



# Journal of Educational Sciences

Journal homepage: <https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES>



P-ISSN  
2581-1657  
E-ISSN  
2581-2203

## The Role of The Multatuli Museum in Teaching Anticolonial History and Culture as The Identity of Banten Society

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: 27 Nov 2025

Revised: 19 Des 2025

Accepted: 24 Des 2025

Published online: 05 Jan 2026

#### Keywords:

Multatuli Museum;  
Anticolonial History;  
Cultural Identity;  
Museum Education

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#### Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.1.p.786-802>

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of the Multatuli Museum in teaching anticolonial history and culture as part of Banten society's identity. The museum, established in 2018 in Rangkasbitung, Lebak Regency, faced initial controversy due to its association with a Dutch colonial figure. Using qualitative methods including observation, interviews, and document analysis, this research investigates how the museum addressed community rejection, the narratives presented through its programs (2018-2020), and strategies for overcoming exhibition space limitations. Findings reveal that the museum employed persuasive and educational approaches to gain acceptance, establishing itself as a center for enhancing historical and cultural literacy. Through non-public programs, public programs, and collaborative initiatives such as the Multatuli Arts Festival, symposiums, and heritage tours, the museum created immersive educational experiences. To address spatial constraints, the museum innovatively utilized virtual platforms, including augmented reality and its official website. This study confirms the Multatuli Museum's significant role as an information and learning center for anticolonial history and culture, integral to Banten's identity formation.

## 1. Introduction

Museums play a fundamental role in teaching history and shaping how communities understand their cultural identity (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Falk & Dierking, 2000). In postcolonial societies, museums face the critical task of teaching contested histories particularly narratives of colonial exploitation and local resistance that directly shaped community identity (Macdonald, 2003; Sandell, 2007). Indonesia's colonial past under Dutch rule from the 17th to 20th century left deep impacts on local communities, yet many younger Indonesians lack comprehensive understanding of how their ancestors experienced and resisted colonial domination

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(Ricklefs, 2008). The Multatuli Museum in Rangkasbitung, Banten, represents a unique educational institution specifically dedicated to teaching anticolonial history through the lens of local experience. However, questions remain about how effectively this museum fulfills its educational mission and contributes to Banten society's identity formation.

The museum commemorates Eduard Douwes Dekker, a Dutch colonial official who wrote under the pseudonym Multatuli (Latin for "I have suffered greatly"). His novel *Max Havelaar* (1860) exposed the brutal *cultuurstelsel* (forced cultivation system) that devastated indigenous populations in Java, particularly in Lebak, Banten (Beekman, 1998; Fasseur, 1992). During his brief tenure as Assistant Resident of Lebak in 1856, Dekker witnessed firsthand how the Dutch colonial administration and local regents exploited the Lebak people through forced labor and extortionate taxation (Multatuli, 1982). When his attempts to protect the local population were rejected by colonial authorities, he resigned and later published *Max Havelaar*, which became one of the most influential anticolonial texts in European literature (Nieuwenhuys, 1978; Shiraishi, 1990). For the people of Lebak specifically, this history represents a crucial part of their community identity their ancestors were the victims Multatuli defended and the subjects of his famous critique. The museum thus serves as a bridge connecting contemporary Banten society with their anticolonial heritage.

Teaching colonial history through museums presents distinct pedagogical challenges. Research shows that effective museum education depends on clear interpretive strategies, engaging exhibition design, and the ability to make historical content relevant to visitors' contemporary lives (Hein, 1998; Black, 2005). Museums must not simply display artifacts but actively teach through multiple methods: guided tours, educational programs, interpretive labels, multimedia presentations, and interactive exhibits (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Witcomb, 2003). For anticolonial museums specifically, the challenge is even greater: they must teach sensitive historical content about violence, exploitation, and resistance in ways that are both educationally effective and emotionally appropriate for diverse audiences including children, students, and families (Bennett, 2006; Silverman, 2010). Furthermore, teaching anticolonial history requires helping visitors understand not just what happened, but why it matters today connecting past exploitation to present-day identity, values, and community solidarity (Message, 2006; Smith, 2006). Studies of Indonesian museums have examined their role in national heritage preservation (Bloembergen, 2006; Eickhoff, 2013), but limited research has investigated how regional anticolonial museums teach local communities about their specific historical experiences and cultural identity.

The Multatuli Museum faces several obstacles in fulfilling its educational mission. First, many visitors particularly younger generations lack background knowledge about the colonial period, making it difficult to understand the museum's collections without effective teaching interventions (Wintle, 2013). Second, the museum must balance historical accuracy about colonial violence with accessibility for general audiences, including school groups (Crane, 2000). Third, for the Lebak community specifically, the museum represents their ancestors' suffering and resistance, yet it

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remains unclear how effectively the museum teaches this heritage and whether younger community members feel connected to this anticolonial identity (Hall, 1999; Harrison, 2013). Finally, while museum professionals understand the theoretical importance of teaching anticolonial history, practical questions remain: What specific teaching methods does the museum employ? How do visitors actually learn from and respond to the museum's content? Does the museum successfully cultivate understanding of anticolonial culture as part of Banten identity? These questions require empirical investigation that examines both the museum's educational practices and visitor experiences.

This study examines the role of the Multatuli Museum in teaching anticolonial history and culture as part of Banten society's identity. Specifically, this research addresses three interrelated questions: (1) How does the museum teach anticolonial history what educational methods, interpretive strategies, and exhibition techniques does it employ to communicate narratives of colonial exploitation and local resistance? (2) What challenges does the museum face in teaching this content to diverse audiences, particularly in making anticolonial history relevant and meaningful to younger generations who lack direct memory of the colonial period? (3) How do visitors, especially those from the Lebak community, experience and respond to the museum's teaching do they develop deeper understanding of anticolonial heritage, and do they perceive this history as part of their cultural identity? To answer these questions, this study employs qualitative methods including systematic observation of museum exhibitions and educational programs, in-depth interviews with museum staff, tour guides, and visitors (particularly from Lebak community), and document analysis of museum materials and interpretive texts. By examining both the museum's teaching practices and visitor learning experiences, this research aims to provide practical insights for enhancing museum education effectiveness while contributing to broader understanding of how cultural institutions can teach anticolonial heritage and strengthen community identity in postcolonial contexts.

## **2. Methodology**

The research method used in this research is a qualitative approach. Moleong (2004) explains that qualitative research is rooted in nature, uses humans as research tools, applies qualitative methods, conducts inductive data analysis, and is descriptive in nature. The reason for choosing qualitative methods is to uncover the scientific aspects of the research object. Furthermore, the collected data will be combined to form a data set that generates interesting ideas and concepts. Related to museology studies, Magetsari (2009). He suggests two approaches to the study of museology: empirical and philosophical. His goal in museum activities is to understand collections as realities comprising a variety of different phenomena, which are then placed within the historical and cultural context of society.

Data collection techniques and procedures are carried out in several ways, namely observation, interviews, document studies, and visual data collection. According to Sutopo (2006) in qualitative research, data analysis techniques are conducted

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interactively by comparing data units to each other to uncover the various information needed by the researcher. This interactive process also involves comparing data obtained from interviews with data obtained from observations, archival studies, and other data sources. This is done to strengthen and validate the conclusions being developed by examining the level of similarity, difference, or other alternatives. Meanwhile, according to Miles and Huberman (1992) dan Sugiyono (2016), there are three main parts of the interactive analysis model that must be understood, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis, organized according to the three research questions. The results reveal how the Multatuli Museum teaches anticolonial history, the challenges it faces, and how visitors particularly from the Lebak community engage with and respond to this heritage. The following table presents questions for the interview.

Table 1. Interview Protocol Questions by Participant Category and Research Objectives

No	Aspect	Frequently Asked Questions
1	Vision and Objectives of Museum Education	What is the vision and mission of the Multatuli Museum in teaching anti-colonial history to the public, especially the people of Lebak? What are the main learning objectives?
2	Teaching Methods and Narrative Delivery	What methods do museums use to teach anti-colonial history? How do museums structure and convey narratives so that visitors from different backgrounds can easily understand them?
3	Educational Programs and Festivals	How are educational programs such as the Multatuli Art Festival, Symposium, and Multatuli Footsteps designed for teaching purposes? What are the expected learning outcomes and how do participants respond?
4	Strategies for Dealing with Limitations	Given the limitations of collections and exhibition space, what creative strategies do museums use (such as focusing on storytelling, Virtual Museum technology, and AR) to remain effective in teaching history?
5	Challenges in Teaching	What are the main challenges faced by museums in teaching anti-colonial history, particularly in relation to: (a) public controversy and rejection, (b) reaching younger generations, and (c) balancing content sensitivity for different audiences?
6	Visitor Profile and Response	Who are the museum's main visitors and what are their characteristics? What feedback has been received about the learning experience at the museum? How has the Lebak community responded in particular?
7	Effectiveness of Learning	Are there any indications that visitors have changed their understanding of anti-colonial history after

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		visiting? How does the museum evaluate the effectiveness of its educational programs?
8	Identity Formation and Social Impact	How does the museum contribute to shaping the identity of the Banten community in relation to the history of anti-colonial resistance? What values does it seek to instill, and has there been an increase in local historical awareness since the museum was established?
9	Contemporary Relevance and Local Pride	How does the museum connect the anti-colonial history of the past with relevant contemporary issues? Has the museum succeeded in fostering a sense of pride among the people of Lebak for their history?
10	Sustainability and Development	What are the challenges for the museum's sustainability in the future? What are the development plans to improve teaching effectiveness? If there is an opportunity, what aspects would you like to improve or develop?

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### ***Multatuli Museum in the Vortex of Controversy***

In the period between 2017 and 2019, students from Lebak Regency who were members of the Lebak Regency Student Family (Kumala) Rangkasbitung Representative strongly rejected everything related to the Multatuli Museum. Lugoy/Joy (2018) reported that on November 10, 2018, they held a demonstration in front of the Lebak Regency Regent's Office. The demonstration was a form of their organization's concern and an expression of hope that Heroes' Day would serve as a starting point for the Lebak Regency Government to uphold the achievements of past struggles. Ila Nahila, the Chairperson of the Kumala Rangkasbitung Representative Office, stated that Multatuli is still considered a colonizer who is not worthy of pride, because to them, a colonizer is always a colonizer. In the demonstration, they proposed that Uwes Qorny's name be immortalized as a building or street name. The students' stance seemed to negate the museum's role and function as a place of learning and focused solely on their dislike of the use of the name Multatuli.

In addition to debates on social media, the Multatuli Museum also faced debates on the ground, particularly in the implementation of its collaborative program with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through the Indonesian Platform. The work team, which came from various circles, including academics, writers, artists, literacy activists, and communities in Banten, had to face attempts to 'sabotage' the event, including invitations to debate during the busy preparation process, the tearing up of publications, and so on. These attempts were discussed in a WhatsApp group called "Persiapan Multatuli Fest" (Multatuli Fest Preparation), created on July 9, 2018. This WhatsApp group functioned as a place for coordination and updates regarding the activities of each work team. Faced with these attempts, the 2018 FSM work team agreed to deal with them proactively and remain relaxed. This is in line with the opinion of Piscitelli 2012 dan Young, et al., 2022 who call it a high-quality interaction that occurs in a museum environment

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provides opportunities to guide exploratory learning and develop collaborative learning skills.

The Lebak Regency Government's efforts to resolve this conflict have involved various means, including persuasive approaches, discussions, and other means. Explanations regarding the establishment of the Multatuli Museum have also been continuously provided, both at the Lebak Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and in other discussion forums. One explanation regarding the establishment of the Multatuli Museum was also discussed in a media briefing following the inauguration of the Multatuli Museum on February 11, 2018. Iti Octavia Jayabaya (2018) confirmed that his office had been accused of cult-likeizing of Multatuli, even though his intention was to foster a humanitarian spirit in Lebak Regency. He stated that Lebak is not an industrial area, but rather a conservation area. He hopes the Multatuli Museum can become a gateway for those who want to learn more about Lebak Regency, including its history, culture, and tourism. Iti Octavia Jayabaya (2018), This effort is important to lift Lebak from its backwardness by increasing literacy and building the Multatuli Museum and the Saidjah Adinda Library.

Director General of Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Hilmar Faried (2018) In the media briefing, he also expressed his delight at hearing that Lebak Regency had become a conservation area. He believes this is crucial, as his administration wants to preserve cultural heritage sites. Hilmar Faried (2018), The Multatuli Museum, as an anti-colonial museum, holds significance because modern historical records are so limited. It holds a wealth of information covering the past centuries, from the Hindu-Buddhist era, a little about the colonial period, and then jumping straight to the era of independence. However, there's a significant gap in between, and the Multatuli Museum fills that gap.

In the interview session, Muchtar (2023) explained the reasons behind the rejection of the Kumala student organization in Lebak Regency. According to him, the students wanted a street or building in Lebak Regency named after one of their senior figures. Meanwhile, according to the former Head of Culture, who now serves as Secretary of the Lebak Regency Archives and Library Service, Wawan Sukmara (2024) One of the efforts he made to address the opposition to the Multatuli Museum was an understanding attitude. He believed this was natural and humane, especially when descendants wanted their ancestors, who had rendered services to the region, to be recognized by the region.

Regarding the name of the museum, Muchtar (2023) There are reasons behind the name choice. First, it's easy to brand, as Multatuli is a well-known name. Second, they also want to honor Multatuli as the figure who brought Lebak to the world stage through the Saidjah-Adinda fragment in the novel Max Havelaar. Third, they hope that Multatuli's values can be absorbed by the people of Lebak and Banten through this museum, so that the values Multatuli upheld, namely anti-oppression and anti-colonialism, can be absorbed and become positive values in society. A similar point was also discussed. Wawan Sukmara (2024), although he admitted that he did not really know who first came up with the name Multatuli Museum,

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but according to him the choice of the name was more for market or branding purposes.

During the 2018 Multatuli Arts Festival, discussions regarding the involvement of students and those opposed to the Multatuli Museum were also raised in the WhatsApp group "Multatuli Fest Preparation." One of these groups was the Symposium working team, which was willing to accommodate both pro and con views in their event content. This opportunity to "challenge" was also widely opened at the 2019 Multatuli Arts Festival. The Symposium working team invited all local and national academics to join in "Rereading Max Havelaar" as its main theme. Niduparas Erlang (2019) as the manager of the Symposium working team, he stated that controversy had accompanied Multatuli since Max Havelaar was first published in 1860. This controversy did not only occur in his own country, but also in the small town of Rangkasbitung, Lebak, where Multatuli had been an assistant resident.

From the above description, it can be concluded that resolving the conflict related to the Multatuli Museum requires a holistic approach involving open dialogue, active participation, and a deep understanding of the dynamics of local identity and history. Identity is a complex social construct, and the conflict that emerged in the context of the Multatuli Museum's establishment illustrates the dynamics in understanding and formulating local identity. Differing views on Multatuli identity also reflect the heterogeneity of society, where individuals and groups have different perspectives on history and related figures. The museum plays a crucial role in shaping and influencing community identity, both through the narratives presented, the artifacts displayed, and interactions with visitors through various programs. Educational programs such as festivals featuring symposiums, discussions, and other events involving local culture can be key to mitigating identity conflict and creating broader understanding within the community. Thus, it can be concluded that resolving the identity conflict that occurred at the Multatuli Museum requires a holistic and inclusive approach.

### ***Analysis of the Multatuli Museum Program 2018-2020***

The Multatuli Museum presents anti-colonial historical and cultural narratives through its various programs. Muchtar (2023) As part of their efforts to convey important messages related to the colonial and anti-colonial periods that occurred in the archipelago, especially in Banten. The programs organized by the Multatuli Museum are divided into three types, namely non-public programs, public programs, and collaborative programs, both in the form of collaboration on organizing events and collaboration on the use of public spaces at the Multatuli Museum.

#### **a) Multatuli Museum Program 2018: Multatuli Arts Festival**

In early 2018, the Multatuli Museum was still accepting casual visitors without a structured educational program. A collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia through the Indonesian Platform was

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initiated. This step was an effort to enrich the experience and expand the network to introduce the Multatuli Museum as the first anti-colonial museum and its narratives. This is in line with the opinion of Falk and Dierking (2002) and Suzuki (2005) who uses the term free-choice learning to describe informal learning. According to Falk and Dierking (2002), free-choice learning is a type of learning that is self-directed, done voluntarily, and driven by individual needs and interests.

The 2018 Multatuli Arts Festival presented programs, namely Symposium, Publishing and Literature, Buffalo Carnival, Exploring Multatuli's Footsteps, Opera Saidjah Adinda, Creative Workshop with Dolorosa Sinaga, Traditional Arts Festival, Theater Festival, Historia Discussion Series, Coffee History Exhibition with Erasmus Huis, and Coffee, Lebak Culinary and Baduy Weaving, namely booths filled by culinary and Creative Economy (Ekraf) entrepreneurs in Lebak Regency and bookstores in Indonesia. From several programs, researchers chose several programs that were full of anti-colonial thoughts and became learning spaces for visitors, namely Symposium, Exploring Multatuli's Footsteps, and Opera Saidjah Adinda. The programs are:

#### 1) Symposium

Symposium is a special content provided to accommodate various ideas. At the Multatuli Arts Festival, the theme raised was Postcolonial and Current Issues Across Disciplines. In its implementation, this Symposium presented 8 main speakers, namely Dr. Hilmar Farid (Director General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia), Dr. Seno Gumira Ajidarma (Rector of the Jakarta Arts Institute), Dr. Neng Dara Affiah (Sociologist, Lecturer at UIN Jakarta), Dr. Katrin Bandel (Critic, Lecturer at Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta), Dr. Bondan Kanumoyoso (Historian, Lecturer at the University of Indonesia), Dr. Sri Margana (Historian, Lecturer at Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta), Eka Kurniawan (Writer), and F. Rahardi (Writer). This program implements constructivist learning theory (Hein, 1998) by providing diverse perspectives and encouraging active engagement with ideas about history, literature, and current issues.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that the content of the Symposium event in the Multatuli Arts Festival is a real example of educational theory in museum practice. Through this symposium, the Multatuli Museum has succeeded in creating a space for education, reflection, and in-depth social interaction on history, literature, and current issues involving leading experts and speakers. The Multatuli Museum has succeeded in developing itself as a center of intellectual and cultural activities that are important for the local and wider community.

#### 2) Tracing Multatuli's Footsteps

Multatuli's Trail is a city tour activity visiting historical sites around Rangkasbitung City. The places visited in Multatuli's Trail are places that appear in Multatuli's novel *Max Havelaar* and its surroundings, namely (1) Multatuli Square; (2) Adipati Karta Natanegara's Tomb; (3) Former Multatuli House; (4) Multatuli Street; (5)

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Multatuli Elementary School; (6) Ciujung Bridge; (7) Multatuli Pharmacy; (8) Hadiwinangun Street; (9) Rangkasbitung Water Tower; and (10) Multatuli Museum (Former Rangkasbitung District Head's Office). This program implements constructivist learning (Hein, 1998), principles of new museology (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994), and helps visitors understand the cultural and historical identity of Lebak Regency through direct engagement with historical sites.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that the Telusur Jejak Multatuli program is a concrete example of the application of modern educational and learning theories in museums, understanding cultural identity, and the principles of new museology. This activity not only introduces visitors to the history and cultural heritage of Lebak Regency but also increases community appreciation and engagement with their cultural heritage. By combining theory and practice, Telusur Jejak Multatuli demonstrates how historical tourism activities can be an effective tool for in-depth education and learning.

### 3) Opera Saidjah Adinda with Ananda Sukarlan

Opera Saidjah Adinda is directed and choreographed by Chendra Panatan with music supported by Ananda Sukarlan on piano, Carmen Cabalero (Spain) playing flute, Vahur Luhtsalu (Estonia) playing Cello and other musicians playing french horn, and percussion including marimba, vibraphone, susp, cymbal, woodblocks, 3 drums of different sizes, and 4 timpani drums. In addition, it is also supported by Saidjah actors namely Widhawan Aryo Pradhita tenor soloist, and Mariska Setiawan soprano soloist, as well as other actors such as young Saidjah, father, and soldier.

This adaptation of the story of Saidjah and Adinda in Max Havelaar is particularly interesting because not everyone can read Multatuli's work. This opera serves as an educational tool (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994), exemplifies the new museum concept that is inclusive and interactive (Ross, 2004), and helps audiences explore complex cultural identities related to colonialism and resistance (Liliweri, 2002; Corsane, 2005).

In the context of the idea of exhibition in a museum, the opera performance of "Saidjah Adinda" can be seen as a living art exhibition. As explained by Lord and Lord (2002) And Burcaw (1984) Museum exhibitions offer a variety of approaches to providing information to visitors. In this regard, this opera performance can be considered a form of exhibition that emphasizes direct experience and interaction between artist and audience. Thus, the opera "Saidjah Adinda" is not only an entertaining work of art but also an exhibition that enriches visitors' knowledge and experience of culture and history.

### b) 2019 Multatuli Museum Program

In 2019, the Multatuli Museum had several programs, including non-public programs, public programs, and collaborative programs. According to the Non-Physical Special Allocation Fund for Museum Operational Assistance (DAK BOP)

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report, activities were divided into three categories: non-public programs, public programs, and collaborative programs.

Another Collaboration Program implemented by the Multatuli Museum is the implementation of the 2nd Multatuli Arts Festival which carries the theme "Coffee and Art". The objectives of the 2019 Multatuli Arts Festival (FSM) are: (1) Developing the nation's noble values; (2) enriching cultural diversity and preserving the nation's cultural heritage; (3) strengthening national identity and pride; (4) enlightening the nation's life; (5) improving the welfare of the community; (6) developing objects of cultural advancement represented in the activity; (7) improving infrastructure and governance of the organization. The expected benefits of the activity are the creation of a cultural ecosystem that brings prosperity to the Lebak community.

The program of events that presents the theme of the anti-colonial movement includes:

#### 1) Symposium

The symposium held at the 2019 Multatuli Arts Festival took the theme "Rereading Multatuli" with sub-themes; (a) Colonial and/or indigenous elite representation in Max Havelaar; (b) Power relations between colonial officials and indigenous elites in Max Havelaar; (c) Social, cultural, and political construction in Max Havelaar; (d) National and cultural identity in Max Havelaar; (e) Colonial image in Max Havelaar; (f) Gender studies in Max Havelaar; (g) Postcolonial studies in Max Havelaar; (h) Postmodern studies in Max Havelaar; (i) Film studies on the film Max Havelaar; and Comparative literary studies. In its implementation, this Symposium presented 4 keynote speakers, namely Prof. Peter Carey (historian, Oxford University), Aquarini Priyatna Prabasmoro, Ph.D. (Lecturer, Padjajaran University), Manneke Budiman, Ph.D. (Lecturer at the University of Indonesia), and Intan Paradhita, Ph.D. (Writer, Lecturer at Macuarie University, Sydney).

This symposium also produced new, fresh, and diverse readings, more contextual to the current Indonesian context. The symposium consisted of seven discussion sessions/panels, with two panels featuring keynote speakers and five panels featuring speakers whose manuscripts passed curation. With seven discussion sessions spanning various perspectives, this symposium not only enriched academic understanding of Max Havelaar but also provided fresh new perspectives on understanding the dynamics of Indonesian history. This event supports constructivist learning (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994; Susilawati, 2010) and plays an important role in shaping cultural identity narratives (Corsane, 2005; Bai and Nam, 2022). The 2019 FSM Symposium succeeded in producing new, more relevant readings of Multatuli's work while strengthening understanding of the role of literary works in shaping national identity and cultural awareness.

Thus, the 2019 FSM Symposium was not only an academic event, but also an engaging and meaningful learning experience. Through the involvement of leading experts and academics, the symposium served not only as a forum for discussion

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but also as a cultural event that enriched our understanding of the nation's history, culture, and identity. The symposium also reflected the complexity of Indonesian cultural identity through an exploration of various issues related to Multatuli and his works, creating an inclusive and diverse narrative of history and culture. Thus, the 2019 FSM Symposium served as an effective platform for interactive learning and in-depth discussion, connecting educational theory with museum practice in a significant and relevant way.

## 2) Eka Budianta's Public Lecture

In 2019, the Multatuli Arts Festival provided a special venue for writer Eka Budianta to deliver a public lecture. The event took place on September 10, 2019, at the Multatuli Museum Hall and was attended by students in Rangkasbitung. In his lecture, Eka Budianta delivered the title "Hope, Courage, and Our Humanity," referring to the novel Max Havelaar.

"To this day, Multatuli's novel Max Havelaar continues to play a vital role as a tool for humanization. May we see the hope, courage, and humanity of the Indonesian people—especially the "Rangkasbitung People"—grow deeper and more qualitative. (Eka Budianta, FSM 2019).

Through his lecture, Eka Budianta provided in-depth insights into Multatuli's work and invited the audience to reflect on how literary works can continue to inspire character and morality in society. His presentation created a space for reflection that enriched understanding of the continuing relevance of humanitarian values. This aligns with constructivist learning theory (Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994), which emphasizes learning through active interaction and critical reflection. Thus, Eka Budianta's participation in the 2019 Multatuli Arts Festival is not only an important contribution in appreciating Multatuli's work, but also stimulates critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the role of literature in shaping character and human values in society.

## 3) Tracing Multatuli's Footsteps

The 2019 Multatuli Trail Exploration presented the theme "Caring for Memories in Building Synergy of the Multatuli Struggle Spirit". This activity was held on September 15, 2019, starting at 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM WIB with the gathering point at the Multatuli Museum. The locations of the 2019 Multatuli Trail Exploration activity include: (1) Multatuli Square; (2) Former Residentie Regent van Lebak (Lebak Regency Government Building); (3) Former Contract Administration of Plantations (Lebak DPRD Building); (4) Tomb of Adipati Karta Natanagara; (5) Former Official Residence of the Assistant Resident of Lebak in Rangkasbitung; (6) Multatuli Road; (7) Ciujung Bridge; (8) Rangkasbitung Station; (9) Former Mexolie Rangkasbitung Oil Factory; (10) Hardiwinangun Road; and (11) Former De Rangkasbitong Water Tower.

The expected impacts of this activity include: (a) increasing awareness of the importance of history; (b) growing love for the city; (c) the presence of a registered

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historical community in Lebak Regency; (d) the growth of creative industries in Lebak Regency; (e) the growth of economic actors among Lebak youth; (f) the presence of lodging with a local concept in Lebak Regency; (g) the growth of tourism actors in Lebak Regency; and (h) the presence of souvenir craftsmen in Lebak Regency. In the context of museum education, the constructivist approach to museum education as proposed by Hein (1998), is very suitable for this activity. Thus, it can be concluded that Telusur Jejak Multatuli is not only an activity that touches on historical memory but also creates a positive impact that extends to various development sectors in Lebak Regency.

### c) 2020 Multatuli Museum Program

In early 2020, the Multatuli Museum was still operating as usual. However, when the global COVID-19 pandemic hit, the Multatuli Museum implemented a total operational closure from April to June 2020. The implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) during the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Multatuli Museum to shift all its activities online.

In 2020, the Multatuli Museum launched the Virtual Museum which is accessed through a channel on the official Multatuli Museum website, namely <https://museummultatuli.id> with url link <https://virtual.museummultatuli.id>. This channel was launched on August 17, 2020, with the aim of connecting visitors who cannot attend in person. This transformation reflects a paradigm shift in the concept of museums from mere conservation sites to active learning centers, as stated by Hooper-Greenhill (1994) and Susilawati (2010). In the context of the Multatuli Maya Museum, this means that visitors can not only view the collection but also engage in the narrative and interactions provided virtually.

In addition to the Maya Museum, the Multatuli Museum also launched another innovation: Augmented Reality (AR). This initiative demonstrates the museum's commitment to making the visitor experience more interactive and immersive, and is expected to increase the duration of visits to the Multatuli Museum. This also aligns with the new museum paradigm, as outlined. Bolter, et al., (2021) and Illsey et al. (2023) that today, museums that use the new museum approach have transformed themselves by using immersive media in their exhibitions. This is also in line with the theoretical perspective on education and learning in museums as expressed by Hooper-Greenhill (1994) and Susilawati (2010) who said that museums now have two main missions, namely recreation and education.

### ***The Multatuli Museum's Strategy in Overcoming Limited Exhibition Space***

The Multatuli Museum faces the challenge of limited exhibition space. Furthermore, it has used the same concept for six years and has never changed its layout. Muchtar (2023) acknowledged that one of the Multatuli Museum's weaknesses, but also its strengths, is its narrative. Narratives are timeless, but on the other hand, after three or four visits, boredom can set in. However, the most important thing isn't the collection or the narrative, but how to conceptualize a

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contemporary museum with excellent service, accessible information, friendly service, and a commitment to ensuring visitors are left untouched.

Muchtar (2023) stated that there was a need to add glass spaces to the Multatuli Museum to enhance the visitor experience, but without dismantling the existing concept. This aligns with the museum's transformation from simply being a place to store artifacts to a center for education and recreation. Hooper-Greenhill (1994) and Susilawati (2010). Meanwhile, to update and increase the number of collections, Muchtar (2023) acknowledges that the Multatuli Museum continues to do so through various means, including updating information not only within the museum but also on the official Multatuli Museum website. Furthermore, easy access to data and information is a key advantage of the Multatuli Museum in the research context. Numerous theses, dissertations, and academic papers related to the Multatuli Museum have been published by academics and researchers. The results of this research are also being collected, which will eventually become part of the Multatuli Museum's collection. Furthermore, the Multatuli Museum collects and publishes research findings, which then become part of the museum's collection.

In facing the complexity of anti-colonial history and the various perspectives that exist, especially in the context of exhibition arrangements to create an inclusive and balanced narrative, Permana (2024) provides an example by comparing the Multatuli Museum with other museums, especially museums under the military, for example the Satya Mandala Museum in Yogyakarta, or the one on Jalan Gatot Subroto, in Taman Mini. According to Permana (2024) Museums under the military often view anti-colonialism solely through the lens of physical struggles, such as war, fighting, and physical contact. They fail to recognize that anti-colonialism extends to other aspects. For example, anti-colonialism doesn't always have to be about physical struggle, but rather through writings, such as Multatuli's example of challenging colonialism using the novel *Max Havelaar*.

The Multatuli Museum provides a common thread between physical anti-colonialism and more recent anti-colonialism. For example, by connecting the physical anti-colonialism in Room 5 (the Banten Room), which discusses local rebellions, with the subsequent period in the early 20th century, where anti-colonialism evolved into the formation of unions or organizations. The Multatuli Museum calls this earlier period proto-nationalism, which then became regional nationalism. In the subsequent period, at the beginning of the 20th century, it became nationalism, where ideas and concepts about Indonesia already existed in the early 20th century, although not directly leading to non-physical anti-colonialism in Banten, it was related to nationalism.

The Multatuli Museum's approach of connecting physical anti-colonial narratives with more modern forms of anti-colonialism demonstrates how museums facilitate learning through direct experience (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). By linking the periods of proto-nationalism and nationalism in its exhibition spaces, the Multatuli Museum helps visitors understand the evolution of the anti-colonial movement in a broader context, from local struggles to the formation of national identity.

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Permana (2024) explained that in principle the Multatuli Museum does not have specific guidelines in designing the Multatuli Museum storyline and he emphasized that the Multatuli Museum does not have many original or replica collections related to colonial and anti-colonial history in Banten. In presenting the past, collectibles such as coin collections, horse saddles, coffee plantation workers' hats, coffee grinders, and in the fifth room there is also a replica of a spear to represent physical resistance. However, the team indeed strengthened it through storytelling or narrative so that those narratives are emphasized through several narratives on the walls—for example, in room three and in room two there are spice commodities, there is a replica of a ship, and so on—so that it seems as if the objects are the tools to imagine the conditions at that time. However, the focus is not on the objects, but on the narrative. This is in line with constructivist theory (Hein, 1998), which emphasizes the active involvement of individuals in the learning process.

The Multatuli Museum also creatively creates innovations, including the use of technology, both visual in the form of documentary films and audiovisual in the form of explanatory recordings of the narrative. This can be found in the second, fourth, and sixth rooms. Furthermore, to address the limitations of exhibition space, Hendra Permana (2024) stated that he and the Multatuli Museum team needed to work hard and think creatively to overcome all existing limitations. Therefore, they began exploring the use of all resources, both first and second reality, namely virtual reality. One of these resources is the Multatuli Maya Museum, or virtual museum.

The approach taken by the Multatuli Museum in dealing with the limitations of exhibition space is in line with Burcaw (1984) which divides the permanent exhibition approach into four types, including the "combination" approach. The concept of "extended reality" aligns with Bolter et al. (2021) and Illsey et al. (2023) which states that immersive media refers to experiences in which the user is assisted into the physical experience of an event, place, or artifact through visuals, sound, or interaction using technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR).

Permana (2024) stated that the Multatuli Museum does indeed desire to develop or change its main exhibition layout. He believes the exhibition layout should be changed at least once every five years, not the same one for decades. However, because the Multatuli Museum is still new, a more serious study is needed, which could involve exploring the current main timeline and moving to a new one, or completely changing the entire structure. He expressed his hope for the Multatuli Museum. Permana (2024) It lies in its sustainability—so that the Multatuli Museum does not die. It cannot be denied that the Multatuli Museum is a legacy of Regent Iti Octavia Jayabaya, whose role as the number one person in Lebak in encouraging the establishment of the Multatuli Museum was significant. It is acknowledged that Permana (2024) expressed concern that the phrase "change regents, museums die (no funding)" might apply to the Multatuli Museum. He believes museums should be free from such political elements. Once the museum is established, the next official can simply develop it. However, the museum must also consider ways to sustain itself and not rely on regional budget funding.

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One example Hendra cited was the ticket fees imposed at the Multatuli Museum, which constitute non-tax regional revenue that doesn't go back to the museum but instead goes back to the local government. Permana (2024) There should be material sharing, such as revenue sharing, so the museum can decide for itself what the funds will be used for, such as adding rooms, creating souvenirs, and so on. However, Hendra concluded with a joke, stating that it gave the impression of being "capitalized," while regional budget funds should not be capitalized.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that: 1) Rejection of the museum's establishment in the first two years was overcome through a comprehensive persuasive and educational approach, making the museum accepted as a means of increasing local historical, cultural, and tourism literacy; 2) The museum applies a holistic approach in organizing its programs consisting of non-public programs, public programs, and collaborative programs. Through these programs, the Multatuli Museum creates an in-depth educational and recreational experience for visitors in understanding local history and culture, and plays a role as a dialectical center that contributes to the formation of a local historical and cultural ecosystem; 3) The Multatuli Museum applies the concept of new museology with thematic exhibitions and a chronological approach in its seven main exhibition rooms. The visual and audiovisual elements presented create an interactive and educational experience for visitors. The limitations of the main exhibition space and the development of the layout concept are overcome by the Multatuli Museum with creative innovations such as the use of virtual space both through Augmented Reality (AR) applications, as well as through the official website and social media of the Multatuli Museum. This finding confirms the important role of the Multatuli Museum as a center for information and learning about anti-colonial history and culture, which is not only accepted as a means of increasing local literacy but also as an integral part of the identity of the Banten community.

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How to cite this article:

Suparti, T., Sudrajat, A., & Fathurrahman. (2026). The Role of The Multatuli Museum in Teaching Anticolonial History and Culture as The Identity of Banten Society. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(1), 786-802.

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