IJHS, e-ISSN 2597-4718, p-ISSN 2597-470X, Vol. 7, No. 2, March 2024, pp. 185-196

International Journal of Humanity Studies
http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJHS
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

J.E. JASPER'S LITERARY WORK ON EDUCATING THE MASSES OVERSEAS: INDO-EUROPEAN LITERATURE FROM COLONIAL JAVA IN THE NETHERLANDS 1904-1910

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https://doi.org/10.24071/ijhs.v7i2.7398
received 23 October 2023; accepted 15 March 2024

Abstract
This paper aims to analyze with the historical method how literature from the Dutch East Indies written by an Indo-European, a person from mixed Asian and European ancestors, attempted to educate the Dutch overseas in Europe. The early 20th century saw several technological developments which raised interest in Asia in the Netherlands and caused a spike in immigrants in the Indies. The Dutch were interested in reading about life in their colonial holdings overseas, especially those who were contemplating making a trip to the Indies. Many writings emerged to teach, warn, or push potential immigrants who wished to go to the Indies. However, those were mainly written by Dutch people who had lived or were living in the Indies temporarily. Indo-European writers had different concerns and interests from the Dutch, which pushed them to also write literary works that were partly aimed at the Dutch overseas. They hoped their writings would help them understand life in Java and to prepare properly. J.E. Jasper, an Indo-European colonial official, was the most outspoken critic of his literature. His work, heavily influenced by the Ethical Policy while developing his thoughts reminded and taught the Dutch about what was important about life in the Indies.

Keywords: ethical policy, Indo-European literature, J.E. Jasper

Introduction
The end of the 19th century marked the beginning of a spur of changes outside and inside of the colonial society in the Dutch East Indies. Various technological developments, such as the widespread use of steamboats, trains, and the telegraph, caused the distance between the colonized land and the homeland to be reduced dramatically. For the first time, the Dutch could reach the Dutch East Indies within a month by boat, and even quicker through the use of the telegraph. This spiked a new interest in the East Indies, which culminated in a rise of migration, primarily Dutch people with strong cultural principles.

The spike of interest in the Dutch East Indies also echoed into literature. The stream of books about life in the East was huge. The most famous work of colonial Dutch literature after Multatuli was also written during this time, *De Stille Kracht* (The Hidden Force) by Louis Couperus in 1900. Several books, many of

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questionable nature about the writer's knowledge, were brought into the world during this time. Some praised the Indies, while others mocked it. Those who were born and raised in the Indies frowned upon the majority of those books, which were deemed a danger since most writers were rich Dutch who only came to travel and write a book about it. They did not understand the true nature of life in the Indies (Borel, 1913).

During this same period, because of the aforementioned developments, a new political thought called the *Ethische Politiek* (Ethical Policy) became popular. The Ethical Policy criticized the former Dutch policy of pure capitalistic exploitation (Deventer, 1899; Brooshooft, 1901). The needs of the colonial society were fully ignored. Infrastructure and education were falling far behind. The Indies had not developed, but become more backward than before. Thus, it was the Dutch moral obligation to right those wrongs, especially since the Dutch had profited so much from the Indies. However, fears of rebellion as what happened in the Philippines also drove the Dutch to invest in the Indies to prevent losing it (Deventer, 1899). The *eereschuld* (debt of honour) would be repaid through education reforms, infrastructure investments, and fulfilling any other needs of the indigenous people, however still combined with continued colonial exploitation (Deventer, 1899).

The Indo-Europeans, descendants of mixed Asian and European heritage, were one of many ethnic groups in the colonial society. They were not the focus of the Ethical Policy, even though many of them lived in poverty due to social and racial discrimination (Rooyackers, 2023; Stoler, 2010). The Indo-Europeans, who lived between and descended from the Javanese and the Dutch, understood both cultures and thought. They witnessed first-hand the discrimination from the Dutch towards themselves and the Javanese. For the Indo-Europeans, the main way to prevent further discrimination and to voice their opinion on society's development was through literature until the rise of the *Indische Partij* (Indies Party) in 1912. Since they were born in the Indies, they were not that much concerned with colonial profit but wished for equal development for all of society's various groups (Rooyackers, 2023).

J.E. Jasper was one such Indo-European. In the early 20th century, he had just been appointed as a low official in the city of Surabaya. His background as an official, who was also involved in projects in the field, and as an Indo-European gave him a deep understanding of the lives of the Dutch, Indo-European, and Javanese. He was raised with the ideals of the Ethical Policy, which he incorporated into his work. Jasper had a passion for literature, which drove him to write various books, which were also intended for the Dutch overseas who wished to travel to the Indies. Jasper used his knowledge and books to teach the Dutch about the lives of Indo-Europeans and Javanese, through their perspectives. This was special since Dutch writers would never use those perspectives. Jasper's work involves themes, perspectives, and topics that differentiated from the Dutch. Yet through these differences, he aimed to teach the Dutch about their mistakes in the East, to protest, to show how they should behave and what they should know before coming to the Indies.

Jasper's work challenges long-held views about colonial literature in the Dutch East Indies. For example, his work shows significant changes in themes, character, motives, and goals, although he adhered to the traditional realistic and naturalistic styles**.** Also, with the frequent use of Javanese main characters in most

of his work, he contests the claim that literature from the colonial period would rarely use them (Nieuwenhuys, 1978; Subagio, 1983). That claim holds for Dutch colonial writers, but not for Indo-Europeans like Victor Ido, Jasper, E.F.E. Douwes Dekker, and others.

Only a few studies have analyzed Jasper and his work since he is somewhat forgotten in studies about colonial literature. Nieuwenhuys in his *magnum opus* about literature from the Indies brings him up shortly, yet only to criticize his writing style which he deemed annoying (1978). Another study about the portrayal of Indo-Europeans in colonial literature highlights a few of Jasper's short stories from his work *Van Deugden en Dwalingen* (Boudewijn, 2011). This postcolonial analysis fails to grasp the true intentions of Jasper and generalizes his view as typical Dutch because of how he portrayed Indo-European characters. Yet while it is true that they are not portrayed positively, the goal of the book is to serve as a reminder to not become like those negatively portrayed characters, which seems to be forgotten.

Well-known author and literary critic Alfred Birney discussed a few works of Jasper in his critical essay *De Dubieuzen*. Birney mentions various more major themes from the works and does not discuss all of Jasper's work nor his work as a means of education about the Javanese. Lastly, there is a bachelor thesis about Indo-European colonial literature and its relation to colonial society (Rooyackers, 2023). This thesis employs a similar method and topic, including Jasper, yet does not focus on how Indies literature attempted to influence Dutch society. Thus the topic of what for and how Jasper wished to educate the Dutch overseas remains an interesting question.

Method

This research used a qualitative approach with the five steps of historical research according to Kuntowijoyo (2005). The first step was defining the topic, which resulted in the focus of this research. The next step was the collection of historical sources, which was done mainly through digital archives like Delpher. The focus was on sources that were written during the early 20th century and which mainly discussed life in the Indies, the Ethical Policy, colonial literature, Jasper's personal life, and his work. The next two steps comprised authentication and interpretation, which were done through the comparison and re-reading of the collected sources. The last step was historiography, which resulted in the writing of this paper.

The used qualitative approach was document analysis, which focused on Jasper's literary work and the collection of other sources connected to his work. The analysis focuses on skimming, reading, and interpretation of Jasper's work (Bowen, 2009). The main focus is placed on the themes, perspectives, and characters used by Jasper to convey his message to his Dutch readers overseas (Altheide, 2000).

The main works analyzed were *Van Java's Wegen* (1904), *Stille Invloeden* (1906), *Het Leven van Ardja en Lasmi* (1908), *De Dieppe Stroomingen* (1910), and *Van Deugden en Dwalingen* (1910). These are all the novels and collections of short stories written by Jasper which were printed in book form by Dutch publishers. Other historical documents used in this research support the argumentation and findings from the in-depth reading of Jasper's work.

Findings and Discussion

J.E. Jasper: Shaping views on literature and early work

Jasper was born into an Indo-European family from Surabaya. He finished the prestigious *Gymnasium Willem III* in Batavia in 1892 before graduating from the *Groot Ambtenaars Examen* in 1894. Afterward, he enrolled as a young man in the civil colonial service. His ambitions and thoughts were very much shaped by his ethnic background and the Ethical Policy thought. The Ethical Policy was just proclaimed and received with big ambitions and enthusiasm by most Dutch, both in Asia and Europe. Jasper was no exception and became a strong proponent of its movement, pleading its case through newspapers, magazines, and eventually literature.

His affection for literature stood out from early on. He became the literature critic for the main local newspaper, the *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad*, in 1900. There he reviewed many contemporary works written by authors from the Indies and the Netherlands. The turn of the century saw many new works about the Indies, mainly written by Dutch people who had visited the Indies briefly. Many described life in the Indies as either being a good or bad thing, often quoting Javanese culture and language in their descriptions.

The more he read, the more Jasper became disappointed by the literature about the Indies. Jasper expressed this feeling in the newspaper *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad* (1900). He highlighted many writers and works about the Indies, which did not represent the Indies, its people, and culture, truthfully. He criticized the simplicity and errors that plagued many of those works. It was ‘time to face the literary nonsense’, which had very little literary and ethnographic value in Jasper’s eyes. The Dutch readers, who knew almost nothing about the Dutch East Indies, would get the wrong expression through these kinds of works.

The three main works that described life in the Indies were included in Jasper’s review of modern Indies literature. Justus van Maurik’s work *Indrukken van een totok* was dismissed quickly since the work contained very little true knowledge about the Indies. Indeed, many critics had pointed out that Justus van Maurik had spent very little time in the Indies. Intentionally or not, his work had spread many misunderstandings about life in the Indies, including the lives of the Javanese.

A more controversial work by Bas Veth called *Het leven in Nederlandsch-Indië* was dismissed by Jasper, as he felt just naming it was more than enough. Bas Veth heavily criticized life in the Indies as deteriorating and degenerating European culture. He made a huge rant with many over-exaggerations about how bad everything was. Of course, since Bas Veth also had only remained a short time in the Indies, and since he broke down ruthlessly the colonial society, many Indies-born resented him, including Jasper. Both of those works were aimed at Dutch readers to learn about life in the Indies, but Jasper felt both did a terrible job at portraying how life in the Indies truly was (Jasper, 1900).

Lastly, the work of Augusta de Wit was received better by Jasper. She would write short stories about the Indies and a short guide in English titled *Facts and Fancies about Java*. Jasper praised her work as having the most literary value. Augusta de Wit was also one of the first writers who would incorporate Ethical Policy thought into her work, like Jasper a few years later. However, Jasper still criticized her work for containing some inaccuracies. Even though her work came

close to telling the truth about the Indies, it could be done better. These works would shape his idea of the need to convey 'truthful messages' to the Dutch readers so that they would not misunderstand the reality of life in the Indies.

The development of the colonial society, comprising all ethnic groups, was equally disappointing to Jasper. According to the Ethical Policy thought, their needs had to be fulfilled and their welfare expanded. Yet in East Java, poverty continued to play a big role in the daily lives of the Javanese and Indo-Europeans. Jasper was involved in many projects and commissions that attempted to research and uplift the lowest strata of society. He also held important positions in the surveys about Indo-European and Javanese poverty in Surabaya. Jasper, being an Indo-European himself, would frequently come in contact with both of those groups. Especially as a lower civil servant, he would often visit the Javanese and Indo-European districts, where he happily mingled with both groups to learn about their lives, thoughts, and needs.

The ideal civil servant had to understand the situation of their assigned area. It was necessary since it was an important factor that enabled the civil servant to truly develop the welfare of all the locals. The Javanese were an important group with many needs that were still left unanswered. The civil servants often lacked this important knowledge, which Jasper criticized (Nieuwenhuys, 1972). Even worse, they would often be involved in the exploitation of the locals. The Javanese had rights, including the right of protection from exploitation, while the Dutch and civil servants especially had the duty to uphold those rights. Jasper would often write about those miseries and problems for magazines and newspapers before 1904 and continued to do so afterward.

During those early years, Jasper would also start to write his work. His first major published work was in *De Gids*, a Dutch literature magazine, with a short story called *Van een Indisch Woud* (About an Indies Forest). The story is about the travels of Jasper and a small company through the woods in the area of Lumajang. In-depth descriptions of Javanese nature are switched with conversations between Jasper and his Javanese companions, mainly the guide Pak Soekiejem. It was received well by the Dutch public, as would be his next short story which was also published in the magazine *De Gids* in 1904.

Jasper also published very short stories in newspapers. Some of those held political nuances, like a short story in *De Java Bode* about two Javanese brothers with different educations. Jasper criticized the negative influences of European education on the Javanese since it opposed the old *adat* (customs). The Javanese brother with the Dutch education became distanced from his own culture and people, which was wrong (E.O.H., 1902). Besides such stories, Jasper would also publish short stories about the people he had met during his travels, like one about the life of an old Indo-European lady in the city of Makassar which was published in the magazine *Eigen Haard* in 1902.

Much of Jasper's work was written during assignments in the interior of Java. He would write about his experiences and disappointments with the colonial civil service and the European communities. For example, the short story *Laatste Tocht* (The Last Journey) which was published in 1904, was written in Jombang (Jasper, 1904b). His first novel, *Stille Invloeden* (Hidden Influences), was written during his time in Bondowoso (Jasper, 1906). Long, poetic descriptions about Javanese nature

became one of his returning characteristics, along with criticism of colonial society and the display of Indo-European and Javanese culture and lives.

Javanese lives, thoughts, and perspectives in Jasper's work

The short stories Jasper wrote in his early years were first published in 1904 in his bundle titled *Van Java's Wegen* (About Java's Roads). The book was published in the Netherlands by the Dutch publisher P.N. van Kampen & Zn., as would almost all of Jasper's other work. The stories *Van een Indisch woud* and *Laatste Tocht* were republished, although the last one was a longer edited version, along with the short story *Van Java's Wegen* which also served as the title of the work. The stories *Laatste tocht* and *Van Java's Wegen* were written from a full Javanese perspective about their suffering caused directly and indirectly by the Dutch. The story *Van een Indisch would* also have Javanese main characters but was written from Jasper's perspective.

Jasper's work was received well and it was noticed how he laid bare the thoughts and feelings of the Javanese throughout the stories (De Sumatra Post, 1905). He was praised for his modern style without mystical intrigues, something which was very popular among Indies literature at the time. Jasper succeeded in evoking sympathy and understanding for the lives of Javanese villagers (Lohman, 1905). These short stories established Jasper's name as a writer in the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies.

This approach was chosen because Jasper wanted to lay out the lives and thoughts of the Javanese. In the short story *Van Java's Wegen* this is shown clearly. Every page is filled with the thoughts and observations of Pak Madin, who owns a small rice field near a sugar factory. The readers closely follow his inner struggles, conflicts, feelings, and personal goals. The main conflict is Pak Madin's betting addiction, to which he gives in and he almost loses all his money. Pak Madin is a man scared of change and lazy because of the monotonous life in the village. He has a lack of incentive to make something better of his life. He feels that he should not bet, and his wife begs him not to, but he continues to bet anyway at a party at the sugar factory. In the end, he almost loses all of his money and his rice field, only to miraculously win the ultimate bet.

The short story *Laatste Tocht* does not share such a happy ending. Simin, who worked at a coffee plantation in Padangan. He was evicted from the plantation because of false accusations by his Javanese *manner*, which the Dutch administrator believed naively. Simin loses his way and goes through various stages of shock and grief while he struggles to figure out what to do next. He holds a grudge against the *mandoer*, the cold, rude Dutch administrator, and other colonial civil servants he meets along the way. Simin falls ill, and while literally and mentally losing his way, he succumbs to disease at the end of the story.

While Jasper criticizes the colonial civil service indirectly, he focuses more on explaining the thoughts and feelings of Simin. As a Javanese *koelie* (worker) he is a simple man who has simple needs. But without a home, money, and goal in his life, he feels helpless. The Dutch and the civil service have failed him. They had cast him out, without considering what that fate would hold for him. It is the struggle of a human being against the cold colonial civil service. Jasper shows clearly the way of life of the Javanese through the eyes of Simin, who visits several villages and *warnings* (roadside stalls) where he interacts with other Javanese.

Jasper's first novel was published in 1906 titled *Stille Invloeden* (Hidden Influences). It was published in two parts consisting of a total of 435 pages and was written from the perspective of a colonial civil servant. The book contained heavy criticism towards the colonial servants and European communities in the interior of Java (Rooyackers, 2023). Thus, it was not aimed at the Dutch overseas like his other work. It did not focus on the lives of the Javanese, nor did Jasper attempt to explain it, but he reiterated the importance of developing the Javanese communities. The main message Jasper conveyed to readers unfamiliar with life in the Indies was about the negative influence of Javanese nature, especially the mountains, on European life. Only the Javanese could withstand it, while the Europeans would sooner or later be corrupted by it (Jasper, 1906). The book was received with mixed reviews, criticizing its weak plot while praising its realistic value (Lohman, 1908).

Jasper's second novel was published in 1908 under the title *Het Leven van Ardja en Lasmi* (The Lives of Ardja and Lasmi). Jasper had written an earlier version of a short story called *In Dagen van Kommer* for the literature magazine *De Gids* in 1907. This short story spanning 26 pages became the first chapter of a novel spanning 218 pages. The perspectives are Javanese, but different from the characters in *Van Java's Wegen* because they are of nobility, yet have fallen on hard times. Just like those short stories and like the title of the work implies, it follows very closely the lives, feelings, and thoughts of Raden Ardjawinata and his wife Lasmi.

Both are described as modern Javanese. Ardja had received lower education, but could not continue his studies even though he wished to. Broke and without perspective in the countryside, they move to the big city of Branggal by train. The train in the Dutch East Indies is a prime example of modernity and civilization, something which was rarely available or associated with the Javanese. Ardja manages to get a job, yet is forced to live apart from his wife.

A great part of the story closely follows the perspective of Lasmi. Her youth and early marriage are explained in-depth by her. Fate, or *takdir*, plays a major role in driving the plot and haunts both Ardja and Lasmi. They hope to improve their lives in the city and escape their bad fates so far. Lasmi especially is shocked when she explores the city, where she sees Chinese riding bicycles and Javanese going to school, all signs of modernity and civilization. At first, Lasmi feels lost and strange, and she never manages to get accustomed to life in the city.

The city provides financial welfare, but it slowly corrupts the health and minds of both Ardja and Lasmi. Ardja becomes selfish and cheats on his wife, while Lasmi falls sick and is taken to the hospital, another place of modernity. Lasmi's loyalty to Ardja drives her to him since she fears he has taken in another woman, which is confirmed in the end. They meet again, even though the sickness takes its toll on Lasmi and she almost dies. In the end, they both move together to the city again, broke again but happy together.

The story focuses heavily on various traditional Javanese beliefs about love and fate in modern places with modern people. Jasper describes the feelings and thoughts of the Javanese when facing modern inventions and the Dutch. Small themes like the importance of education also play a role. But what Jasper tries throughout the book is showing the full lives and thoughts of its Javanese main characters, from both male and female perspectives. The goal of this was clear, to educate the Dutch overseas and in the colony about the Javanese so that they could

understand them better. Since if the Dutch could understand the Javanese, then they could help the Javanese to improve their lives, according to Ethical Policy principles.

The last two works of Jasper were published in 1910. The first one was the novel *De Dieppe Stroomingen* (The Deep Currents), which is often seen as the pinnacle of Jasper's work. The other one is a bundle with twelve short stories spanning 226 pages, mainly written from Indo-European and sometimes Javanese perspectives. It is Jasper's only work to be published by another publisher, H.J.W. Brecht. Its title *Van Deugden en Dwalingen* (About Virtues and Errors) reflects the main goal of the bundle, which is to provide lessons to its readers to develop themselves. The bundle was mainly written for Indo-European readers since their lives and mistakes were the most highlighted (Rooyackers, 2023). However, some stories were fully or partially written for Dutch newcomers in the Indies.

The short stories from *Van Deugden en Dwalingen* that are worth mentioning are *De Bedelaar* (The Beggar), *Oostersch Mysteries* (Eastern Mystery), *Wanhoopsdaad* (Act of Despair), and *Het Kind* (The Child). Those four out of the twelve total stories are aimed at Dutch readers, by either explaining Javanese thought and culture or by showing errors made by the Dutch in interacting with Javanese. The stories differ from Jasper's earliest work, mainly in the way that the descriptions are less vivid and in-depth. Jasper mainly uses his perspective as a civil servant who once dealt with the characters in real life (Rooyackers, 2023).

These later short stories are quite different from the earlier ones, mainly in terms of perspective and themes. Jasper stresses more the importance of understanding the Javanese way of life and thinking, but this time not so much with showing this directly from a Javanese perspective. Jasper shows how he slowly came to understand it more and more by interacting without prejudice. Tolerance and understanding of different cultures is an important part of becoming a good citizen in the Indies society. The stories are thus less practical in the sense that Jasper shows directly Javanese culture, yet focuses more on the importance of learning about Javanese culture.

The novel *De Diepe Stroomingen* can be seen as the pinnacle of Jasper's literary work. It was published in 1910 in two parts, consisting of 230 and 224 pages. Jasper combines all the main themes and perspectives, both Javanese and Indo-European, from all his former works into this one. The story, which often changes perspectives between Javanese and Indo-European characters, tells about the making of a religious rebellion. This was one of the main fears for the Dutch, as had happened for example in the Banten region in 1888 (Sartono, 1966). It is however interesting to note that Jasper held no Islamophobic views in this book and blamed the developing rebellion on failures of Dutch civil servants. Javanese culture played a role in embracing the rebellious religious thought, yet was impossible to blame.

The main perspectives are from the Javanese regent, the religious teacher Oemar, and the Indo-European civil servant George Westkamp. Other perspectives that are used in the book are from Timah, a Javanese woman, Theo Westkamp, and other Javanese villagers. The use of those different perspectives is among others to explain the differences between ethnic groups like the Javanese and Indo-Europeans. Racial and ethnic stereotypes were often used by the Dutch when dealing with other groups in the Indies (Doorninck, 1915; Jasper, 1910a). This was

something Jasper strongly disagreed with, something he showed clearly through the use of varied characters with different personalities, needs, and goals.

The message for Jasper's Dutch readers was abundantly clear. The Dutch had a moral obligation to further the lives of the Javanese. Various Dutch characters play a role in the book, but never Jasper uses their perspective. Instead, the Dutch characters mainly embody the bad apples of colonial society. The Dutch administrators at the factories and plantations beat the Javanese, while the Dutch civil servants ignored any problems. They do not view the Javanese as human beings like themselves, and they do not at all consider even trying to understand them. This led to a catastrophic rebellion in the end, which was stopped by an Indo-European civil servant who understood Javanese life and thought.

The Indo-Europeans and the Javanese characters in the book are the ones who put in the work to stop or further the rebellion. The perspective of the regent is also very interesting, as Jasper rarely shows nobility perspectives. The regent, who initially supported the Dutch, slowly converts to the rebels in the story after being let down by the Dutch. He felt *malu* or shame together with anger when he was not treated according to Javanese customs. The Indo-European civil servant George Westkamp has close relations with the Javanese and understands that the regent is switching sides, while the Dutch are fully oblivious to the regent's involvement.

Javanese perspectives are dominant in the book and show the various ways of thinking, from the Islamic preacher Oemar to the Javanese regent to the villagers. Jasper embraces diversity and places it on a pedestal for all to see. When understanding the Javanese, one has to also understand the diversity among the Javanese themselves. The first was rarely practiced at the start of the 20th century, thus even rarer the second. But it was essential for anyone who came to the Indies to know. Preparation and education were important so that the Dutch who wanted to come to the Indies would become good, humane, and beneficial colonial citizens for all.

Education and developing political thought

The messages Jasper wanted to convey through his work played a big role in his literature. A dual focus on education, for readers both in the Netherlands and the Indies, and social critiques on colonial society drives Jasper's pen. Social critiques will not be highlighted here, since that has already been done in-depth in another work (Rooyackers, 2023). Thus, this part will shine a light on Jasper's focus on education and developing the Ethical Policy school of thought through literature. Those two are inherently connected in Jasper's work and influence one another. Jasper was educated with Ethical Policy ideals and principles while furthering Ethical Policy thought with education.

Social injustice and indifference caused by the acts of the Dutch or inaction of the colonial civil service is a main theme in every work of Jasper. As a colonial civil servant himself who dealt with every layer of society, he witnessed many Dutch civil servants who were cold and not understanding of others. They lacked any initiative or interest in the lives of the Javanese for example. For Jasper, who had Dutch, Javanese, and Indo-European ancestors, that was disappointing. Even more so when the Ethical Policy was proclaimed formally in 1901. The powerful, the Dutch, and civil servants had a moral obligation to help the weak, the Javanese among others.

The Javanese perspectives used in the works mainly belong to the lower strata, including peasants and poor rural nobility. The only exception is Jasper's novel *De Diepe Stroomingen*, where he also uses the perspective of a Javanese regent. However, he combines this with many other perspectives belonging to Javanese villagers and a religious preacher. According to the Ethical Policy, the Javanese and other indigenous people needed to be prepared for self-rule. The Ethical policy was mainly focused on the lower-class Javanese, who were suffering the most. Because of this, Jasper favors peasants as his main characters, to show the lives of those who need help the most. The perspectives of both lower- and higher-class characters are different, with the first being rougher with more struggles, while the latter is more refined, closed, and intellectual.

Jasper was a fiery proponent of the Ethical Policy until the end of his time as a civil servant, when he was more or less forced to retire in 1929 when colonial politics abandoned the Ethical Policy. Cold and rude attitudes from the Dutch towards the Javanese were blamed on a lack of education by Jasper. Education, which was also an important part of the Ethical Policy, was what Jasper tried to give with his literature (Rooyackers, 2023). Not only for inhabitants of the colony but also for the Dutch overseas. They needed to be prepared and educated if they wanted to live in the Indies.

The foundations of the Ethical Policy, mainly education, infrastructure, and migration of the overpopulated areas, are all supported by Jasper. However, Jasper views awareness among the Dutch and colonial servants about the need to understand the Javanese before developing these Ethical Policy foundations as critical. Many seemed not to be aware, of or actively choosing to do so about the lives of the Javanese. Education and infrastructure are two points that are sometimes mentioned in Jasper's work, for example in *Stille Invloeden* and *Het Leven van Ardja en Lasmi*. However, education for the Dutch to make them actively pursue those principles was the main concern for Jasper.

Literature was the most accessible tool for Jasper, who had a high interest in art. Novels about the Indies were very popular at the start of the 20th century. Those novels were always printed in the Netherlands before being shipped to the Indies, thus it would naturally be spread among the Dutch population interested in the Indies. Anyone able to write could pick up a pen since books were being printed and distributed at a fast speed. There is not a clear reason why Jasper stopped, but his later work tended to be received with more mixed reviews, while Jasper himself became more occupied with other research and government assignments after 1910.

Jasper aimed his words at the more intellectual parts of Dutch society. His readers were not informed about the most basic things of life in the Indies like others (Wit, 1898). Plenty of such books were already in circulation. Instead, Jasper chose to focus on another aspect, understanding the Javanese and Indo-Europeans, framed in a correct mirror of colonial life. For those who wished to become a morally good person and help the Javanese, Jasper's books were a treasure of knowledge. He was often praised for his writings and knowledge. Jasper's critical tone was tolerated during the Ethical Policy period, however at the end of the 1920 when active repression and European pragmatism became more dominant, he was discarded from the civil service and retired.

Conclusion

Jasper's work during the early 20th century aimed to fulfill a need by the Dutch, according to Jasper himself. He, as an Indo-European member of colonial society and as a civil servant, experienced directly how the promising and humanistic principles of the newly proclaimed Ethical Policy were not always upheld by the Dutch. Jasper wished to change that, through educating these Dutch before coming to the Dutch East Indies by writing literature. His work focuses heavily on the minds and lives of the Javanese and Indo-Europeans in the Indies. Thus, an interesting pure Javanese perspective can be found in almost all of Jasper's work, which is seldom found in the work of Dutch colonial writers. This sets apart Jasper's literary work.

Jasper intended to include 'ethnological' and 'psychological' values in writing literature. The Ethical Policy thought was heavily used in these works, and this was developed according to Jasper's thoughts. It was clear he agreed with the main principles, but he saw other problems at the root which had to be addressed before proceeding with other objectives. It was the only to truly benefit the Javanese, the end goal of the Ethical Policy if one would truly understand Javanese. This was the message Jasper pressed to convey in every single literary work he wrote.

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