Another suggestion for future research is to delve more into the gendered aspect of intergenerational transmission of memories. My case studies notably present memories transferred through paternal lineage as the creator's ancestors were all soldiers during the war. While I noticed this, further investigation can be done into the significance of this paternal inheritance and its effects on family dynamics. For example, Stoltz explores such a gender angel in *De Tolk van Java* in "Masculinities, Intersectionality and Transnational Memories." Her research elucidates how the novel represents transnational memories of hegemonic masculinity through the father/son relationship, thus analysing the depiction of (post)colonial gender structures in an intersectional manner. This focus on the paternal lineage also raises questions on the role of women during this period and how their experiences may have affected their remembrance and subsequent intergenerational memory transmission. For example, the figure of the "njai," the Indonesian concubine and housekeeper of Dutch men, can be explored within these narratives on the Indonesian War of Independence.[10]

In conclusion, this thesis has aimed to examine how *De Tolk van Java*, *De Oost* and *Kleinkinderen van de Oost* represent intergenerational memories of Dutch colonial perpetration during the Indonesian War of Independence. Each of my case studies offers a distinct insight into the complexities around the inheritance of the painful and violent memories associated with the war and demonstrates that the colonial past has left its traces on the present. Still, more

[10] Historian Reggie Baay wrote a extensive study on the njai: *De Njai: Het Concubinaat in Nederland-Indië* (2009)

than enough exciting research on the topic can be done in the future to broaden our understanding of the legacies of colonialism. I hope that my thesis has provided my readers the same insights as my case studies have given me, especially that colonialism and past violence have a long breath and intergenerational repercussions.

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PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

Fraud and Plagiarism
Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

ChatGPT/Generative AI
You are not allowed to generate text, code, figures, images, etc. with Generative AI and present it as your own work. This is a form of fraud. When in doubt, always consult your thesis supervisor about what is and is not admissable.

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The rules also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.14) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.
Name: Dewi Kopp Student number: 2413574
Date and signature: 

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.