



Johannes van der Steur's Humanistic Thinking: Efforts to Educate Neglected Children

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Abstract

This study examines the life and humanitarian legacy of Johannes van der Steur, widely known as the "Father of Humanity" in Magelang, and analyzes his work through Abraham Maslow's humanistic theory. Using Kuntowijoyo's historical method, the research follows five stages: topic selection, heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. Data were collected from personal diaries, biographies, KITLV archives, and historical artifacts. The findings show that Van der Steur's humanitarian mission was driven by deep concern for abandoned and vulnerable children during the Dutch colonial period. Through the establishment of the Oranje Nassau Orphanage, he developed a systematic approach that addressed children's physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Analysis based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs reveals that Van der Steur's practices embodied key humanistic principles decades before the publication of *A Theory of Human Motivation* in 1943. His efforts extended beyond charity by creating a supportive environment that promoted dignity, personal growth, and social integration. This study concludes that Van der Steur's legacy reflects the humanistic belief in the inherent potential of every individual and demonstrates the transformative role of education and care in fostering self-actualization.

[Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kehidupan dan warisan kemanusiaan Johannes van der Steur, yang dikenal sebagai "Bapak Kemanusiaan" di Magelang, serta menganalisis kiprahnya melalui perspektif teori humanistik Abraham Maslow. Penelitian menggunakan metode sejarah Kuntowijoyo yang meliputi pemilihan topik, heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Data diperoleh dari catatan harian, biografi, arsip KITLV, serta berbagai peninggalan sejarah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa misi kemanusiaan Van der Steur didorong oleh kepedulian mendalam terhadap anak-anak terlantar dan rentan pada masa kolonial Belanda. Melalui pendirian Panti Asuhan Oranje Nassau, ia mengembangkan pendekatan sistematis yang memenuhi kebutuhan fisiologis, keamanan, sosial, penghargaan diri, hingga aktualisasi diri anak-anak asuhnya. Analisis berdasarkan hierarki kebutuhan Maslow menunjukkan bahwa praktik Van der Steur telah mencerminkan prinsip-prinsip humanistik jauh sebelum publikasi *A Theory of Human Motivation* pada tahun 1943. Upayanya tidak hanya berupa bantuan sosial, tetapi juga penciptaan lingkungan yang mendukung martabat, pertumbuhan pribadi, dan integrasi sosial. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa warisan Van der Steur merefleksikan keyakinan humanistik tentang potensi setiap individu serta menunjukkan peran transformatif pendidikan dan pengasuhan dalam mendorong aktualisasi diri.] © The Authors.

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1. Introduction

A just and prosperous life are society desires. Every human being has the need to access health facilities, social security, cognitive development through both formal and informal education, social recognition, and the freedom to carry out life activities [1] [2]. Justice and prosperity have even become an international concern, marked by the ratification of the Declaration of Human Rights, which states that it is necessary to provide education on human rights and obligations, prevent all repressive and progressive actions, and demand universal recognition and respect [3]. Human rights are fundamental to individual dignity and freedom. Various rules and measures have been established to guarantee the continuity of these rights [4]. In fact, the expected life is not yet humanistic, and racial discrimination is still a root problem.

Abraham Maslow, in his humanistic theory, states that humans behave in order to fulfill their pyramid of needs [5]. Garduci states that Maslow's pyramid of needs consists of physiological needs, safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs [6]. According to Kurniawan and Zahro, Maslow's humanistic theory emphasizes the human life journey to produce a concept of self-actualization [7]. Unfortunately, achieving self-actualization has many challenges, one of which is racial discrimination, which has implications for the obstruction of free and fair access to education, hunger, and structural violence [8]. The emergence of Abraham Maslow's theory is relevant in the colonial era and today. The application of Abraham Maslow's humanistic theory within a colonial context is crucial, as colonialism is inherently a discriminatory system that dehumanizes marginalized groups. Maslow's theory serves as an analytical framework to examine how Van der Steur restored the human dignity of neglected children by fulfilling the hierarchy of basic needs that had long been neglected by the racialized colonial social structures. One of the current conflicts resulting from the unfulfillment of one of the pyramids of Maslow's humanism theory is racism.

The escalation of racial discrimination does not merely disrupt social order; it represents a systemic erosion of human dignity that prevents marginalized individuals from accessing the foundational levels of Maslow's hierarchy. By institutionalizing inequality, such discrimination undermines the collective capacity for social cohesion and precludes the possibility of a secure, inclusive citizenship. Data from the US Department of Justice states that in 2024, 53.2% of cases in the United States were caused by racial/ethnic sentiment [9]. Europe has seen a phenomenon of Islamophobia or anti-Islam incidents that have resulted in Muslims being subjected to violence, discrimination, and hate speech, making them feel small and isolated in Europe and the United Kingdom [10]. Racial conflicts are not only felt in Europe and America; even Southeast Asian countries have experienced racial conflicts that drew global sympathy, such as the Rohingya case in Myanmar. The major Rohingya conflict occurred in 2017, where mass killings, rape, persecution, and village burnings took place. This case did not receive attention from the Myanmar government because the Rohingya are not recognized as citizens of Myanmar [11]. The Rohingya case caused tremendous fear, leading to post-traumatic stress disorder in children [12], depression, impaired social skills, and loss of identity. These global instances underscore that racial discrimination remains a persistent barrier to the hierarchy of human needs; therefore, re-examining Van der Steur's humanistic approach in the colonial era becomes essential to understanding how such systemic dehumanization can be effectively countered through structured social pedagogy.

Racist conflicts during the colonial period had equally alarming consequences, necessitating the actualization of measures to address the resulting disparities. These gaps and divisions posed a unique challenge to the development of Abraham Maslow's humanistic philosophy [13]. Aprilia explains that there were three social strata during the colonial period, with the first class occupied by Europeans, who were at the top of Indonesian social life. The second class was filled by foreign easterners, including Chinese, Arabs, and Indians, who were the middle class and were entitled to certain privileges from the colonial government. Meanwhile, the third class or the lowest class in the social and

community structure was the native community or the Indonesian people themselves [14]. The colonial government created a practice of cultural hegemony by bringing in European domination and claiming it as the truth [15]. The dominant ways of applying hegemony are 1) control of language, discourse, and terminology so that they are accepted by the public as absolute truth; 2) control of education, media, and culture; 3) legitimization through religion, science, and even religion [16].

The concept of colonialism first emerged in the 15th century, developed by Prince Henry of Portugal [17], followed by Columbus in 1492 [18] and other European countries with various interests. The colonial power that stayed the longest in Indonesia was the Netherlands. Anju Nofarof Hasudungan explains that the Dutch first arrived in Indonesia in 1596 under the leadership of Cornelis De Houtman but were rejected. The Dutch succeeded in gaining the sympathy of the Indonesian people on their second landing under the leadership of Jacob Van Neck in 1599 [19], even though there was turmoil afterwards. According to Laely, the second Dutch landing in Banten was not a strong hegemony but a fairly smooth process from the trading system until the Dutch Empire was able to acquire Indonesian territory in 1800 [20]. In 1901, the Dutch expanded to Sumatra, Kalimantan, and the Greater East [20]. The Dutch instilled their culture in Indonesia while discrediting local culture until Japan invaded in 1942 [21].

Social life in Indonesia during the colonial period was highly discriminatory. Racism was practiced in various ways. In terms of education, it was regulated through the *Algemeene Verslag Tweede Deel: Statistische Gegevens* (General Report, Second Part: Statistical Data) of 1929/1930, which divided schools into *Hollandsch-Chineesche School* (HCS): schools specifically for the Chinese community and their descendants, with Dutch as the language of instruction; *Europeesche Lagere School* (ELS): elementary schools for Europeans, foreign Easterners, and important figures; *Hollandsch-Inlandsche School*: a school for native children from the aristocracy, prominent figures, or civil servants; *Volkschool*, which was a public school in villages; *Vervolg School*, which was a *continuation of Volkschool, Voll. 2e kl. School, Schakelschool*, and other schools of the same level [22].

In the economic sphere, designed to benefit the Dutch colonial government, the local community was forced to become laborers producing export commodities, while the local aristocracy was assigned to act as supervisors with low wages [23]. In terms of employment opportunities, Europeans had a greater share in the government and private sectors with high salaries and the freedom to run businesses, while foreign easterners were given the right to engage in entrepreneurship with restrictions and legal protection, while the local population was discriminated against and forced to work as laborers and supervisors if they were nobles. In the field of law and justice, discrimination occurred where initially the law only applied to Europeans with European judges. The judiciary then developed with the creation of special courts, resulting in two courts: the European Court, which was held and functioned to judge Europeans, and the indigenous court, which was held and functioned to handle cases involving the indigenous community [24]. The appointment of judicial officials was regulated by the colonial government [25].

The colonial government divided ethnic groups into separate residential areas known as *wijkenstelsel* [26]. This policy was in effect from the 19th to the 20th century, grouping together Arabs, Chinese, native Indonesians, and the most exclusive group, Europeans [27]. Nafisah, in her article entitled "The Arab Community in Surabaya in the Historiography of Social Groups in Indonesia: Compared to the European and Chinese Communities during the *Wijkenstelsel* System" also states that to leave the area, one must present a travel permit (*Passenstelsel*) with a tiered administrative mechanism [27]. The separation of residential areas consisted of several motives, including monitoring ethnic movements, controlling the economic activities of each racial group, and establishing a certain exclusivity [28].

Interpersonal relationships during the colonial period were extremely regulated, with the government implementing the *Regering Reglement* policy that divided society into three classes: Europeans (the highest class), foreign Easterners consisting of Chinese, Arabs,

and Indians (the middle class), and native Indonesians (the lowest class) in the social structure [28]. Their social lives were severely restricted, causing them to form their own circles. As a result, social jealousy between races often occurred. This division of social classes affected their activities. For example, in the world of entertainment, the three groups were differentiated in their enjoyment of cinema. Another example related to civil registration facilities, where their data was differentiated from one another.

Discrimination in the form of health is seen in hospital services. Indigenous people are vulnerable to diseases such as malaria, plague, cholera, and smallpox [29]. The high number of indigenous people with diseases is caused by the lack of attention to public facilities in their areas. Around their living areas, there are many puddles and poor irrigation channels. Hospitals were also built in cities where Dutch people lived, making hospitals unfamiliar and foreign to indigenous people, especially those living in villages. Even after death, racial discrimination was inevitable, as can be seen in the construction of separate cemeteries according to ethnicity and different funeral services. There were even rules regarding the use of horses to pull the coffins of Europeans and foreigners from the East.

A life filled with discrimination angered the native Indonesians. They were marginalized from their own land in various aspects. Such social conditions caused some people to hate and fuel their anger by not tolerating the Dutch Europeans. The lives of the indigenous people are very far from Maslow's theory of humanism. In terms of safety needs, the indigenous people do not enjoy stability and security in the birthplace of their ancestors, as they are overshadowed by the pressure of other, superior races in terms of law, housing, health care, and even entertainment. In Maslow's humanistic level of love and belonging, indigenous social groups received love and social relationships from their own groups. The social stratification of indigenous people at the bottom made them less valued and recognized, and they were always in a vulnerable position. Discrimination leads to deep hatred. The indigenous people are reluctant to accept Dutch elements, resulting in anti-Dutch skepticism. The children of Indonesian-European marriages or concubines are also not accepted by the indigenous social group, making them an outcast group [30].

Based on several descriptions, it can be said that conflicts occur due to character [31], one of which is manipulative character. Differences in character are essentially inevitable. Sigmund Freud states that the id, ego, and super-ego influence personality [32]. Puryanto and Sidik convey that differences and clashes of character are the main causes of conflict [33]. However, conflict can actually be prevented by civic philanthropy education to promote accommodation, empowerment, involvement, and the development of an inclusive culture [34].

These circumstances reached the Netherlands, prompting a humanitarian figure to travel to Indonesia in the early 19th century to help solve social problems caused by racial discrimination. This study examines Johannes van der Steur, who was a humanitarian figure in Magelang. Concerned about the many abandoned children and Indo vagrants in Magelang, he established an orphanage called Oranje van Nassau. The objectives of this article are: First, to provide information on several points, supplementing information about Johannes van der Steur as a local historical study of the Dutch colonization era in Magelang in the 19th century. The author will present information about Johannes van der Steur's bibliography and the background of the Dutch missionary. In addition, this article will also discuss the actualization of Johannes van der Steur's humanism from the time he first arrived (in 1892) until his death (in 1945). The conceptual framework of this article uses Abraham Maslow's theory of humanism, which aims to determine the correlation between Johannes van der Steur's thinking and Abraham Maslow's theory of humanism.

Maslow's humanistic theory, as reflected in the historical account of Johannes van der Steur, had a positive impact on the social life of the Dutch East Indies. His initiative to establish an orphanage in 1893, the first in Indonesia served as an inspiration for the establishment of other orphanages, as documented in the article titled "*Peningkatan Pemahaman Hak Anak dalam Panti Asuhan Bukit Hermon Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2014*" by Weron Murary, Dayen Baho, and Olivia Merion Ranglalin,

published in *Solideo: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* in 2024. The article notes that Johannes van der Steur established a facility for the children of soldiers whose parentage was unknown. However, the article provides only limited information regarding Johannes van der Steur, as its primary focus is the legal assistance required for the children of the Bukit Hermon Orphanage [35].

Johannes van der Steur is also documented in the article entitled "Teriakkan "Pukul Terus": Misiologi Pantekosta dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen" by Elia Tambunan, Hesra Oktavianus Sembiring, and Andreas Sudjono, published in the *Jurnal Ilmiah Religiosity Entity Humanity (JIREH)*. Published in 2022, the article discusses the missiology of the Pentecostal church from a historical and empirical perspective. The paper focuses on Christian religious education and the global study of Pentecostalism, identifying Johannes van der Steur as one of the prominent figures in Pentecostal missiology in the Dutch East Indies between 1906 and 1920 [36]. The subsequent literature is a book titled *100 Tahun Pekerjaan Pa van der Steur di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pa van der Steur, written by Bernard, A.C., et al. in 1994, which chronicles the life of Johannes van der Steur up to his domestic life with Anna Maria Zwagger.

Based on the literature reviewed, there is a lack of research discussing the figure of Johannes van der Steur, despite his profound contributions to alleviating poverty among abandoned children. He directed an organization that not only provided care for individuals but also delivered education to equip them with skills, thereby fostering self-reliance. During the colonial era, van der Steur responded to the discriminatory social class divisions imposed by the colonial government, even though these were enforced by his own compatriots. Furthermore, the humanistic principles he practiced closely align with Abraham Maslow's humanistic theory, long before the theory was formally introduced in academic studies. This study offers novel insights into local Indonesian history and sheds light on a humanistic figure who remains underrepresented in scholarly journals.

2. Method

The research method used to examine the article is the historical research. Koentowijoyo formulated five research steps, namely topic selection, source collection, verification, interpretation, and historiography [37]. The selection of this topic is rooted in the author's emotional connection to Magelang, which serves as the primary motivation for documenting its local history. This study addresses the biographical aspects of Johannes van der Steur and his role as a humanist figure in Magelang. The research stages are as follows:

First, the selection of topics in this paper was based on the author's emotional connection to Magelang, which motivated him to write about local history, as well as the author's opportunity to obtain historical sources. Second is Heuristics, the process of collecting primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were obtained from contemporaneous written documents, including: the diaries of Johannes van der Steur; *De Middernachtzending Een Buitenparlementaire Actiegroep*; *Beleefd Aangeboden Door Papa Joh. v. d. Steur aan intieme vrienden en oude B.O.S. leden van 'Oranje Nassau' Richtlijnen vooral na Pa's dood (niet voor de Press)*; *Het Leven (LEVEN 022): Personen op naam, 'Godsdiensten, religies'* (1930); *Het Leven (LEVEN 022): Portretten, Medisch, Personen op naam, 'Godsdiensten, religies'* (1906); and *Na 25 jaren: Herinneringen uit mijn leven en werk en wordingsgeschiedenis van het gesticht 'Oranje Nassau' Magelang*. Meanwhile, secondary sources consist of supporting written documents, such as recent scholarly journal articles relevant to the research theme and other supplementary materials.

Subsequently, the researcher conducted internal criticism of the contemporaneous documents, ensuring the reliability of the information contained therein by reviewing chronological descriptions, dates of authorship, and literary style. External criticism was performed to verify the authenticity of the written documents through digital forensic analysis of metadata. This included a visual examination of document integrity, such as typographic

identity, the presence of official stamps, ink consistency, and the verification of archival index codes within the Delpher and KITLV repositories.

During the interpretation phase, verified data sources were synthesized and analyzed. First, the researchers utilized humanism theory to provide a conceptual framework for dissecting Johannes van der Steur's philanthropic endeavors. Specifically, Maslow's humanistic theory which addresses the process of human self-actualization was applied. The correlation between Johannes van der Steur's actions and Maslow's framework was established to ensure that the study transcends a traditional historical biography, evolving into a comprehensive psychopedagogical analysis. Subsequently, the researchers interpreted Van der Steur's contributions during the Dutch colonial period in Magelang through the lens of Maslow's humanism. The final stage is historiography, in which the researchers synthesized the historical facts gathered in the preceding phases into a cohesive and unified narrative.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Biography of Johannes van der Steur

Johannes van der Steur was born in Haarlem, Netherlands in 1865 [38]. In his childhood, he was called Johan. He came from a poor family and from a young age helped support the family economy. At the age of 22, he owned a bakery and dedicated himself to being an evangelist in the city of Haarlem. Johan actively opposed policies that deviated from the church, namely the policy of prostitution and brothels that existed in the Kingdom of the Netherlands at that time [38]. While serving as an evangelist, Johan met a former Dutch soldier who said that life in the colonial country was very worrying [39]. Based on a story told by one of the soldiers in the city Hardewijk Netherlands, lonely single soldiers in Indonesia, took local women as concubines in military barracks. This practice was considered prostitution. Johan, who had a helpful spirit from childhood, accustomed to his family's activities, decided to go to Indonesia to help and carry out evangelistic activities. On September 10, 1892, Johannes van der Steur departed from Haarlem for Java, specifically Magelang (personal notes of Johannes van Der Steur).

While residing in Haarlem, the Netherlands, Johannes van der Steur was confronted with reports from a KNIL (*Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger* or Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) soldier regarding the widespread practice of concubinage in Java. This systemic issue resulted in multifaceted suffering, particularly for the women and children involved, who faced socio-economic instability and psychological marginalization. Johannes van der Steur's humanitarian spirit motivated him to depart for Magelang with the added confidence of being a Christian missionary [39]. He came to help abandoned children with Christian teachings. His Christian presence and contribution were very impactful, although the emergence of Christianity and colonialism coincided with the colonizing nation cannot be denied [40]. The Church's involvement in addressing child neglect and poverty [41].

Upon his arrival in Magelang, Johan conducted evangelism in the military barracks in Magelang. According to him, the military barracks were the worst places for prostitution. This was the basis for Johan's relationship with the soldiers, he wanted to reach them more easily, and to maintain contact, he built a military house that had relaxation facilities and a reading room to facilitate discussion, as well as a building that functioned as a chapel (JOH. VAN DER STEUR. (Diary)). Johannes van der Steur also rented and bought houses to care for his students, most of whom were the result of concubinage in the military barracks. Since caring for abandoned children, Johan was known as "Pa" which means father.

Children born of concubinage tend to suffer from poor outcomes and even lack access to education. The offspring of marriages within military barracks were called "anak kolong," whose presence was difficult to accept and even disowned by their own fathers (Dutch soldiers). Anak kolong is the term for the children of European soldiers born from the

tradition of concubinage in military barracks during the Dutch East Indies era [42]. Many of these children suffered from homelessness, starvation, and moral burdens.

Establishment of an Orphanage *Orange de Nassau* stated in the deed of establishment of the orphanage *Orange de Nassau* [43]. This orphanage was founded because Johan found many abandoned Indo children in Magelang. When he was carrying out his evangelism duties as a Christian missionary, his teachings in spreading virtue were questioned to find a solution. A Dutch soldier wanted to know what Johannes van der Steur was doing in practicing charity. The Dutch colonial soldier brought four children from concubines, the next day these four children brought two more friends. Long story short, Johannes van der Steur took care of this child and called him "Pa" when he was still single (Joh. van der Steur's diary).



Figure 1: Four photographs on a single page: Orphans at Huize Oranje Nassau
Source: Het Leven (LEVEN 022). Personen op naam, "Godsdiensten, religies". 1930 [44]



Figure 2: Pa van der Steur and his foster children gathered within the Oranje Nassau orphanage complex

Source: Het Leven (LEVEN 022). Portretten, Personen op naam, "Godsdiensten, religies", "Leeftijdsgroepen (jong, middelbaar, oud)", on 1906 [45]

Since then, after carrying out evangelism, Pa cared for children from concubinage who were neglected, orphaned, and abandoned by their parents. In addition to caring for them, Pa also taught his male students the art of sculpting, Christianity, and crafts, assisted by Captain Engineer Batenburg and Lieutenant De Gags Fortman. Meanwhile, the female students were taught sewing and household chores such as cooking and cleaning.²¹ In 1895, the number of Indo children cared for by Johannes van der Steur had reached 40, and Johan was then called "Pa" by his foster children. In 1896, Pa's foster children increased to 65 children, so Johannes van der Steur rented 3 houses in Pasteralaan (now: the Pasturan area of Magelang City).

On year 1898 Johannes van der Steur appointed become *religious teacher* (religious teacher) for lower-ranking soldiers in the Magelang garrison [46]. In 1933, the number of children cared for had reached approximately 930. In 1935, this number increased to approximately 970 children and had reached 1100 children by 1939. Year after year

passed as Pa grew in line with the increasing number of children he cared for. Pa even borrowed a military barracks as additional housing for the children under the shelter (*After 25 years. Reminiscences from my life and work, and the history of the "Oranje Nasau" institution in Magelang. Maresh Magelang*). Johannes van der Steur was very close to his students. Figure 3 present the photo of Johannes van der Steur with his fellow caretakers at the Oranje Nassau Orphanage and his students:



Figure 3: Johannes van der Steur, Pa van der Steur, with two colleagues and his foster children took a photo together.
Source: KITLV, 1897

In 1907, Johannes van der Steur married a white woman named Anna Maria Zwager. Johan and Anna ministered at an orphanage owned by Johannes van der Steur. Anna's presence was a great help to Johan. Anna protected and supported Johan's ideals, so that 7,000 children were helped by this orphanage. The struggle of evangelizing and caring for the children in the orphanage was then carried out by Johannes van der Steur alone again after his wife died in 1936.



Figure 4: Funeral ceremony of Johanne van der Steur's wife, Anna Maria van der Steur-Brother-in-law tahun 1936
Source: KITLV

After the death of his wife, Johannes van der Steur was so ill that he had to seek treatment in the Netherlands. However, he continued to monitor him by telephone. Concerned about the condition of the orphanage, Johannes van der Steur decided to return to the Indies. Several years later, the Japanese invasion came. In 1942, Johannes van der Steur was taken prisoner in Cimahi by Japanese troops. In 1945, after independence, Johannes van der Steur was released and returned to Magelang. Unfortunately, his health deteriorated. On September 16, 1945, Johannes van der Steur died. He was buried in *Cemetery Europeesche Bergraafplats Magesari Magelang* Johannes van der Steur's grave still stands today in the Magesari area.

The Johannes van der Steur burial complex is the only remaining burial complex there, having been relocated in the 1970s.



Figure 5: Tomb of Johannes van der Steur
Source: Author's documentation

3.2. Johannes van der Steur's thoughts in Abraham Maslow's Theory of Humanism

Maslow presented the theory of humanism as a response to Sigmund Freud's behaviorism and psychoanalysis theories which were considered not to reveal the space of human thought and considered all human behavior to occur due to subconscious drives or environmental influences that humans cannot control [5]. Maslow's concept is relevant to the actualization of Johannes van der Steur who carried out his activities based on full awareness and not tending to be driven by the subconscious. Johannes van der Steur's life did not become his thoughts dwarfed, but opened new horizons and took real action to solve problems in the surrounding environment.

The pyramid of needs, a phenomenal theory by Abraham Maslow, consists of five levels. In the context of Magelang's colonial society, the fulfillment of physiological needs served as the first step of Van der Steur's resistance against dehumanization. While the colonial administration systematically neglected the offspring of concubines, leaving them in a state of chronic malnutrition and homelessness, Van der Steur's Oranje Nassau Orphanage acted as a vital intervention. By providing consistent nutrition and shelter, he did not merely perform charity; he laid the necessary biological foundation required for these marginalized children to eventually pursue higher psychological growth, as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy. In the colonial period, the state practiced a form of calculated neglect toward the children of concubines, who were stigmatized as "social refuse". This systemic abandonment resulted in widespread infirmity and forced these individuals into a precarious existence of homelessness. Johannes van der Steur's childhood was characterized by difficulty in accessing some basic needs. Children of colonial concubines could not meet their basic needs. They became homeless, homeless, and had no access to housing in any social class. As abandoned children, they lacked skills to sell for a living. Therefore, Johan established the Oranje Nassau orphanage as a shelter, provided education in household and carpentry activities, and sent them to school. Van der Steur's provision of sustenance transcended mere philanthropy, it constituted a politico-humanistic intervention aimed at reclaiming the fundamental right to existence long eroded by colonial discrimination.

The second pyramid is *safety needs* or the need for a sense of security and protection. The Dutch colonial era at Magelang did not provide many safe spaces for children, especially those born of concubinage. Indo children, who were seen as privileged because of their European heritage, often suffered a more tragic fate than poor native children, often becoming homeless. They lacked the privilege of receiving protection and care during their development. This phenomenon led Johannes van der Steur to create a space for *safety needs* filled with children. The place was an orphanage where Johan

himself was the owner and head of the orphanage. He acted like a father, defending his children when problems arose. For example, in 1901, a local newspaper reported that one of the children from Johannes van der Steur's orphanage had fallen from a train on his way home from school. Johan took action by ensuring health care and immediately traveled from Magelang to Bethesda Hospital, Yogyakarta (colonial era: *Missionary Hospital "Petronella"*) to ensure the situation.

Abraham Maslow's central pyramid is *love and belonging needs* or so-called social needs, such as having a family and fulfilling its function. Humans are social creatures who need interaction, and also need inclusive and exclusive attention. Maslow recognized that exclusion is a real misery. Children in Magelang, who are predominantly European-Indonesian Peranakans from concubinage, do not receive these needs. By creating a space for them, Johannes van der Steur created a communication space and provided a platform for the orphanage family, consisting of Pa', Johannes van der Steur's wife, nurses and educators, and other children with similar fates.

The next pyramid of needs is *the esteem needs* where a human being has a need to be appreciated. Johannes van der Steur, in addition to providing a decent place to live, also provides psychological support, self-confidence, and human strength. What Johan does is in accordance with Maslow's theory, as observed from Johannes van der Steur's attitude, who continues to motivate children to stay alive, do good, and practice divine principles. Johannes van der Steur instills Christian values in his students so that the Zending mission can be achieved and answer the needs of the time, which in this case is in accordance with Maslow's pyramid of needs.

The final pyramid of needs is the need for self-actualization, which influences changes in perspective, thinking, and good behavior management. This is evident in the news report of the fall of one of Johannes van der Steur's students while returning to Magelang. Although Pa' sends the children to different levels of school, their return activities must be carried out together. This can be concluded as instilling self-actualization through mutual belonging, mutual care, sympathy, and empathy among the children of Oranje Nassau Orphanage. Johannes van der Steur teaches the habit of group cooperation. Another example of the actualization of needs instilled by Pa' in his students is when they dared to help someone who was swept away in the Progo River. The activities carried out by Johan in humanism correlate with the characteristics of Abraham Maslow's humanism [47].

According to Yunailis, a person is said to have self-actualized if they meet the criteria: a) successfully fulfilling their primary needs; b) not depressed either psychologically, neurotically, or other pathologically; 3) already knowing themselves and the direction of life they are striving for; 4) aware of various obstacles to child development that are wrongly acquired through experience. People who succeed in self-actualization are those who are able to place themselves between themselves and problems, and create a distance of privacy [48]. In fact, humans are born good, the concept of positive humans is conveyed by Maslow with the concept of being values in the form of morality [7].

4. Conclusion

This article covers two topics. First, Johannes van der Steur was a philanthropist for abandoned children in Magelang. His seriousness was evident when he established the Oranje Nassau Orphanage. The majority of the children cared for by Johannes van der Steur were Indo-European children born to European men and native Indonesian women. During the colonial period, Indo children were marginalized because they were not part of the social stratification. An understanding of social perspectives during the colonial era is imperative, as it provides the foundational framework for analyzing how systemic structures influence human dignity and the fulfillment of basic needs. Second, there is a correlation between Johannes van der Steur's thinking and Abraham Maslow's theory of humanism, which consists of a pyramid of five levels of needs. Johannes van der Steur fits the criteria

of humanism presented by Abraham Maslow, as he fully actualized himself. Johannes van der Steur also characterized the essence of humanity as good, as presented in Maslow's humanism. This article also presents that colonialism gave rise to a form of "racist" trauma that led to conflict. This had a latent impact and created a movement in which the lower classes could also resist racism.

This research is expected to contribute to the history of local figures' thinking in relation to humanism theory, in which Dutch missionary figures contributed to alleviating social problems through education. Future researchers can continue this research by maintaining the focus on the roles of other figures in history who contributed to social welfare during the Dutch East Indies colonial period, but developing more specific aspects.

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