

# Politics in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Minahasa and the role of Eduard Douwes Dekker

## contribution to the seminar CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN INDONESIA: ECHOES FROM THE PAST

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# Cultural diversity:

Different criteria may be used, such as:

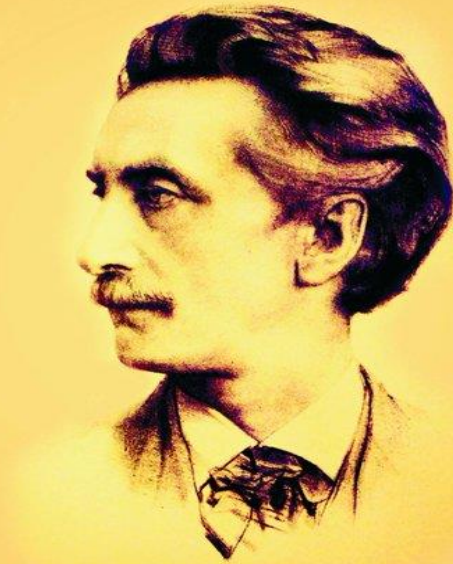
1. Between groups of belonging
2. Between historical periods
3. Between «lifestyles»: this may be transnational

# A political perspective on cultural diversity:

The «haves» and the «have – nots»

M u l t a t u l i

# Max Havelaar



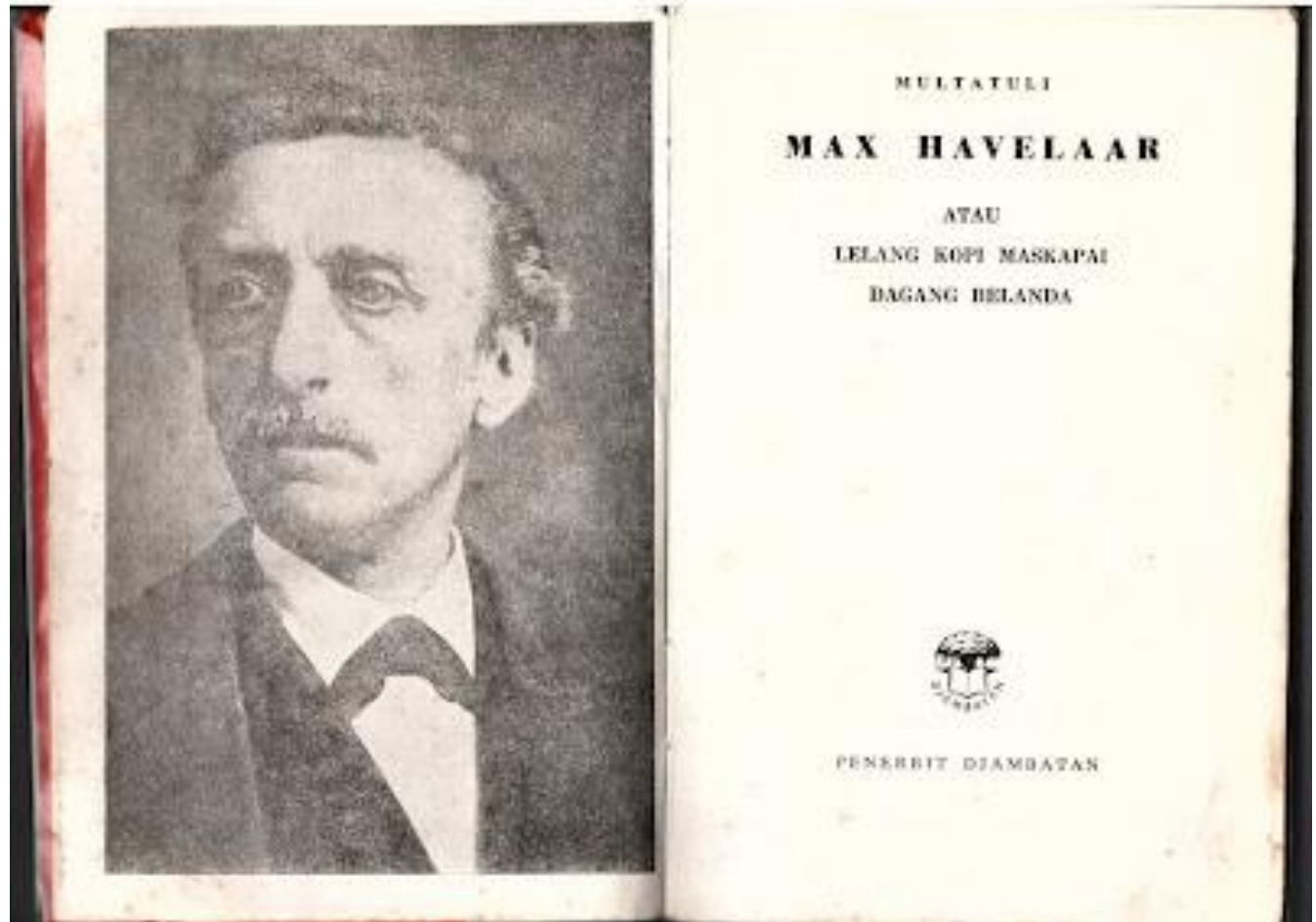
Buku pertama yang membuka mata dunia tentang busuknya Kolonialisme Hindia-Belanda, dan memberi ilham bangsa Indonesia untuk merdeka.

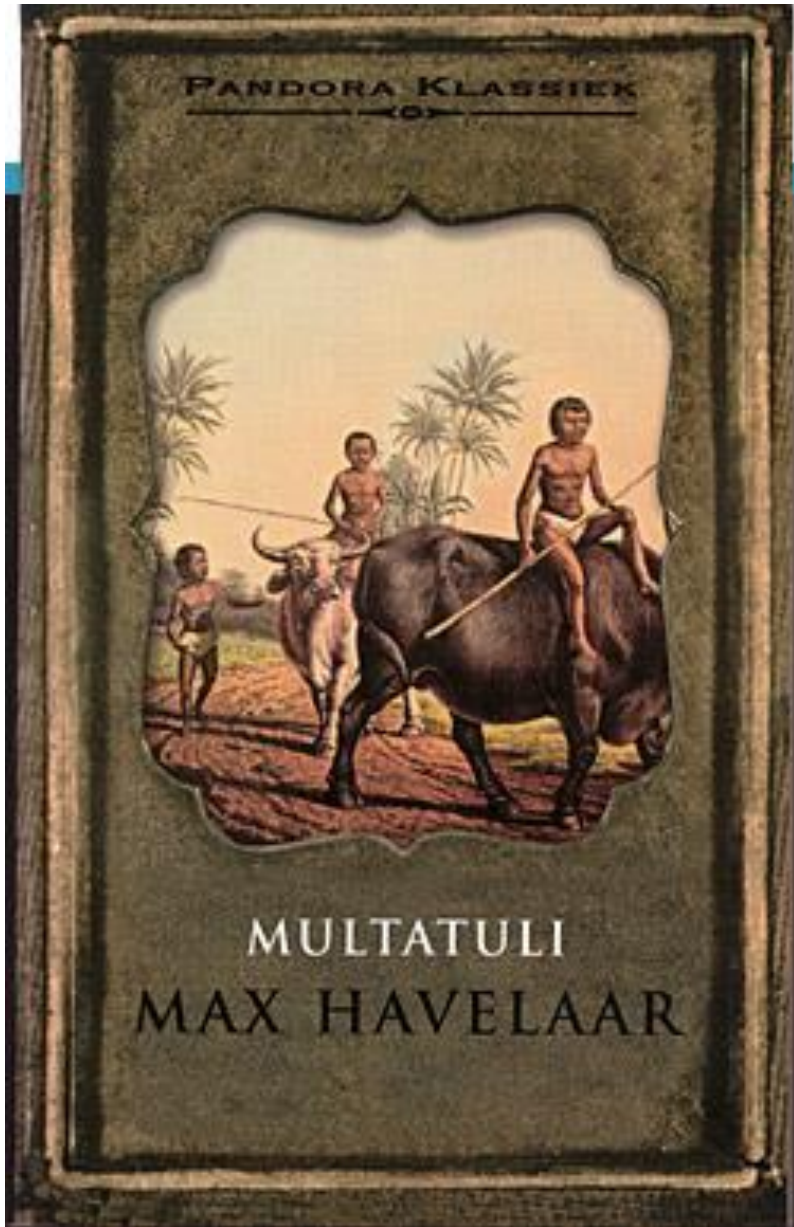
# Multatuli Max Havelaar

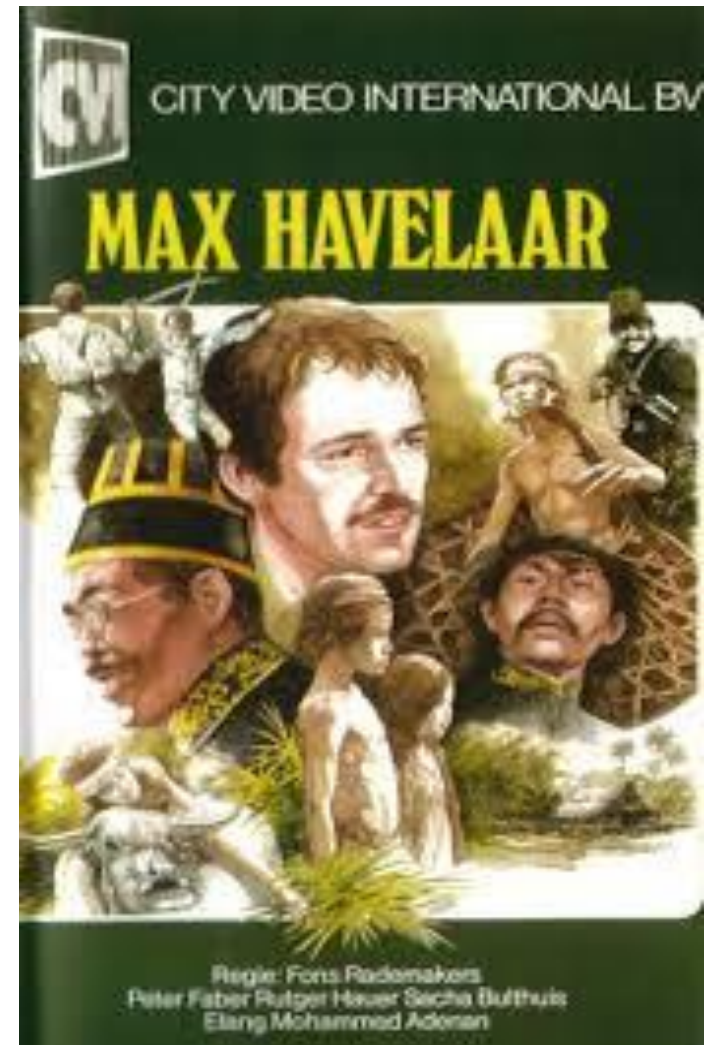
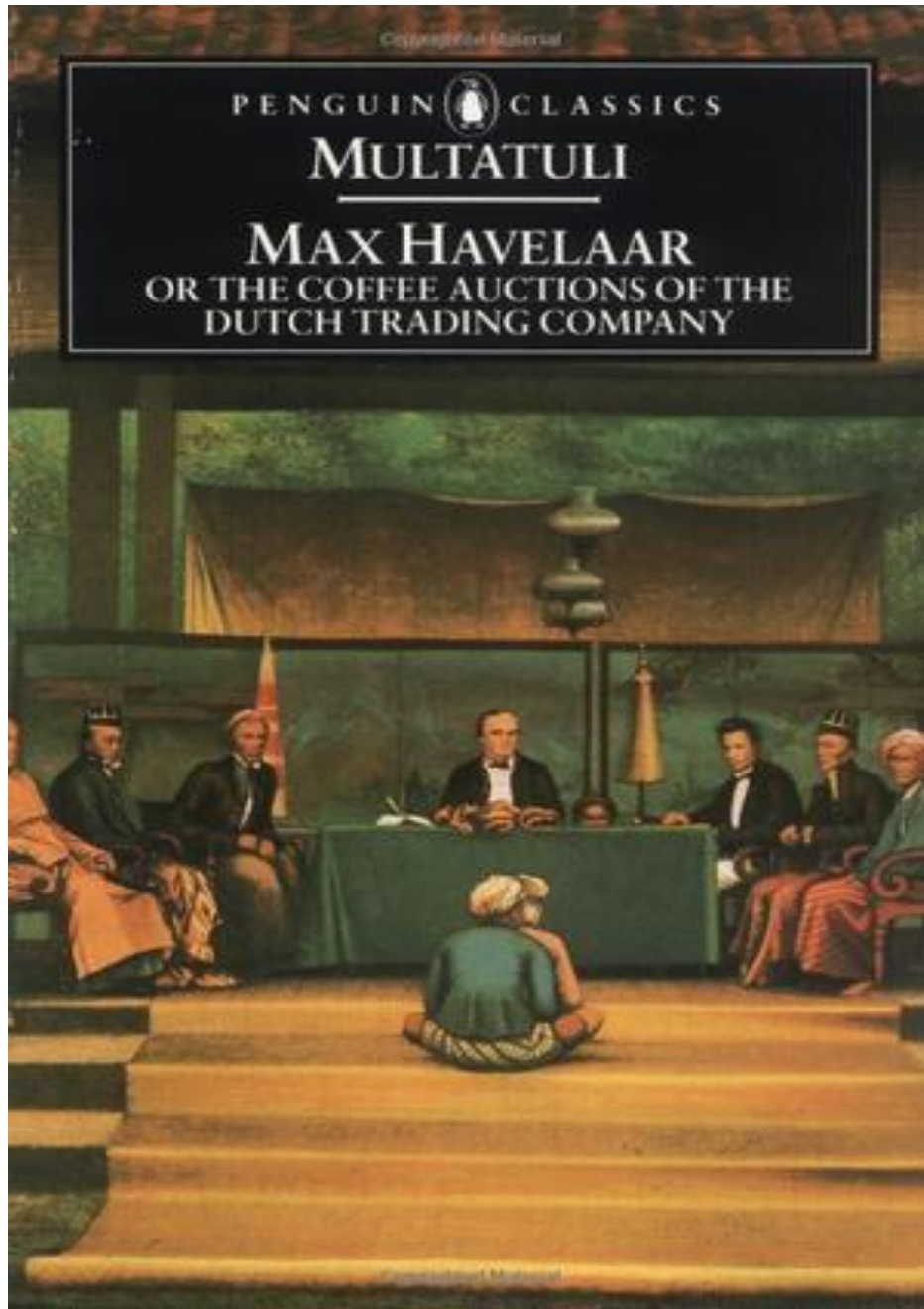
*Of de koffieveilingen  
der Nederlandse  
Handelmaatschappij*



DWARSLIGGER KLASSIEK







# Eduard Douwes Dekker (Multatuli)

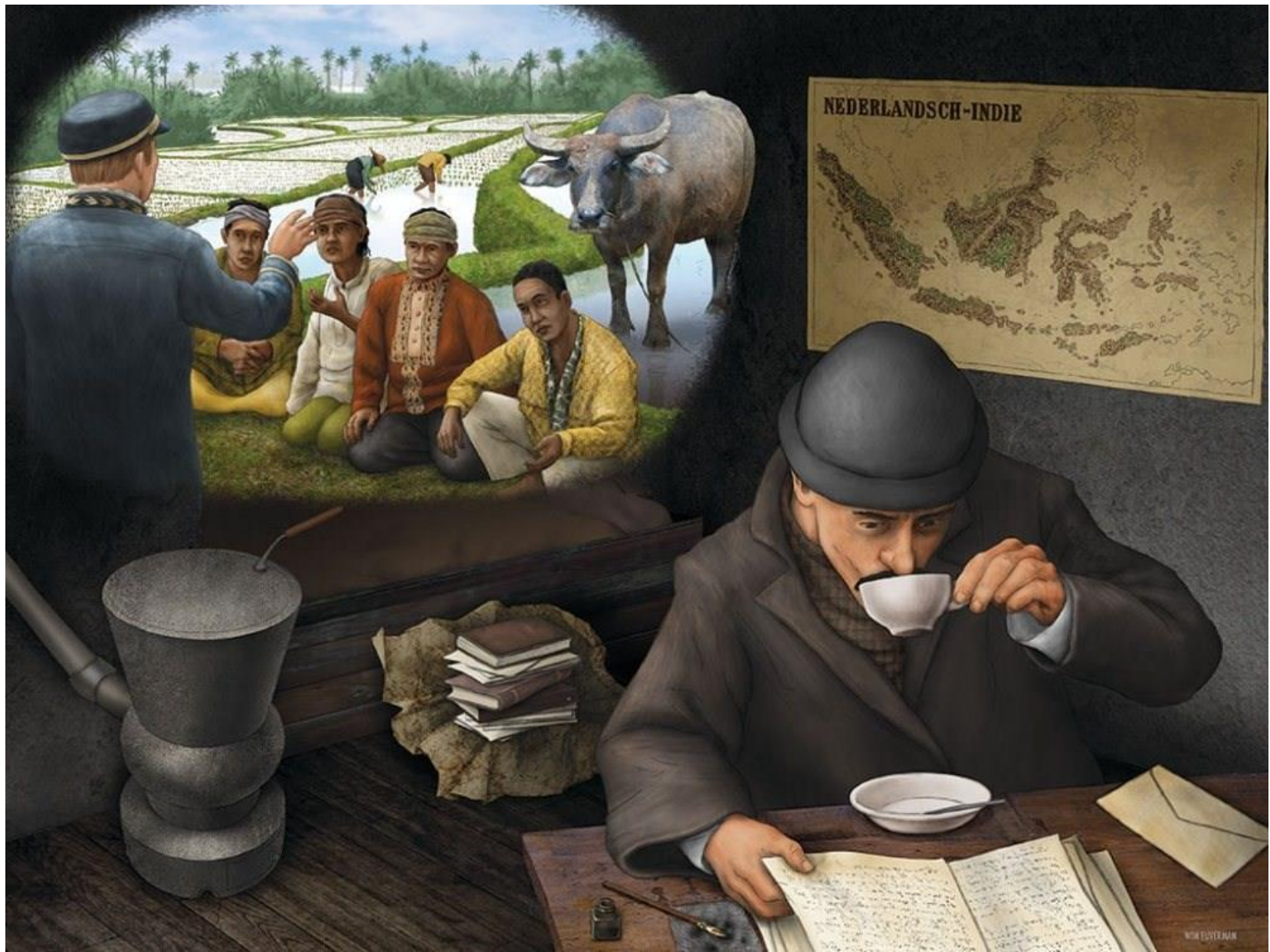
1820 Born in Amsterdam

1838 Leaves for «Nederlands Indië»

Until 1856 Civil servant in Batavia, Natal, Karawang, Purworejo, Manado, Ambon, Lebak

1857 Return to the Netherlands - unemployed.

1860 Publication of *Max Havelaar*.

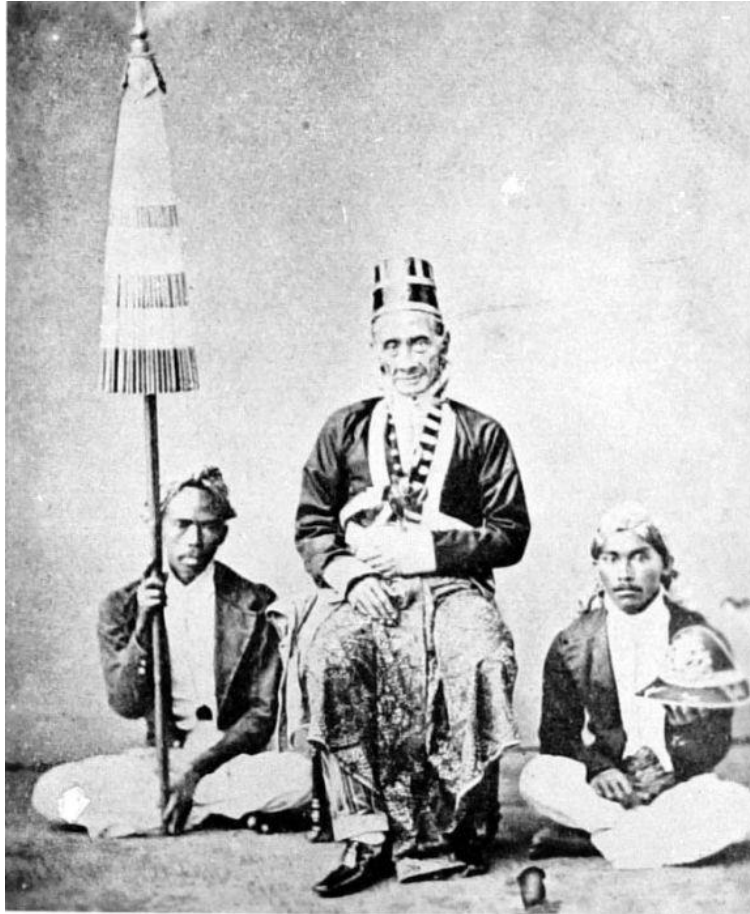


# Pramoedya Ananta Toer:

"Saya masih berpendapat bahwa Multatuli besar jasanya kepada bangsa Indonesia, karena dialah yang menyadarkan bangsa Indonesia bahwa mereka dijajah.

Sebelumnya, di bawah pengaruh Jawanisme, kebanyakan orang Indonesia bahkan tidak merasa bahwa mereka dijajah. (Saya Terbakar Amarah Sendirian! h. 15)"

# Raden Adipati Karta Nata Negara Lebak, tahun 1850an



Collectie  
Tropenmuseum  
Amsterdam





Si Tou Timou  
Tumou Tou

# Douwes Dekker as secretary of the Residency of Manado, 1848-1852

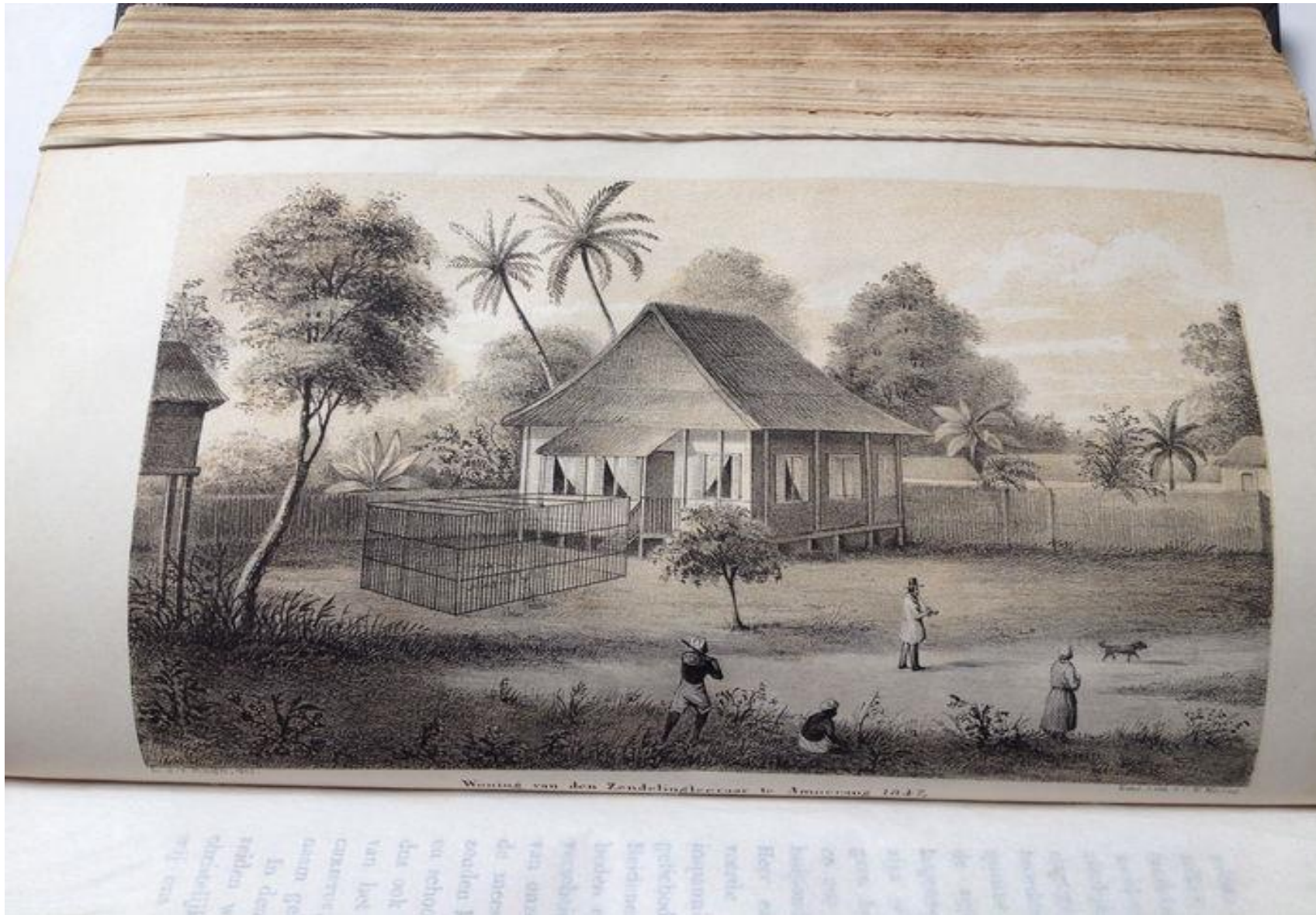
Residency of Manado:

=

Provinces

- Sulawesi Utara
- Gorontalo
- Central Sulawesi





Woning van den Zendingleeraar te Amoenang 1846.

Woning van den zendingleeraar te Amoerang 1846

(in: Van Rhijn 1851)

# Legal distinction within the population of Manado Residency (notes by Douwes Dekker, 19-08-1849)

- Europeans;
- Descendants of Europeans;
- Burger Islam;
- Arabs;
- Ternatans;
- Chinese;
- Native negorij Christians
- Native burger Christians
- Slaves
- Negorijmensen («negorij people»)
- Vrije mensen («free people»)
- Negorijmensen in the service of Europeans
- Unmarried negorijmensen (orang berboedjang)
- Pagans

Dutch colonial system: legal plurality  
between categories of people based  
on «race», ascendance and tradition:

**A HIGHLY RACIST SOCIETY**

# Fort and «Societeit» in Manado, 20th century



Collectie  
Tropenmuseum,  
Amsterdam

# Manado, city of partying

«... as the Resident is not married, we are more or less the most prominent of this place; and in general, I have to say that the public treats us better than we probably deserve...»

«... in fact, Manado is somewhat too gaudy for us.. Every birthday, every baptism, every “nothing” seems to be a motive for a feast.»

Letter of 15-1-1851 to his brother, the Reverend Pieter Douwes Dekker

# About his second house at Paal Dua

«A distance of three paal, by a poor road, seems to me a suitable obstacle between my thinking and their dancing.»

Letter of 15-1-1851 to Pieter Douwes Dekker

# Some issues Douwes Dekker had to deal with:

- Earthquake of 1846 – its aftermath
- Whalers
- Piracy
- Health crises
- Adat
- Policy reform

# Reform measures

Abolishment of compulsory rice deliveries :

«Proclamation» to leaders of Minahasa,  
1851

Power, abuse of power and political dynasties

Minahasa : authority based on personal characteristics.  
(different from Java)

The case of Sonder

Woe, poor and hungry  
Sonder. Alas, may those poor  
souls be released from their  
scourge – the chief”. Nicolaas  
Graafland, 10-4-1852

# Power, abuse of power and political dynasties (2)

The development of administrative dynasties  
(level of walak) in the 19th century.

# Concluding:

## Cultural diversity:

- a. between Indonesians and Dutch, regarding government; but also between Javanese and Minahasans.
- b. between the haves and have-nots: in the colonial era, as discussed in this presentation.
- c. between periods; but surmising that certain aspects of political mechanism outlined above are still present now, in a different form.