MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

NOMINATION FORM

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

The manuscript of Multatuli’s ‘Max Havelaar’ – Revolutionary accusation against colonial exploitation and most important Dutch novel

The Multatuli Society (Multatuli Genootschap), as owner, and the University of Amsterdam, as custodian, submit the manuscript of Max Havelaar for placement in the Memory of the World Register of UNESCO.

This exceptional literary work, with its condemnation of Dutch oppression and exploitation in colonial Indonesia, became crucially important in the history of decolonization, which led to a new relationship between the Netherlands and its former colony in a process that still continues. The Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer described it as “The Book that killed colonialism” (New York Times, April 18, 1998, see Annex.) Because of its literary power and universal appeal against oppression, the book is still topical and a source of inspiration.

Max Havelaar is the most important work of Dutch literature and is still much read and studied, in the Netherlands as well as abroad. It was written in 1859 by the former Dutch East Indies colonial civil servant Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820-1887), and published on May 14, 1860 under the Latin pseudonym “Multatuli”, meaning “I have suffered much.” After Max Havelaar, Multatuli wrote many more works of literature, including a few novels, plays and seven volumes of ideas.

In 1856, Douwes Dekker, as assistant-resident of the department of Lebak on West Java, had lodged a formal complaint against the resident, the local authority, because of his abuse of power. The Dutch-Indies authorities rejected the complaint, after which Douwes Dekker’s resignation was accepted. He left for Europe and roamed about, before settling in a boarding house in Brussels in 1859. There he turned his complaint into literature; in less than a month, he wrote Max Havelaar. He made a fair copy of his manuscript, which he sent to Jacob van Lennep, a writer, patron and lawyer, who was to help him find a publisher. Van Lennep immediately recognized a powerful story, but at the same time understood the risk it contained for the political stability and the colonial administration. In red ink, he censored the whole manuscript before he took it to the publisher.

The preserved manuscript of Max Havelaar concerns the fair copy; the first handwritten one has been lost. The fair copy made by the author in Brussels in 1859 provides insight into how the author worked. It is all the more important because it shows how Jacob van Lennep tried to censor; he replaced most of the place names, proper names and dates by dots, in an effort to remove their political topicality. But underneath the corrections, the original text remained
legible (Multatuli lost the copyright; only 15 years after publication of the first edition, in 1875, a new publisher gave him the opportunity to insert the original names and dates, and the story was finally published as he had wished.)

The submitted manuscript provides information about the production of this nineteenth-century novel: the manuscript shows the traces of being used as the standard for the first edition in the composing room.

The importance of *Max Havelaar* is twofold. First of all, this is a political novel in which a Dutch author, for the first time in history, called attention to the suffering of an oppressed colonial people, through literature. *Max Havelaar* was widely recognized as the first critical study of colonial relationships, and is of great historical significance. The book condemns the exploitation and abuse of local labour by both the Dutch colonial authorities as well as by indigenous chiefs who were subordinate to them. This led to radical changes in the way Dutch colonies were governed. The book also led the Dutch people to realize that a colonial government also had to adhere to moral principles. The contribution of *Max Havelaar* to the awakening consciousness of Indonesians is still incontestable. Read and quoted by the very first Indonesian nationalists, *Max Havelaar* is part of the shared history of the Netherlands and Indonesia.

The message of *Max Havelaar* also resonated internationally among writers and scholars. Indonesian decolonization, inspired by *Max Havelaar*, was as an example to colonies that were never part of the old Dutch empire, and a landmark in the emancipation process worldwide (see the letter of support by Bambang Purwanto). It has been translated into almost forty languages.

Secondly, the book is a literary masterpiece and unequalled in the Netherlands. It is at the same time a biographical novel, a roman à clef, and a novel of ideas, in which Multatuli very ingeniously handles the perspective of his characters. The combination of form, style, and content is absolutely authentic, so that Multatuli cannot be placed in any literary tradition (national or international). With this book, Multatuli has inspired many writers, politicians, and dissidents.

*Max Havelaar* is important for the following reasons:

- The book was recognized as a literary masterpiece as soon as it was published. It is the best-known novel in Dutch literature, and in 2002 it was voted the best work of all time by the Society of Netherlands Literature (*Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde*).
- It is the only Dutch literary work to be found in the historical canon, so that its use as a description of the Netherlands’s colonial past is standard in the school syllabus.
- In other respects as well, the book has a place in Dutch popular culture, as can be seen to expressions such as “the Max Havelaar.”
- The internationally recognized “Max Havelaar” trademark shows how *Max Havelaar* is accepted as a source of inspiration for responsibility in world trade.
In addition, note as well:

- The Multatuli House in Amsterdam, founded in 1910 as the Multatuli Museum on the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Max Havelaar*.
- The Multatuli Society of 1946, based on the Multatuli Museum.
- *Over Multatuli*, published twice a year since 1978, as a periodical dedicated to the writer of the most famous book in Dutch literature.

2  DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organization)

- Multatuli Genootschap  
  p/a Korsjespoortsteeg 20  
  1015 AR Amsterdam  
  The Netherlands  
- Universiteit van Amsterdam  
  Spui 21  
  1012 WX Amsterdam  
  The Netherlands

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

- The Multatuli Society is the owner of the manuscript.
- The Multatuli Society the manuscript is a longterm loan to the University of Amsterdam's Special Collections department since 1931.

2.3.1 Contact person(s)

- Chantal Keijsper, committee member, Multatuli Society  
- Steph Scholten, director of the UvA Heritage/Special Collections

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

Mrs. Chantal Keijsper  
Bestuurslid Multatuli Genootschap  
p/a Korsjespoortsteeg 20  
1015 AR Amsterdam

E C.C.A.E.Keijsper@library.leidenuniv.nl  
T 00 31 (0) 71-527 1562  
F 00 31 (0) 71-527 2836
3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Multatuli [pen name of Eduard Douwes Dekker], manuscript in his own handwriting (fair copy) of *Max Havelaar, of de Koffij-veilingen der nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij*.

3.2 Description

Paper copy book with text in ink (two colours: black and red) by Eduard Douwes Dekker, fair copy in his own handwriting of *Max Havelaar, of de Koffij-veilingen der nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij*. With corrections by Jacob van Lennep, 239 pages, 31,5 x 19,5 cm [Hs. CollectieXLV].

For the digital version see http://boekenhandschrift.dpc.uba.uva.nl/uvatxt/id/uvatxt.MUL01_UBAHSXLVA1/nl

The manuscript of *Max Havelaar* was handed over by Van Lennep to the Amsterdam publisher Joost de Ruyter, who used it as the standard for the production of the first edition. The manuscript came in the possession of the Multatuli Society via the heirs of the publisher in 1910. Apart from the *Max Havelaar* manuscript, the Multatuli Society also administers more of Multatuli's records. In order to safeguard their preservation and accessibility, the Society loaned the *Max Havelaar* manuscript along with the other records to the library of the University of Amsterdam in 1931. The Special Collections department is the custodian. Since 2007, the Special Collections department has been housed in a well-equipped building on Oude Turfmarkt 129, Amsterdam with state-of-the-art-facilities. Because of its importance, the manuscript has been designated a “vault-piece,” which means it is kept in a vault under perfect conditions of preservation and security.

Bibliographic references:
Photographs of the manuscript (see Annex).

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION / ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity
The authenticity and uniqueness of the document is established (see as well the bibliographic references under 3.1, for example Max Havelaar, of de Koffij-veilingen der nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij door Multatuli. Toelichting op het handschrift. Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Bas Lubberhuizen, 2007)

4.2
- World significance
Max Havelaar, widely recognized as the first critical study of colonial relationships, is of great historical significance. The book condemns the exploitation and misuse of local labour both by the Dutch colonial authorities as well as by indigenous chiefs who were subordinate to them. This led to radical changes in the way Dutch colonies were governed. Fasseur states that the book also led the Dutch people to realize that a colonial government also had to adhere to moral principles, with the result being that the notorious “Culture System” based on exploitation and material gain was finally abolished. If, because of its paternal approach, the “Ethical System” that replaced it may have retarded the process of decolonization, the contribution of Max Havelaar to the awakening consciousness of Indonesians is still incontestable. See C. Fasseur, “Onhoorbaar groeit de padi. Max Havelaar en de publieke zaak,” in Over Multatuli no. 20, 1998, page 51 (see Annex). Quoted by the very first Indonesian nationalists, Max Havelaar is part of the shared history of the Netherlands and Indonesia (see letter of support by Bambang Purwanto). The book is considered a reference point for the decolonized world. It has been translated in almost 40 different languages (see www.multatuli-museum.nl/multatuli/vertalingen.html).
Max Havelaar also found recognition internationally among writers and scientists because of its literary powers of expression. See e.g. James A. Michener, “Getuigenis over Multatuli” in Over Multatuli, no. 18 (1987), page 5-7 (see Annex).

- Uniqueness
  As indicated in the Summary, this is a unique document. It concerns the manuscript of Max Havelaar, written in 1859 by the author himself. The manuscript also shows the corrections and adaptations of Jacob van Lennep, which are of great significance because of the political intentions for the reception of the book. And finally the manuscript provides information about the production of the book: the manuscript has been used as the standard in the printing office. The nominated manuscript is the only existing autograph of Max Havelaar.

- Irreplaceability
  The original document is irreplaceable as it is unique.

4.3 Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style (f) social, spiritual and community significance satisfied? (see 4.2.5)

Ad a. Time
In 1859, the year of publication, the message in the book, as formulated by Multatuli, a former representative of the colonial establishment, was regarded as explicitly revolutionary and explosive. Reinier Salverda states that its impact in the Netherlands at the time of publication can only be compared to that of Emile Zola’s J’accuse (1898), his great protest over the Dreyfuss Affair in 19th-century France (see Annex). The literary structure was new at the time of publication and is still unrivalled. The book was quickly spotted in the foreign press, and in the nineteenth century several translations were published (English 1868; German 1875, and French 1876). Today there are 40 translations – and the number is growing.

Ad b. Place
Max Havelaar represents the first condemnation in the colonial Netherlands against exploitation in the Dutch East Indies under the Dutch colonial government. Due to its significance to both countries, this work, which eventually helped lead to the independence of the former colony and thereby a separation between the Netherlands and Indonesia, is at the same time a connection between the two countries.

Ad c. People
Max Havelaar is considered a crucial novel about colonial politics in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies. The book contains important observations of a contemporary who was actively working as civil servant of the Dutch East Indies and reacts from the inside to the abuses in the Dutch East Indies. In the nominated manuscript, all the names of people and places as well as dates have indeed been crossed out by Jacob van Lennep, but they are still legible.
“The ‘Eastern’ elements,” as Reinier Salverda suggests in his letter of support, “evoke the now vanished world of the former Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia, independent since 1945); Javanese characters, oriental tales, and a cast of narrators, each with their own voice, who could have stepped right out of a Javanese wayang or shadow play.

In 1972, when it was translated into Indonesian, its translator, the Indonesian writer and literary historian Dr. H.B. Jassin, stated that this novel belongs both to Indonesia and to the Netherlands. Although for Indonesians Multatuli definitely was a Dutch colonialist, they also respect and admire him for his commitment to humanity and justice, and for his skill and honesty as a writer. He was the first to put an ordinary Javanese village boy, Saidjah, at the centre of a tragic story, portraying him as a human being with ideas, dreams and emotions, at a time when this was simply unheard of.” (see also, letter of support by Reinier Salverda).

The publication, though not in itself anti-colonial in nature, contains a humanitarian message.

Ad d. Subject and theme
The central subject and theme of Max Havelaar is a condemnation of how the Javanese were oppressed in (the former) Dutch East Indies. Ever since its first edition, the book has inspired many people, for example the Indonesian nationalists in their struggle for independence. The universal theme of the book - a condemnation of oppression - is still relevant.

Ad e. Form and style
Upon its print publication in 1860, Max Havelaar was immediately considered a literary masterpiece. In terms of structure and style, the work remains unrivalled. The book has a unique combination of style, form, and content, and as such fits in neither the Dutch nor a foreign literary tradition, though it has been (and continues to be) widely imitated, both in terms of the ideas as well as in terms of style and composition. It is considered the most famous novel in Dutch literature. In the election for the best work from Dutch literary history, held in 2002 by members of the Society of Netherlands Literature, Max Havelaar was declared the most important book.

4.4 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination? (see 4.2.6)

The manuscript is unique.
It was written in 1859 on acid paper, and is therefore vulnerable, but the manuscript is not especially threatened; the storage conditions are optimal. Because of its unique value, Special Collections has designated the Max Havelaar manuscript a “vault piece” and is therefore even more protected against damage by users when it is being consulted for research.
Well-known specialists in the field have written letters of support:

- Cees Fasseur
  From 1986 – 2001, professor at Leiden University in the history of Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and its relations to the Netherlands. In “Indologen: Ambtenaren voor de Oost 1825 – 1950,” Fasseur outlines the developments in the education of Dutch East Indian civil servants, which forms a reflection of the changes in the colonial mentality.
  He endorses the application of the Multatuli Society and the University of Amsterdam to UNESCO with the letter of support by Dik van der Meulen (see Annex 3).
  E-mail: cfasseur@hetnet.nl

- Marita Mathijsen-Verkooijen
  Professor Emeritus of Modern Dutch Literature at the University of Amsterdam (1999 - 2009). Upon her retirement, she was appointed Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau for her importance to the rehabilitation of nineteenth-century Dutch literature, both in scientific terms as well as for a wide audience.
  She endorses the application of the Multatuli Society and the University of Amsterdam to UNESCO with a letter of support dated February 11, 2010 (see Annex 2).
  E-mail: m.t.c.mathijsen-verkooijen@uva.nl

- Dik van der Meulen
  Dutch expert, writer. Winner of the prestigious AKO Literature Prize in 2003 for the biography “Multatuli - Leven en werk van Eduard Douwes Dekker.”
  He endorses the application of the Multatuli Society and the University of Amsterdam to UNESCO with a letter of support dated February 12, 2010, also endorsed by Cees Fasseur (see Annex 3).
  E-mail: dikmeulen@gmail.com

- Bambang Purwanto
  Professor of History at the Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yokyakarta, Indonesia. He specializes in the Economic History of Indonesia and South East Asia.
  He endorses the application of the Multatuli Society and the University of Amsterdam to UNESCO with a letter of support dated February 10, 2010 (see Annex 4).
  E-mail: purwantougm@yahoo.co.uk
  E-mail: fib@ugm.ac.id

- Toeti Heraty Roosseno
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Indonesia, poet, women's rights activist. She endorses the application of the Multatuli Society and the University of Amsterdam to UNESCO with a letter of support dated February 9, 2010 (see Annex 5).
E-mail: toeti@cbn.net.id

- Reinier Salverda
Since 2006 the director-manager of the Fryske Akademy, and since 1989 has been working as a professor of Dutch Language and Literature at University College in London. He previously worked for eight years at the University of Jakarta (Indonesia), where he taught Dutch and linguistics.
He endorses the application of the Multatuli Society and the University of Amsterdam to UNESCO (see Annex 6).
E-mail: rsalverda@fa.knaw.nl

5 LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details):
Multatuli Genootschap
p/a Multatuli Museum
Korsjespoortsteeg 20
1015 AR Amsterdam
T. 00 31 (0)20- 638 1938
F 00 31 (0)20 620 4909
E multatulimuseum@zonnet.nl
www.multatuli-museum.nl

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner):
Universiteit van Amsterdam
Bijzondere Collecties/Special Collections
Oude Turfmarkt 129
1012 GC Amsterdam
5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership:
Property of the Multatuli Society, has been on longterm loan to the Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam since 1931.

(b) Accessibility:
The document can be consulted for research at the Special Collections. Due to its exceptional and unique value, the manuscript is kept in a vault, which implies that it can only be consulted if special permission has been granted. And to prevent damage from use, in 2007 a facsimile of the manuscript was published: *Max Havelaar, of de Koffij-veilingen der nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij: het handschrift door Multatuli*. Fac [Amsterdam: Lubberhuizen], 239 pages, 33 cm. For that reason, the entire manuscript has also been digitized; for the digital version, see:
http://boekenhandschrift.dpc.uba.uva.nl/uvatxt/id/uvatxt.MUL01_UBAHSXLVA1/nl

(c) Copyright status:
No copyright restrictions due to the expiration of limitation periods.

(d) Responsible administration
Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam

(e) Other factors
Not applicable

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage? YES

The manuscript is part of the loan from the Multatuli Society to Special Collections.
The Special Collections, a division of the University of Amsterdam's library, manages the special collections of the University of Amsterdam's library up until 1850, and all the exceptional, unique material from after that period (see also www.bijzonderecollecties.uva.nl). Since 2007, the Special Collections Bijzondere Collecties has been located at the Oude Turfmarkt 129 in the centre of Amsterdam, with up-to-date facilities in terms of climate control, supervision, and consultation. As a vault piece, the manuscript is subject to the so-called vault-piece procedure.

7  CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional Memory of the World committee

- The reason for the nomination is the 150th anniversary of the novel Max Havelaar. Special Collections, the Multatuli Society and (Dutch newspaper) NRC are collaborating in organizing many activities to celebrate this anniversary. The start of the anniversary year began with an article by Gijsbert van Es, “Multatuli was a whistle blower” / “Multatuli was een klokkenluider” in nrc.next, dated October 12, 2009, page 1 and pages 4 and 5.

- This collaboration resulted in an agreement between the Multatuli Genootschap and the Special Collections on November 11, 2009 (regarding a joint exhibition “It's not a novel, it's a condemnation! 150 years of Max Havelaar,” from February 2 to May 16, 2010, on view at the Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam), and regarding cooperation in the preliminary investigation of a possible inclusion of the Max Havelaar manuscript in the Memory of the World Register of UNESCO.

- Winnie Sorgdrager, chairwoman of the Multatuli Genootschap, announced this intention on February 2, 2010 during her speech at the opening of the exhibition “It’s not a novel, it's a condemnation! 150 years of Max Havelaar.”

- The board of the Multatuli Genootschap and the management of the UvA Heritage / Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam consulted with Jan Bos, secretary of the Dutch Memory of the World Committee, on February 12, 2010.

- The Chairman of the University of Amsterdam’s Board of Governors, Dr. Karel van der Toorn, declared on February 18, 2010 his agreement to cooperate with the Multatuli Genootschap in making a nomination to UNESCO.
PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage (see 5.5)

*Max Havelaar* is a manuscript from 1859, created on acid paper; in good condition; is not threatened.

9 ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage (see 3.3)

This document – unique and regarded very important – has the status of a so-called “vault piece.” There is a special vault procedure for consulting vault pieces.

PART C - LODGEMENT

This nomination is lodged by:

(Please print name)  
Multatuli Genootschap  
Universiteit van Amsterdam

(Signature) Ms. Winnie Sorgdrager LLM  
(Date) March 6, 2010

(Signature) Dr. Karel van der Toorn  
(Date) March 6, 2010
Annexes

Photographs of the manuscript
1. a. Photograph of the opening page of the Max Havelaar manuscript
   b. Photograph of page 225
   c. Photograph of the last page of the Max Havelaar manuscript

Letters of support
2. Marita Mathijsen-Verkooijen
3. Dik van der Meulen and Cees Fasseur
4. Bambang Purwanto
5. Toeti Herat Roosseno
6. Reinier Salverda

Other annexes