had effectively put an end to local 'headhunting' practices in Maluku Tenggara by the 1920s (see de Jonge and van Dijk 1995:28). This historical 'fact' was confirmed by the residents of Amaya themselves who, nevertheless, still recall and relive the experience of headhunting through the heroic stories they tell about the exploits of their ancestors.

While these stories generally depict their historical foes, the inhabitants of Arwala Ilwai on the island of Wetar, as the demonised and degraded victims of Mayawo headhunting raids (see Pannell 1992 for more details), other stories indicate that Mayawo weren't adverse to decapitating and dismembering the odd Dutch government official or clergyman whose presence not only physically challenged local autonomy and territorial integrity but also disrupted local epistemological and ontological truths.[2]

Mayawo stories about their Dutch headhunting victims, are held up and publicly celebrated, in much the same way that severed heads were, as evidence of both the omniscient power of their ancestors and the emasculated province of the Netherlands East Indies State in this region of Maluku in the late 19th and early 20th century. However, while depicting certain cultural continuities, such as Mayawo concerns with and resolution of 'outsiderhood', these stories already point to historical and social disruptions in the lives of the inhabitants of this region. In this sense, the colonially-imposed cessation of headhunting should be read as symptomatic of existing and on-going shifts in regional polities and politics.

In the late twentieth-century, the relationship between headhunters and their victims is often inverted, and the victims today are not from Arwala Ilwai nor are the headhunters the Mayawo themselves. Instead, the new headhunters are government agents, such as civil servants, military figures or the police, mining company personnel, consultants on state development projects, tourists, and perhaps, even the odd anthropologists (see; Drake 1989; Erb 1991, Forth 1991; George 1996; Healey 1996; Hoskins1996; Pannell 1992; Tsing 1996).[3] In the case of Amaya, the headhunters in question were two Dutch consultant engineers working on a state development project with the specific objective of constructing concrete wharves or *jembatan* on those islands visited by the government 'PERINTIS' shipping service. For the month it took the two engineers to complete their investigations of possible sites on Damer, the residents of Amaya, and those of other villages on the island, lived in mortal fear that one or more of them would be abducted by the Dutch engineers, their heads severed from their bodies and used to strengthen the foundation of the proposed wharf on the island.[4] The story of the Dutch 'headhunters' is not unique. As one resident of Amaya pointed out:

> *in October and November, when we are making our new gardens, we often see Westerners (Orang Barat) who come to our island looking for heads. Yes, headhunters look like Westerners. We once caught one, but it disappeared before our eyes*.[5]

The identification of the 'new headhunters' as 'Westerners' (*Orang Barat*) or, more specifically, Dutch, evokes the memory of former colonial encounters and experiences. Moreover, as a number of authors have commented, these modern stories of headhunting also capture and contribute to a "contemporary climate of violence" (Tsing 1996:189). In re-enacting the terror and violence that local people often experience with respect to the Indonesian state and its vision of social unity, economic development and political compliance, these stories not only graphically acknowledge a history of violent state rule but also brutally recognise the role of local people as 'victims of development' (Tsing 1996:201).[6] To look upon these stories or rumours of headhunting as merely metaphoric of underlying state-local tensions