

Biography of a book

Paratext in all Dutch editions of Louis Couperus' De stille kracht

MA Thesis Book and Digital Media Studies

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Introduction

Stories are bound to their mediums. The somewhat romanticised history of storytelling is often portrayed as such: the very first fictions were told among tribesmen around a campfire, then script appeared and stories were written down in books, printing enabled a whole new 'print culture' and the novel to emerge, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries photography and especially cinema again provided new storytelling possibilities, to which television was added in the 1940s and 50s, and more recently videogames created interactive narratives. Each of these mediums convey stories in their own unique way to a 'receiver' (listener, reader, watcher, gamer). Within the limits of a medium itself there can be a great deal of difference as well. Books seem rigid at first glance: a text is a text and does not change. Present day literary theory, however, posits that texts are never 'finished' and keep on changing through rewrites – by the author or later editors. Even though that may be, a text usually stays largely the same as it is republished or reprinted through the years. The way texts are presented to the reader, on the other hand, is always changing. Every edition of a fiction or non-fiction book can feature a different cover, a different blurb, different introductions or afterwords, different typography, and in some cases even a different title. Even though the text they contain is identical to editions of the same book can look very dissimilar to one another. A modern edition of *Robinson Crusoe* will look nothing like the first edition of 1719.

These changes are brought about by changing trends in book production and a changing perception of the text. This means that it is possible by examining every edition of a certain text to construct a 'biography' of that book. Beginning with the first edition, the 'birth' as it were, the book will mature in later reprints, changing along with the times. It is such a biography that this study aspires to present. The subject is the Dutch literary classic *De stille kracht* (*The Hidden Force*), written in 1900 by the respected Dutch author Louis Couperus (1863-1923). This study represents an analysis of all Dutch editions of *De stille kracht* from its earliest editions from the beginning of the twentieth century to the most recent edition published in 2015.

Research question

To accomplish the aim of this thesis the following research question is used: ‘How did the different aspects of “paratext” change for the editions of Louis Couperus’ *De stille kracht* since its first edition of 1900 by the publishing house L.J. Veen?’

As is clear from the research question this thesis does not feature a traditional argumentative structure, but rather a description of the findings of my research, followed by an analysis in the conclusion. The kind of research done for this thesis has never been done for any work of Couperus and hopefully it will make a valuable addition to the literary and book history research field, as it explains how the physical appearance of a literary work can be interpreted in different ways over the years and how important publisher’s choices of paratext can be for the perception of a certain text.

As an objective description of any kind is an impossible goal to strive for, the reader will be presented throughout this study with interpretations of the paratextual elements of the editions examined. However, the research objects will always be described as objective as possible (i.e. what does a cover look like, what factual information is conveyed through an introduction, etc.), followed by an interpretation of what these material features mean for the perception of the main text and how the differences in paratextual elements between the editions of *De stille kracht* can be explained. Even though the structure of this thesis is not argumentative, it does feature arguments and interpretations.

Why was *De stille kracht* chosen as the subject of this thesis? There are three reasons for this. First of all the appearance of the first edition of *De stille kracht* appeared in 1900 means that there are exactly 115 years of publication history to research. This is the perfect scope for a study like this: it is not too narrow to properly describe historical developments and it is not too wide for an MA thesis. The second reason is that of all the works published by Couperus, *De stille kracht* has gone through the largest (and most diverse) number of editions – even more than his other masterpieces such as *Eline Vere*. This ties in with the third reason, which is that this book is still very much ‘alive’. It is still regarded as a masterpiece by readers of Dutch literature. At the end of this year theatre director Ivo van Hove will turn the novel into a play and it is rumoured that Paul Verhoeven wanted to turn it into a film. In the 1970s, moreover, a highly successful television series based on the novel was aired. It is in all

likelihood thanks to this enduring popularity of the novel that so many editions of *De stille kracht* have appeared.

Paratext

What then are these paratexts and paratextual elements mentioned above and what role do they play in this thesis? The term ‘paratext’ was coined by French literary theorist Gérard Genette (b. 1930). In his book *Seuils*¹ (translated into English as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*) he examines and describes the illocutionary force of the liminal devices and conventions that mediate between book, author, publisher and reader.² Covers, titles, forewords, afterwords, glossaries, blurbs, interviews and an author’s correspondence are all examples of ‘paratextual elements’.

How does Genette define paratext? He regards paratextual elements as ‘accompanying productions’ that present the main text they surround. Paratext is “what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and [...] to the public.”³ It is also a ‘threshold’, an ‘unidentified zone’ between the inside and outside of a text.⁴ Paratext consists of two parts: peritext and epitext. Peritext consists of all paratextual elements that can be found within the volume of a particular book. Epitexts are located outside the book, interviews in literary magazines are a good example.⁵ This thesis is only concerned with peritexts. The primary reason for this is to limit the scope of the research, but also because the aim is to describe the Dutch editions of *De stille kracht* that have been published the last 115 years and what changes can be observed between these editions. When occasionally references to epitexts and developments or events outside the editions of *De stille kracht* are made, they only serve to elucidate the main narrative concerning peritextual paratext.

Genette considers paratexts to be of the textual kind. Mostly paratextual elements are thus texts themselves. Genette admits, however, that paratextual value may be present in other “types of manifestation”.⁶ The most important of these ‘types’ for this study are illustrations, images and photographs that are used on the bindings and dust

¹ Gerard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Editions du Seuils, 1987).

² Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), back of cover.

³ Genette, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*, p. 1.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 2.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 5.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 7.

jackets of *De stille kracht* or that are included in the text. Most of the paratextual elements that are discussed in this thesis will be of the true 'Genettian' textual kind, but a substantial part of the thesis will be dedicated to illustrations, most prominently on the bindings and dust jackets. Genette appears to have somewhat overlooked the power of cover illustrations in his study. Cover illustrations can convey the plot, atmosphere, themes and historical context of a novel: by displaying direct scenes they can stress certain plot elements. Illustrations can also be highly atmospheric, presenting the reader with the feel of the novel even before he or she starts reading. Especially artistic covers can convey the themes of a novel through symbolism. The covers of older classics generally consist of images that display the time the novel is set in, indicating to the reader what the historical context of the story is.

The final important point Genette makes is that paratextual elements exist to serve a certain text. They have no right of existence in themselves, but they do fulfil a secondary function.⁷ It is hard to exactly describe such a function, because paratextual elements often venture into the terrain of 'what the author/publisher/artist intended', a tricky field to operate in. Therefore, any remarks on what the findings of this study mean are limited to the novel, not to the author, publisher or readers. The reader should keep in mind that all the conclusions that are drawn on the function of the paratextual elements of *De stille kracht* do not constitute hard facts.

Structure

This thesis is structured as follows. The introduction serves to introduce the subject and research question and explains the aims and methods used, followed by a brief account of Louis Couperus and *De stille kracht* to those who are unfamiliar with the author and/or his work. The chapters are arranged chronologically, each spanning a few decades:

- Chapter 1, *Early Editions*, deals with the editions published between 1900 and 1949. During this period only three editions of *De Stille Kracht* were published, but these are especially interesting because they appeared during and shortly after the author's lifetime. Because this chapter discusses the first edition, the writing process of *De stille kracht* and the long road to its publication and the commotion it caused are addressed here.

⁷ Genette, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*, pp. 12-13.

- The second chapter, *Redesign*, spans the period from 1950 to 1969. During this timeframe the editions of *De stille kracht* saw many changes compared to the first three editions. Publishers clearly tried to find new ways to present the novel to the public.
- In *Renewed Interest*, the third chapter, the editions published between 1970 and 1989 are examined. Mainly because of the TV-Series *De stille kracht* received a popularity boost, which explains the higher frequency at which new editions appeared in this period. *De stille kracht* became a bestseller and the paratextual elements show it.⁸
- The last chapter, *Multiple Series*, deals with the period from 1990 to 2015. *De stille kracht* is now almost exclusively published as part of a series – mostly series of literary classics. Each of this series feature their own sets of paratextual elements and are quite different from one another.

The thesis ends with a conclusion where the research question will be answered after a brief summary of the most important findings from the preceding chapters. Also some remarks will be made about the usefulness of Genette's paratext concept for book historical and literary scholarly research.

Louis Couperus and De stille kracht

Louis Marie Anne Couperus was born on 10 June, 1863 in The Hague. He was named after three of his sisters who had already passed away at the time of his birth: Louise, Marie and Anne. His family had always held high governing and military positions in the Dutch East Indies. Both his parents were born there. For the sake of his older siblings' careers Couperus and his family moved to the Dutch East Indies when he was nine years old. Five and a half years later the family returned to the Netherlands, but Couperus missed the colony dearly. Because he did not feel at home in the Netherlands he left secondary school early, resulting in his being called the black sheep of the family.⁹

It was one of his teachers – Jan ten Brink, himself a literary author – who encouraged Couperus to get a teaching degree in Dutch literature. Couperus first focussed on poetry, but he soon discovered that he was a more skilful prose writer. In 1888, when he was just 25 years old, his novel *Eline Vere* was published. The first great

⁸ "Unieboek-top-tien", *Het Vaderland*, 7 september 1974. *De stille kracht* was number eight on the list of the top ten best sold books of August 1974.

⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993), p. 217.

Dutch psychological novel, *Eline Vere* was quite successful and marks the beginning of Couperus' life as an acclaimed writer.¹⁰

In 1893 Couperus married his niece Elisabeth Baud whom he knew from his childhood in the Dutch East Indies. Couperus was a homosexual, but he tried to hide and dismiss that part of his life as much as he could, because homosexuality was considered highly improper at the time. The marriage produced no children. After his wedding Couperus wrote a series of historical novels, among which *Majesteit* (Majesty, 1893), *Wereldvrede* (World Peace, 1895) and *Hooge Troeven* (High Trumps, 1896) - inspired by his travels through Italy.¹¹

From Italy he went back to the Dutch East Indies. During his stay there and after, when he had settled in Nice, he returned to write more realistic, psychological novels, mostly about upper class society in The Hague. He continued to be fascinated by antiquity and also wrote several mythological novels, such as *Dionysos* (1904) and *De berg van licht* (The Mountain of Light, 1905-1906). From 1906 onward he started to focus more on journalistic work. He went on writing historical and mythological novels, even though he said he would never write a novel again. During World War One he moved back to The Hague, but after the war he resumed his travels all over the world. Having fallen ill in Japan he returned to the Netherlands in 1922. His health worsened and on 16 July, 1923, Couperus died, one month after his sixtieth birthday.

De stille kracht was written during Couperus' visit in the Dutch East Indies from 1899 to early 1900. The main character of the novel is Otto van Oudijck. He is *resident* (local governor) in the fictional Laboewanggi district on Java. Being a very pragmatic man who does not believe in the supernatural, he tries to do what he thinks is best for the indigenous and Dutch population of his district. He shares part of his power with the local *regent*, a high ranking Javanese official from the old and aristocratic Adiningrat family. When the brother of the *regent* of Laboewanggi, who is himself *regent* of another district, behaves badly at a party when in a drunken stupor, Van Oudijck is forced to fire him, thus creating bad blood between him and the Adiningrat family. Since this conflict, supposedly supernatural events take place in Van Oudijck's residence. Stones start flying around, glasses break spontaneously and the eerie sound of wailing ghosts can be heard. Van Oudijck's family and his servants flee, leaving him behind. He is now convinced that

¹⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993), pp. 217-218.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 218.

Indonesia is permeated with a *hidden force*, something that he as a Westerner can never understand. The symbol that is used for the hidden force is a hajji wearing white, who mysteriously appears and disappears at set times. Van Oudijck now understands that the Dutch may act as if they rule the Indonesian archipelago, but in fact there is no place for them there. He quits his job as a *resident* and retires to a quiet life elsewhere in the colony.

The supernatural is only one of many plotlines in the novel; the book is populated by a large cast of characters who all are struggling to find their place in the colony. Most interesting and infamous is Van Oudijck's wife, Léonie. Out of boredom she has several affairs with other men, among whom her own stepson, Theo, and the lover of her stepdaughter, Addy de Luce. The detailed description of her erotomaniac character and her many affairs led to quite an uproar in the Netherlands when the novel was first published. Most infamous is the sirih shower scene. At the height of the supernatural occurrences Léonie decides to take a bath. In the bathhouse invisible mouths spit sirih juice, a sticky, blood-like substance, on her naked body, after which she runs into the garden in utter terror.

This short description does not do justice to the complexity of the novel, as the book is much more than just a sensational, erotic, supernatural thriller. It is also an insightful dissection of the Dutch East Indies colony. Its themes proved to be prophetic, as anti-colonialism started to gain momentum in the decades after the publication of *De stille kracht*. Couperus' conclusion that Westerners cannot understand, and therefore cannot rule the mysterious Orient proved to be true. Fifty years later the Netherlands finally lost the Dutch East Indies.

Chapter 1 – Early editions (1900-1950)

This chapter describes the three earliest editions of *De stille kracht* that were published in the first half of the twentieth century. All these editions were published by L.J. Veen publishing house. The question is what kind of paratext these editions feature and what can be said about it in relation the production and reception of the novel?

Before dealing with the editions themselves, it is important to consider what the writing process of *De stille kracht* looked like. Couperus started writing *De stille kracht* during his stay in the Dutch East Indies. His sister, Trudy, had invited him to come to the colony. He stayed there for about a year after his departure from Nice in 1899. He wrote a substantial amount during his stay: he finished his book *Langs de lijnen der geleidelijkheid* (*The Law Inevitable*) and wrote almost all of *De stille kracht*, the idea for which must have come to him through his own experiences in the colony.¹² Many of the characters and situations in *De stille kracht* are actually based on real persons and incidents.¹³ The most important source of inspiration for *De stille kracht* were probably the discussions he had with his brother-in-law Gerard de la Valette, who was a *resident* in the Dutch East Indies. *De stille kracht* caused quite a commotion upon publication in the Netherlands, as it was considered too erotic for the spirit of the age.¹⁴ As Couperus himself put it in a letter dated 20 December 1900 to Constance Valette (his favourite niece): “De derrière van Léonie heeft in Holland veel bekijks en hoofdschuddens veroorzaakt!!!” (Léonie’s behind has caused a lot of sensation and disapproval in Holland!!!).¹⁵ So at its first appearance *De stille kracht* was quite a sensational book. It was presented to the public in 1900 in two very different ways: first as a serial in the literary magazine ‘*De Gids*’ and later as a book published by L.J. Veen.

Appearance in De Gids

De stille kracht was scheduled to appear in the Dutch literary magazine *De Gids* in 1900. Therefore Couperus sent the editorial secretary of this magazine – Jacob Nicolaas van

¹² H.T.M. Van Vliet (ed.), *Louis Couperus: De correspondentie* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep, 2013), pp. 195-196.

¹³ F. Bastet, *Louis Couperus* (Amsterdam: EM. Querido’s Uitgeverij B.V., 1987), pp. 231-236.

¹⁴ Van Vliet (ed.), *De correspondentie*, p. 196.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 299.

Hall – parts of his manuscript.¹⁶ Up to that time he had regularly published other works in *De Gids*; for instance *Langs de lijnen der geleidelijkheid* appeared in *De Gids* in the same year as *De stille kracht*.¹⁷

At the same time, Couperus wrote a pleading letter to his publisher L.J. Veen on 12 April 1900. In it he explained that *De stille kracht* had to appear in *De Gids* because he needed the money the magazine would pay him. It is an indication that Couperus was not very happy with the simultaneous appearance of his work in magazine and book form, but Couperus' financial troubles did not allow him another option. He also wrote to Veen that he did not want a second edition to be published as early as 1901 as Veen suggested. The publisher thus appeared to have been very confident in the success of *De stille kracht* from the outset.¹⁸ Maybe it is because of this that he decided to give the first edition such an eye-catching and unusual binding. On 8 July 1900 Couperus sent a letter to Van Hall, accompanied by a substantial part of *De stille kracht* for him to review before the manuscript would be, as he styled it, “blemished by the fingers of the printers”.¹⁹ He urged Van Hall to send the manuscript as soon as he could to Veen so the book could be printed. Couperus was still abroad at this time and had to manage both publications for the magazine and Veen from afar. Therefore he relied on Van Hall to send the manuscript to L.J. Veen.²⁰

De stille kracht appeared in *De Gids* in 1900 in two installments. The book starts on page 382 of issue 3 of the magazine and continues on the first page of issue 4. There is hardly any paratext to be found in this edition. *De Gids* had its own stylesheet, consequently *De stille kracht* was printed and presented in the same way as all other contributions in the magazine. This means that the work is introduced by the means of a simple title (*De stille kracht*) and the author is only named at the end of the text. One font and type size is used for the text of the entire magazine while chapter titles are printed small and discrete. There is no introduction to Couperus' work. The only paratext present in the *De Gids* edition of *De stille kracht* are footnotes which provide translations of Malaysian words. For example, on page 474 *pasàngrahan* is translated as “*binnenlandsch hotel, ten dienste der ambtenaren*” (inland hotel in service of officials)

¹⁶ Bastet, *Louis Couperus*, p. 239.

¹⁷ Van Vliet (ed.), *De correspondentie*, p. 258.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 259.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 263-264.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 263-264.

and *slendang* as “*sjawl, sjerp*” (shawl, sash).²¹ Couperus had actually sent a letter to Veen about these footnotes. On 3 August 1900 he writes:

Amice.

Geef mij eens een idee: wat zal ik doen met de Maleische woorden: ze met een aanhaling ¹) etc beneden aan de bladzij vertalen? Het staat zoo vervelend. Ze niet vertalen? Achter in het boek een woordenlijstje geven??

Wat is je idee?

Mijn zwager denkt nog steeds na...

L.C.²²

The last sentence of the letter references the protection of the rights of Elisabeth Couperus after the death of her husband, in case Veen would sell his business, and is unrelated to the questions about the Malaysian translations.²³

Veen's response is not preserved, but evidently *De Gids* (and also Veen's first edition of *De stille kracht*) opted for the footnotes. Whether Couperus was happy with this decision remains unclear.

With regard to the paratext the magazine version does not seem to be of much interest. However, the translations of Malaysian words in footnotes does tell us that even in 1900 the readers of *De stille kracht* needed some aid to facilitate reading. The intended audience was not familiar with the Malaysian language, so Couperus thought it was necessary to include Malaysian words for authenticity's sake. The uniform stylesheet of *De Gids* makes it hard to comment upon how the text was perceived by its publishers and audience.

²¹ Couperus, 'De stille kracht', *De Gids* 64:3 (1900), p. 474.

²² Van Vliet (ed.), *De correspondentie*, p. 271. Translation: "Amice. Give me some advice: what shall I do with the Malaysian words: translate them at the bottom of a page through means of a footnote ¹)? That looks so unpleasant. *Not* translating them? Provide a glossary at the back of the book?? What is your idea? My brother in law is still considering... L.C."

²³ H.T.M. van Vliet, *Louis Couperus: De correspondentie – de commentaar* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep 2013), p. 114.

The first edition published by L.J. Veen

Couperus was publisher Lambertus Jacobus Veen's most important writer. Their collaboration, which started in January 1892 when Couperus approached Veen to publish a novel and some novellas for him, would span 25 years. In May 1892 Veen published Couperus' *Extaze* (Ecstasy) which was well received. This marked the beginning of a fruitful relationship. Even though Veen and Couperus saw each other only a few times during their lives, they bonded through their correspondence. Although both men were born in the same year, Veen became something of a father figure to Couperus, giving him advice and helping him with his financial difficulties.²⁴

The most striking physical aspect of the first edition of *De stille kracht* is the Batik book cover. Batik is a South-Asian dyeing method that especially took root in Indonesia. It involves drawing figures on a cloth with wax. The cloth is then soaked in a water-based dye, thus colouring the cloth except at the places which are covered with wax. After the dyeing the wax is removed by putting the cloth in a bath with boiling water. The cloth is then dried. This process can be repeated several times to create a multi-coloured cloth.²⁵

The designer of this well-known book cover was Chris Lebeau (1878-1945). He was an interesting man: a zealous anarchist who was also

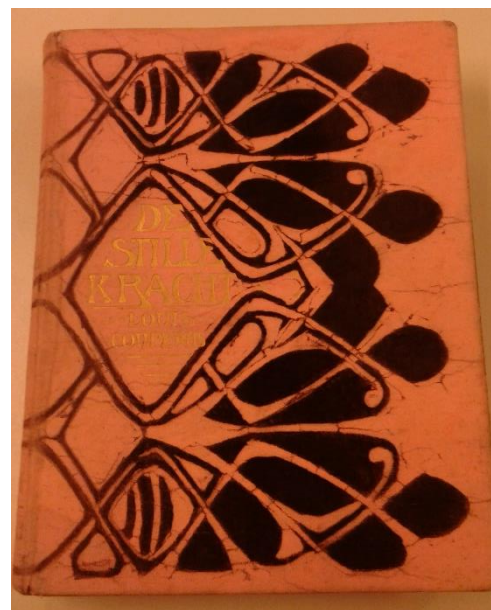


Fig.1. Lebeau's Batik cover of the first editions of Couperus' *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1900). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

very anti-militarist. During the Second World War he was an active member of the Dutch resistance and was arrested for helping Jews. He was sent to Dachau concentration camp, where he died from exhaustion, mainly because he was a vegetarian and gave away his food to others. As an artist Lebeau always stayed true to the *jugendstil/art nouveau* style. He and his wife started to work with the Batik technique and it was him who introduced it in Europe at the Paris World Fair of 1900. His art was applied to a

²⁴ Van Vliet (ed.), *De correspondentie*, pp. 61-62.

²⁵ UNESCO, 'Indonesian Batik', <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00170>> (20 May 2015).

great variety of objects ranging from table cloths to book bands of which *De stille kracht* is a prime example.²⁶

It was L.J. Veen who decided on the Batik book cover, the first time Couperus mentions it is in a letter to L.J. Veen dated 1 August 1900. He asks if the batik cover will be beautiful.²⁷ Even though Veen really liked the Art Nouveau style, Couperus got bored with it. However, he absolutely loved Lebeau's Batik cover once he saw the result. In an undated letter to L.J. Veen he wrote:

Wij zijn beiden verrukt over *De stille kracht*, die gisteren in gebatikt katoen en fluweel zin intocht deed!! Het is prachtig mooi, ik kan niet anders zeggen. Wij zijn er beiden in extaze over en ik heb een kinderachtig plezier dat mooie boek telkens in mijn hand te nemen. Ik dacht eerst aan een paar kennissen er een paar cadeau te geven, maar ik en er te gierig toe en hoû alle exemplaren voor mijzelf! Hulde, hulde!!²⁸

The back of the book names the company that did the actual batiking and the book binder, but not the designer.²⁹ In fact, Lebeau is not mentioned at all. The title page is very simple, it states the name of the author and the title of the book, as well as L.J. Veen as publisher, without a year of publication however.³⁰

The batiking of the binding of *De stille kracht* was done by the firm of Uiterwijk & Co. Batikwerken which had offices in Apeldoorn and The Hague. The book was bound by J Brandt & Zoon Boekbinderij in Amsterdam.³¹ Of this Batik cover several versions exist in the colours purple, yellow-orange and blue. Also a De Luxe edition (*Pracht-Uitgave*) was manufactured which had a velvet cover in pink.³² Of this special edition only forty

²⁶ Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, 'LEBEAU, Joris Johannes Christiaan', <<http://socialhistory.org/bwsa/biografie/lebeau>> (20 May 2015).

²⁷ Van Vliet (ed.), *De correspondentie*, p. 269.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 196. Translation: "We are both *delighted* with *De stille kracht*, which made its entry yesterday in batiked cotton and velvet!! It is very beautiful, I cannot say otherwise. We are both in ecstasy about it, and I feel a childish delight every time I take that beautiful book in my hand. I first thought to give a few copies to acquaintances as a gift, but I am too stingy and I will keep all copies for myself! Honour, honour!!"

²⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1900), cover.

³⁰ Ibidem, title page.

³¹ Ibidem. Uiterwijk & Co. is credited for the Batik cover on the back of the book, as are the binders J. Brandt & Zoon Boekbinderij.

³² Van Vliet, *De commentaar*, p. 124.

copies were made.³³ The luxury edition cost 10 guilders and the cotton edition cost fl. 4.90.³⁴

In 1905 *De stille kracht* was added to the series *Werken van Couperus* (Works of Couperus) and got its own 'Werken'-cover. It was very simple: the words 'Werken van Couperus' and the title of the work are printed with some ornamentation surrounding it. The content of the book was not changed.³⁵

The batik covers of the first edition are indeed incredibly beautiful but are together with footnotes for translation of Malaysian terms actually the only example of paratextual elements in the first edition. The cover and especially the usage of the batik technique communicate the Indonesian setting of the work. It also qualifies the book as something exclusive and luxurious. Of course, the De Luxe edition was very expensive and the cotton editions were not cheap either. This does tell us that the work at this stage did not need any special introduction or texts to promote it. The beautiful cover and text were enough for the readers of the first edition.

Cheap second edition

The second edition of *De stille kracht* did not come out in 1901 like Veen had proposed, but no less than ten years later in 1911. This edition was published in a series by Veen called *Standaardbibliotheek* (standard library) which consists entirely of works by Couperus. In 1911 and 1912 Veen also published Couperus' *Majesteit* (1893) and *Wereldvrede* (1895) in the *Standaardbibliotheek*. These are all cheap reprints. 3000 copies were printed of this edition. Paperback editions cost fl. 1.50 and hard cover editions fl. 1.90, which is much lower than the fl. 4.90 and fl. 10 of the first edition.³⁶ The lowered price needed to get sales of Couperus' works going again and to "go along with the times".³⁷ This means that book prices had probably dropped since 1900. Books in general were indeed becoming cheaper at this time and the book economy shifted from being demand led to supply oriented. Publishers started to create more and cheaper

³³ H.T.M. van Vliet, *Versierde verhalen: de oorspronkelijke boekbanden van Louis Couperus' werk [1884-1925]* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij L.J. Veen, 2000), p. 207.

³⁴ Van Vliet, *De commentaar*, p. 124.

³⁵ Van Vliet, *Versierde verhalen*, p. 208.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 216.

³⁷ Van Vliet (ed.), *De correspondentie*, pp. 529-530.

editions and the second *De stille kracht* edition fits in this trend.³⁸ Apparently Veen wanted to supply the Dutch readers once again with *De stille kracht*.

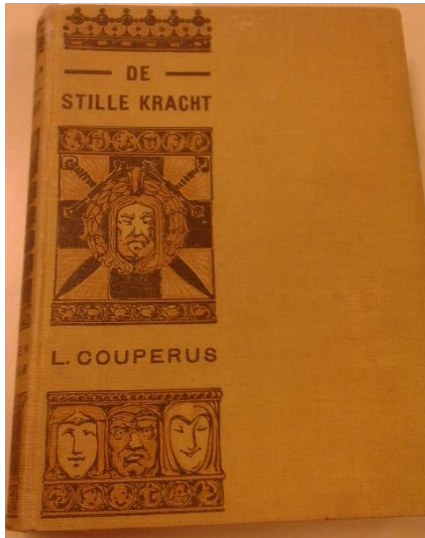


Fig.2. Wierink's cover of the cheap second editions of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1911). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

of this cover is not given on the binding or elsewhere in the book. Van Vliet in his book *Versierde Verhalen* identified the designer as Bernhard Willem Wierink.⁴⁰ Wierink (1856-1939) was a notable graphic designer and art teacher.⁴¹ The simple title page does not contain a year of publication.⁴²

The second edition does not contain any other texts than the main text and the title page, so like the first edition this cheap edition is lacking in paratext. The footnotes explaining Malaysian terms are still there, unchanged.⁴³ The fact that this edition is marketed as a 'cheap edition' and is published in a series, however, does say something about the text itself. It is seen as an important work in Couperus' oeuvre that should potentially find its way to a large audience. It still does not need any supplementary texts to introduce it to the readers, apart from the footnotes.

³⁸ A. van der Weel, 'Modernity and Print II: Europe 1890-1970', in: S. Eliot and J. Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Chisester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 359-360.

³⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1911), cover.

⁴⁰ Van Vliet, *Versierde verhalen*, pp. 208-209.

⁴¹ 'Bernard Willem Wierink 1856-1939', <<http://www.boek.be/boek/bernard-willem-wierink-1856-1939>> (27 juli 2015).

⁴² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1911), title page.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 110, which has the footnotes for *binnenlandsch hotel* and *sjawl, sjerp*.

Third edition

The third edition of *De stille kracht* did not appear until 1935, when Couperus and L.J. Veen had already passed away. That is why on the title page the publishing company is now identified as 'L.J. Veen's Uitgevers Mij. N.V.' (L.J. Veen's publishing company plc). The year of publication is still not mentioned.⁴⁴ That the book is from 1935 can be deduced for example from the article 'Over herdrukken' (On reprints) by Menno ter Braak in the Dutch newspaper *Het Vaderland* from 23 June 1935. This article by Ter Braak is a reaction to the publication of the third edition.⁴⁵

The bare hard cover of this edition is very simple. Only the writer and the name of the novel are given, along with a symbol that consists of the letter L, J and V for the publishing house. The spine is also unadorned.⁴⁶ The reason for this plain cover is that the third edition was sold with a dust jacket. The

illustration on the front of the dust jacket was made by Dutch illustrator Ben Mohr. He was born in 1910 and during his artistic career he created several hundred book covers, especially in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Interesting in relation to *De stille kracht* is the fact that Mohr's parents had lived in Batavia in the Dutch East Indies but had moved back to the Netherlands before Ben's birth. Three of his own siblings would go to the colony later on. In order to learn how to draw Mohr travelled to Manchester and Nice and he got private drawing lessons in Laren. From 1933 onward he started to create book covers for publisher

Querido. Besides Querido he also made book covers for other publishing houses such as Elsevier, Van

Holkema & Warendorf, H.W.J. Becht and, of course, L.J. Veen. He also designed advertisements.⁴⁷ Whether Mohr himself had visited the Dutch East Indies before he created the illustration for *De stille kracht* is unknown. The illustration Mohr made

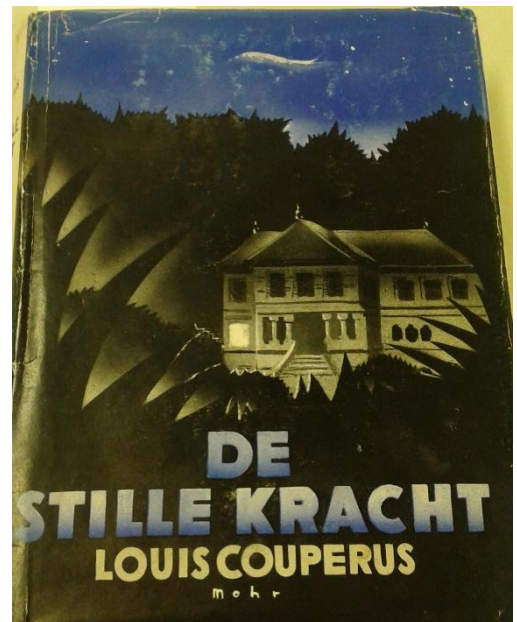


Fig.3. Mohr's cover of the third Veen edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1935). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

⁴⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1935), title page.

⁴⁵ "Het Vaderland: staat- en letterkundig nieuwsblad", ('s-Gravenhage, 23 June 1935), p. 1.

⁴⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1935), cover.

⁴⁷ R. Gaarlandt, J. Gielkens and R. Idema, 'Deze omslagen zijn niet bestemd om lang bewaard te worden', *De Parelduiker*, volume17, issue 1 (2012), pp. 57-61.

shows a European colonial residence in the jungle of Indonesia at night. Behind one window of the house a light can be seen. It is a very atmospheric image that communicates the themes of *De stille kracht* well – colonialism and mysticism. The title of the book is set in blue with the author's name in white underneath it. The image is signed 'mohr' at the bottom.⁴⁸

The back of the dust jacket does not contain a blurb text. However, on the inside of the dust jacket the price of the book is printed. Fl. 1.90 for the paperback edition and fl. 2.90 for the hard cover edition. The cover of the paperback edition is the same as the dust jacket of the hard cover edition. This edition is thus a little bit more expensive than the cheap second edition. It also does have extra paratext that was not available in the first two editions. On a separate page before the main narrative begins this short text is printed:

VOORBERICHT BIJ DEN DERDE DRUK

Wij hebben gemeend in de oorspronkelijke taal en spelling van den auteur niets te moeten wijzigen.

De Uitgeefster.⁴⁹

What does this short text tell us? Apparently Couperus' stylized spelling was already a bit outdated in the 1930's. However, it is not required to change the spelling according to the publisher, apparently it could still be understood. It was also part of Couperus' particular writing style, which the publisher might not have wanted to taint by changing it. For the rest, the main text is the same as that of the first and second edition and the translation of Malaysian terms are again available through footnotes.

What conclusions can be drawn based on the present paratext in these three early editions of *De stille kracht*? The fact that there is hardly any paratext present in these editions indicates that Couperus' work did not need to be introduced through these means to the reader. The reader is aided by the translation of Malaysian terms, but the main text remained unchanged. The only notable paratextual elements are on the covers and dust jackets. The batik cover of the first edition really makes the book something

⁴⁸ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: 1935), dust jacket.

⁴⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: 1935), p. 4. Translation: "Preface to the third edition. We have decided to change nothing in the original language and spelling of the author. The publisher."

special and exclusive. At the time of its appearance *De stille kracht* apparently was already seen as an important work. The cheap second edition is published in a series, thus placing it within the oeuvre of Couperus. The plain cover communicates its availability to a large readership. The third edition has a wonderful illustration on its dust jacket which is more direct in communicating to the reader what the story is about than the earlier covers. Still, when analysing these three early editions, a development is perceptible: the book goes from an expensive and exclusive first edition to a cheap second edition to reach more readers, and finally to a regular edition that is far more direct in its design.

Chapter 2 – Redesign (1950-1969)

Since the third edition of 1935 no new edition of *De stille kracht* was published until 1951, when the fourth edition came out. From that point on the novel was published more frequently and subsequently the editions of the 1950s and 1960s are distinctively different in design and paratext than the three earlier editions. What are these differences precisely? And what do they say about the novel and its reception?

This chapter will have a different lay-out than the previous one. Instead of examining every edition one by one all editions will be compared based on several subthemes. These themes are: ‘covers’, ‘blurbs’, ‘series’ and ‘various paratexts’ (i.e. footnotes, introductions, etc.). The editions examined in this chapter are:

Fourth edition by L.J. Veen, 1951. *De stille kracht* is now part of the ‘Amstelboeken’ series. This pocket edition has a striking cover that is quite different from the three previous Veen editions of *De stille kracht*.

First edition by *Uitgeverij Het Kompas*, Antwerp, 1951, as part of the Phoenix series. *Het Kompas* was a Belgian subsidiary of L.J. Veen and thus this pocket edition is almost exactly the same as Veen’s fourth edition.

Part of *Verzamelde werken* (Collected works), vol. IV, by *De samenwerkende uitgevers Amsterdam/Antwerp* (The collaborating publishers Amsterdam/Antwerp), 1953. This hardcover edition contains especially interesting paratextual elements like a glossary and justification.

Fifth edition by L.J. Veen, 1960. This pocket edition discards the footnotes for translations of Malaysian words. Later editions follow its example.

Sixth edition by L.J. Veen, 1964. A ‘literary paperback’ and the first edition of *De stille kracht* to feature a blurb text.

First hard cover edition in the *Klassieken-reeks* (Classics-series) by *Nederlandse Boekenclub 's-Gravenhage*, 1968. The first edition to openly portray *De stille kracht* as a 'classic'.

Seventh edition by L.J. Veen, 1969. Unremarkable, but with a nice cover.

Covers

The covers of the first two editions of *De stille kracht* did not display an illustration or image to convey the themes or plot. The Batik cover of the first edition referenced the Indonesian theme of the book, but it is the third edition, featuring a non-abstract cover illustration that directly communicated the themes of the novel. The later editions published in the 1950s and 1960s continue this trend.

The fourth Veen edition of *De stille kracht* appeared in both hard and soft cover in 1951. The hard cover was very simple: it only contained the author's name, the name of the novel and the letters L, J and V for the publisher.⁵⁰ The paperback edition of the fourth Veen edition sports a much more interesting design: its cover illustration is very colourful and vivid, depicting the Indonesian jungle in blue, black and white. Because of this colour scheme the image has an otherworldly feel. Standing between the bushes is a black female figure. In the upper left hand corner a large yellowish golden illustration in the shape of an animal head is displayed. The author's name is printed vertically, also in yellowish gold, on the left hand side on a black patch. *De stille kracht's* title appears in white at the bottom of the jungle illustration.⁵¹ It is

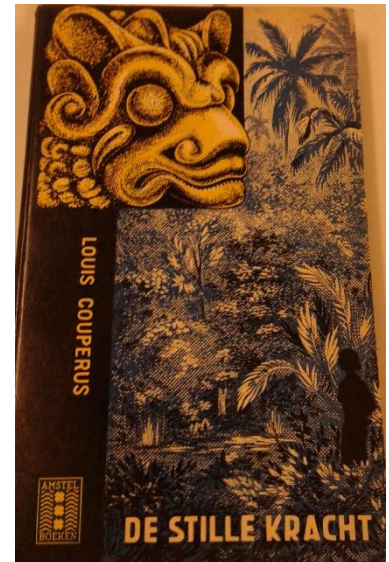


Fig.4. Soft cover of the fourth Veen *De stille kracht* edition (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1951). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

very reminiscent of the dust cover of the third edition which also featured the Indonesian jungle in dark blue colours. Both covers perfectly convey the Indonesian and mystic themes of the novel. This cover is very different from the *jugendstil* batik cover of the first edition. Unfortunately the name of the designer of this cover is not given.

⁵⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1951), hardcover.

⁵¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1951), soft cover.



Fig.5. Cover of the *Het Kompas* edition designed by Nagi. *De stille kracht* (Antwerp: Uitgeverij Het Kompas, 1951). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

The cover of the Belgian *Het Kompas* edition published in the same year as the fourth Veen edition is very different in its design compared to its Dutch sister publication. Instead of ominous blues this cover is dominated by white. We see an Indonesian woman in white dress in a white colonial interior, putting a flower in her hair. Behind her and a plant we see an Indonesian man in pink traditional dress. Both their faces are expressionless. The title of the book and the author's name are printed in black on white strips above and below the cover illustration.⁵² The back of the book displays a black phoenix, referencing the name of the series this edition is part of.⁵³ The name of the artist who created this cover is not mentioned, but the image is signed with the letters 'nagi'.⁵⁴ Whose initials

these are remains unclear. The figures in the illustration cannot be identified as characters from the book, but the cover tries to indirectly convey the themes and atmosphere of *De stille kracht*. The expressionless faces indicate that the Indonesians are 'unreadable' for the Westerners. The rest of the cover design – especially the curly font used for the author's name and title – has a romantic feeling to it. Perhaps it is a little more subtle than the covers of the previous Veen editions, but it operates in the same way by conveying the themes atmospherically instead of portraying actual scenes from the novel.

The Collected Works cover does not have to be addressed extensively here, because its cover only features the letters 'L' and 'C' in gold.⁵⁵ Very stylish, but it does not say anything about *De stille kracht* itself. The work is published in one binding along with Couperus' *Babel*, *Novellen* (novels), *De Zonen der Zon* (Sons of the Sun), *Jahve* and *Dionysos*. Therefore the cover is not specifically referencing any of these works.

⁵² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Antwerp: Uitgeverij Het Kompas, 1951), cover.

⁵³ Ibidem, back of cover.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, cover.

⁵⁵ Couperus, *Verzamelde werken*, vol. IV (Amsterdam/Antwerp: De samenwerkende uitgevers, 1953), cover.

The cover of the fifth edition by Veen from 1960 is the first one to display actual characters from the book. In the background we see again the Indonesian Jungle and through the foliage a European style residence is visible. Above the residence, in the leaves, we see the transparent face of the 'White Haji' from the story, recognisable by his white turban. On the right hand side we see a woman clutching a sheet to her naked body to cover herself up and looking frightened at the face of the 'White Haji'. We can identify her as Léonie. Her nakedness and the towel reference the most infamous scene of the book – her visit to the bath house – as well as the erotic undertones of *De stille kracht*. In the foreground we see a close up of the torso and head of a gentleman in official uniform, who in all likelihood is Van Oudijck. The title and author's name are set both in white.⁵⁶ This cover is far less subtle than its predecessors. The designer, who is not mentioned, takes a more sensational route by displaying the most striking characters from the work and

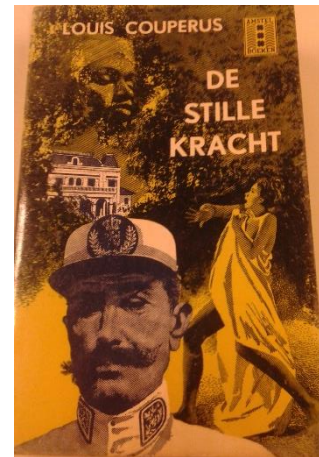


Fig.6. Cover of the fifth Veen edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1960). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.



Fig.7. Cees van Dorland's sixth Veen edition cover of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1964). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

arranging them in a dynamic way against a green background.

The cover of the sixth Veen edition which appeared in 1964 stands out from all others. From the direct and sensational fifth edition cover it switches to a minimalist approach. The cover is teal green and displays a highly stylized tree which splits in two, in the gap the branches form we can see a pale white moon. The tree and moon together look like an eye. The author's name is printed in black at the top with the title in white beneath it.⁵⁷ Again this cover conveys mystery, but it does not really tell much about the story or setting. Cees van Dorland was the designer of this cover, about whom alas no information can be found. He did create more covers for works by Couperus.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1960), cover.

⁵⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1964), cover.

⁵⁸ See Couperuscollectie, 'Fidessa', <http://www.couperuscollectie.nl/couperus/language/nl/pid/19/work_id/15/couperus+collectie.html> (4 August 2015),

In 1968 *De stille kracht* appeared in the *Klassieken-reeks* (Classics series) of *De Nederlandse Boekenclub* (The Dutch Book Club). Like the Collected Works edition it features an elegant hard cover without an illustration. The cover is dark red and has Couperus' signature inlaid in gold on it. The spine features the author's name and the title.⁵⁹ This design is the same for every work that appeared in the *Klassieken-reeks* and is thus not specifically related to Couperus' story.⁶⁰ However, it does tell us that *De stille kracht* is now considered famous enough to be included in a classics series. This will be elaborated upon under *Series* later in this chapter.

The last edition to be discussed in this chapter is the 1969 seventh edition by Veen. It is a pocket edition that looks rather cheap, but it does have a nice illustration on the cover. It is a coloured pen drawing of a woman in European dress standing in the gallery of a European colonial residence. She is clutching her throat and has a frightened look on her face. Outside the gallery behind her we can see the dark Indonesian jungle and a white moon shining through the leaves. Underneath the moon a black figure in a white turban and cloth passes by. The woman appears to be frightened by this figure.⁶¹ This illustration is thus reminiscent of 1960's fifth Veen edition cover. The woman can be identified as Léonie and the dark figure is the White Hadji. It successfully conveys both the story of *De stille kracht* as well as its themes in a rather direct manner. The author's name and title are printed in a simple black font at the top.⁶²

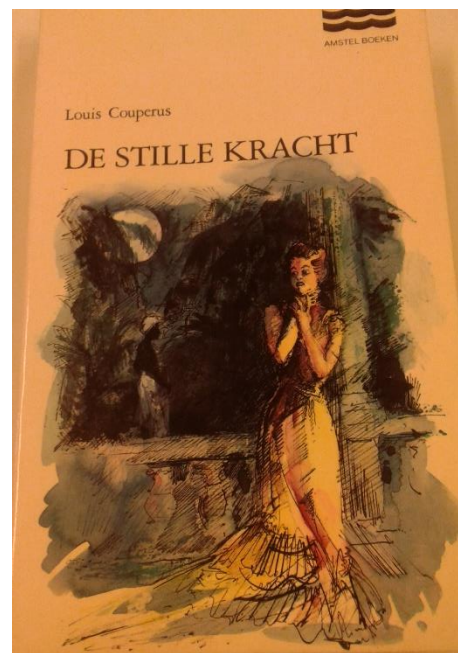


Fig.8. Cover of the seventh Veen edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1969). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

Couperuscollectie, 'Omnibus', <http://www.couperus-collectie.nl/couperus/language/nl/pid/19/work_id/263/couperus+collectie.html> (4 August 2015), Couperuscollectie, 'Psyche' and <http://www.couperus-collectie.nl/couperus/language/nl/pid/19/work_id/135/couperus+collectie.html> (4 August 2015).

⁵⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* ('s-Gravenhage: Nederlandse boekenclub, 1968), cover.

⁶⁰ A randomly chosen example is Casanova, *Mijn levensgeschiedenis* ('s-Gravenhage: Nederlandse boekenclub, 1967), cover.

⁶¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1969), cover.

⁶² Ibidem, cover.

Is there any development visible when examining the covers of all editions of *De stille kracht* from the 1950s and 1960s? Yes, there is. The fourth Veen edition is very much like the dust cover of the third Veen edition, conveying mystery without portraying an actual scene of the plot. The *Kompas* edition does this as well but in a different and more subtle way. The fifth and seventh Veen editions are more direct by showing the main characters from the book in their cover illustrations. There is a shift of focus from atmospheric to direct observable. The sixth Veen edition is very stylized and unlike any other cover of *De stille kracht*. The Collected Works and *Klassieken-reeks* editions have stylish, luxurious bindings without illustrations however. They do both indicate that *De stille kracht* has now become part of the 'classics canon'.

Blurbs

The very first edition of *De stille kracht* to feature a blurb at the back of the cover is the 1960 fifth Veen edition. It runs as follows:

In 'De stille kracht' beschrijft Louis Couperus met het aan zijn schrijverstalent onafscheidelijk verbonden vermogen tot scherpzinnige milieu-ontleding, de 'zwarte kunst' der Indiërs, het beangstigend mysterie van het Oosten, het Indië van voor de oorlog, waar hard werd gewerkt en gefeest, waar in de imposante natuurrijkdom de kleinsmenselijke belangen hun rol speelden.

Geheel die vooroorlogse Indische wereld tekent Couperus ten voeten uit. De mensen klein, maar toch in staat tot grootste verrichtingen, de haat en de gehechtheid ten opzichte van het Indische land en vooral het 'stille gevaar', het voor de westerlingen ondoordringbare mysterie van het Oosten, dat hen klein maakt en overweldigt.⁶³

This blurb tells two different things about the actual story: it conveys the themes and it places the story in a historical context. Instead of providing a synopsis of the storyline of

⁶³ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1960), back of cover. Translation: "In '*De stille kracht*' Louis Couperus describes with his astute ability to dissect society, which is inseparably connected to his talent as a writer, the 'black magic' of the Indonesians, the frightening mystery of the Orient, the pre-war Dutch East Indies, where people worked and partied hard, where in the imposing natural wealth the small-human interests play their part. Couperus draws up in a nutshell the entire pre-war Dutch Indian world. The small people, but capable of grand operations, the hate and attachment pertaining to Indonesia and foremost the 'hidden danger', the for Westerners impervious mystery of the Orient, that makes them small and overwhelms them."

De stille kracht this blurb sketches the themes the book deals with. The mystery of the Orient and the paradoxical “hate and attachment pertaining to Indonesia” are mentioned. This guides the reader’s perception of the novel by focussing his or her attention to this aspect. Besides this the blurb indicates that the novel is set in the pre-war Dutch East Indies. This is mentioned twice. In other words, the novel now takes place in a historical past that does not exist anymore. The story has become ‘outdated’ so to speak. It is also mentioned how brilliant Couperus constructs this now former reality in *De stille kracht*. It is striking that the seventh Veen edition, published nine years later, still uses the same blurb text on the back cover.⁶⁴

The only other edition to feature a blurb text in the selection made for this chapter besides the fifth and seventh Veen edition is the sixth Veen edition. The text runs as follows:

Couperus – Louis Maria Anne (1863-1923) heft als verteller, romanschrijver en autobiograaf een machtig oeuvre op zijn naam staan. Sinds 1893 reisde en woonde hij meestal in het buitenland, vooral in Zuid Frankrijk en Italië. Nadat zijn vroegste poëzie in *De Gids* was gepubliceerd, legde hij zich later vooral op proza toe. De overbeschaafde, vermoeide Haagse aristocratie leverde hem de stof voor de psychologisch-realistische romans *Eline Vere*, *Noodlot*, *Extase*, *Langs lijnen van geleidelijkheid*, *De boeken der kleine zielen*, *Van oude mensen de dingen die voorbijgaan*. Hij schreef in een rijke, dikwijls overladen taal. Als gevolg van zijn studie der geschiedenis verschenen: *Antiek toerisme*, *De berg van licht*, *Komedianten*, *Xerxes of de hoogmoed*, *Het zwevende schaakbord*. Zijn reisimpressies verschenen in *Het Vaderland* en *De Haagse Post*. Couperus was van een onvergelijkbare werkkraft. Het is ondoenlijk al zijn werken hier te noemen. Zes jaar van zijn jeugd bracht hij in het toenmalige Nederlands-Indië door, dat ook in later jaren door hem werd bezocht en hem voor verscheidene werken stof leverde. Hij leerde met zijn die psychologisch indringingsvermogen de Oosterling weliswaar kennen, doch stuitte als Westerling tevens op het beangstigende mysterie van het oosten – dat ondoordringbare iets, wat eigenlijk voor de Westerling het ‘stille gevaar’ genoemd zou moeten worden, waardoor hij zich aldaar als door en muur omringd voelt. Met zijn onbetwistbaar groot

⁶⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen’s Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1969), back of cover.

schrijverstalent tekent Couperus in 'De stille kracht' dit beangstigende mysterie.⁶⁵

This blurb is rather unusual. It first introduces the author and lists some important works he has written to then remark that he has written too much to name in the short blurb text. Through a description of Couperus' relation with the Dutch East Indies the blurb then introduces *De stille kracht* but stays very much focussed on the writer instead of the work itself. No synopsis of the plot is given, but in a few sentences the themes of mystery and the opposition between West and East are sketched, like in the previous blurb text. This places *De stille kracht* within the context and frame of Couperus' life and oeuvre, more so than the fifth Veen edition blurb text. The blurb reads more like a short biography and praise for Couperus than a description of the work in question. According to this blurb text work and author are inseparable.

What conclusion can be drawn from these two blurb texts? They align in content with the covers. Both covers and blurbs are more concerned with the atmosphere and themes of the book with than the actual plot. The blurbs start interpreting the work before the reader has read it for him or herself. The blurb for the 5th Veen edition was also used for the seventh Veen edition. The publisher of said last edition thus considered the fifth Veen edition blurb text more fitting for this work than the blurb text that appeared on the sixth edition which like its cover is rather peculiar. It focusses very much on the writer and not so much on the actual work.

⁶⁵ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1964), back of cover. Translation: "Couperus – Louis Maria Anne (1863-1923) has as a storyteller, writer and auto biographer a mighty oeuvre to his name. Since 1893 he mostly lived abroad, especially in southern France and Italy. After publishing his earliest poetry in *De Gids*, he specialised in prose later. The overly civilized, tired aristocracy of The Hague provided him the substance for the psychological-realistic novels *Eline Vere*, *Noodlot* (Footsteps of fate), *Extase* (Ecstasy), *Langs lijnen der geleidelijkheid* (The law inevitable), *De boeken der kleine zielen* (The books of the small souls), *Van oude mensen de dingen die voorbijgaan* (Of old people the things that pass). He wrote in a rich, ornate language. As a result of his historic studies he wrote *Antiek toerisme* (Tourism in Antiquity), *De berg van licht* (The mountain of light), *Komedianten* (The Comedians), *Xerxes of de hoogmoed* (Arrogance: The Conquests of Xerxes), *Het zwevende schaakbord* (The floating chessboard). His travel accounts appeared in *Het Vaderland* and *De Haagse Post*. Couperus was an incomparable workforce. It is impossible to name all his works here. Six years of his youth he spent in the Dutch East Indies, which he visited again in later years and provided the substance for several works. He got to know the Oriental through his talent for psychological penetration, but as Westerner he encountered frightening mystery of the Orient – that impenetrable something that should be called the 'hidden danger' for the Westerner, because of which he feels there as if surrounded by a wall. Through his undisputed great talent as a writer Couperus paints in '*De stille kracht*' this frightening mystery."

Series

As indicated on the cover or in the books themselves some of the editions of *De stille kracht* are part of a series. I regard the indication that a book is part of a series to be paratextual because that notification and the existence of the novel within a series do say something about the work itself.

The fourth, fifth and seventh Veen editions are part of the 'Amstel boeken' (Amstel books) pocket series. This is indicated by the Amstel boeken logo on their covers and title pages.⁶⁶ The fourth Veen edition mentions at the back of the cover other books that have also appeared as Amstel boeken: Hendrik Gorter's *Delianen* and *Tabakkers*; Eirich Kästner's *Drie mannen in de sneeuw* (Three Men in the Snow); Nikolaj Leskow's *De verzegelde engel* (The Sealed Angel); Charles Lindbergh's *Luister de wind* (Listen! The Wind); Jack London's *Chechaquo*; Lev Tolstoj's *Anna Karenina*; Henri van Wermeskerken's *Manneneiland* (Men's Island).⁶⁷ The works by Gorter describe the life of colonial planters on Sumatra, but other than that the mentioned works do not seem to have a direct thematic link to *De stille kracht*. It is a haphazard collection of works from different parts of the world and different time periods that were part of L.J. Veen's publishing list. The fifth Veen edition also features a list of books that have appeared in the Amstel boeken series, including all titles mentioned above but expanded with works from Alexandre Dumas (The Count of Monte Cristo and Three Musketeers), Emily Brontë (Jane Eyre) and Henri Pirenne (The Middle Ages).

The edition published by *Uitgeverij het Kompas* in 1951 is part of a new *De Feniks reeks* (The Phoenix series). It is actually the first of eighteen books to be published in this particular Feniks series.⁶⁸ There have been several Feniks series published by *Uitgeverij het Kompas*, starting with the first one in 1933. The Feniks books were supposed to be the best books for the lowest price. Its aim was to stop the negative influence high prices of books had on the flourishing of Flemish reading culture. The

⁶⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1951) cover, back of cover. Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1960), cover, back of cover, french title, title page. Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1969) cover, back of cover.

⁶⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij 1951), back of cover.

⁶⁸ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Antwerp: Uitgeverij Het Kompas, 1951). The back of the cover features a Phoenix symbol and on the page before the beginning of the novel it is indicated as the first work to be published in the current Phoenix series.

multiple Feniks series became highly successful and featured many great literary works.⁶⁹

The *Nederlandse Boekenclub* published *De stille kracht* as part of their Classics Series in 1968. This is the first time that *De stille kracht* is openly acknowledged as a classic, although this 'classic' status is already implied by the Amstel boeken series. The *Nederlandse Boekenclub* is the oldest book club in the Netherlands. It published Dutch translations of works by various famous international authors from Victoria Holt to Hemingway.⁷⁰ Among these names Couperus appears to be regarded as a 'classic author' and the *Boekenclub* publication gave *De stille kracht* a validation as a good book. It was selected for the book club, thus it must be considered an important work by the editors of *Boekenclub*. Couperus has always divided critics and his work regularly provoked strong critical reactions – as became clear from the first publication of *De stille kracht*. At the same time, Couperus was considered as one of the great European writers of his time. Interestingly enough this appreciation of Couperus seems more prevalent outside the Netherlands. 1963 was called a 'Couperus-year' because it marks the hundredth anniversary of his birth. This and the increasing number of publications of *De stille kracht* indeed point to increasing appraisal of his oeuvre.⁷¹

The Collected Works of Couperus that was published between 1952 and 1953 in twelve parts can be considered a series as well. *De stille kracht* is part of the larger oeuvre of Couperus and has a place in that. The series was published by the collaborating publishers *N.V. Drukkerij en Uitgeversmij De Arbeiderspers* from Amsterdam, *D.A. Daamen's Uitgeversmaatschappij N.V.* from The Hague, *Van Loghum Slaterus' Uitgeversmaatschappij N.V.* from Arnhem, *Nijgh & Van Ditmar N.V.* from The Hague, *G.A. van Oorschot* from Amsterdam, *Uitgeverij De Sikkel* from Antwerp and of course *L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij N.V.* from Amsterdam. The Collected Works edition was created by a committee of editors consisting of A. van Rhijn-Naeff, Pierre H. Dubois, Prof. Dr. J. A. Goris, Dr. J. Hulsker, M. Nijhoff, Prof. Dr. G. Stuiveling and Dr. Herman Teirlinck.⁷² The fact that this literary monument was created is an indication

⁶⁹ Ludo Simons, *Geschiedenis van de uitgeverij in Vlaanderen II: de twintigste eeuw* (Tielt: Uitgeverij Lannoo 1987), p. 117.

⁷⁰ Victoria Holt, *De geheimzinnige echtgenoot – een liefde in Frankrijk* ('s-Gravenhage: Nederlandse boekenclub, 1977) and Ernest Hemingway, *Ernest Hemingway Omnibus* ('s-Gravenhage: Nederlandse boekenclub, 1965).

⁷¹ Marc Galle, *Couperus in de kritiek* (Amsterdam: Polak & Van Gennep, 1963), pp. 5-9 and 81.

⁷² Couperus, *Verzamelde werken IV* (Amsterdam/Antwerp: De samenwerkende uitgevers, 1953), colophon, no page number.

that Couperus and hence *De stille kracht* were now generally regarded an important part of Dutch literary history. Not many authors are honoured by a collected works edition. However, this edition also ruffled the feathers of some Couperus lovers because of the modernised spelling and the omission of some important stories and poems.⁷³

What does the indication of a series in the physical copies of *De stille kracht* mean? It communicates to the reader that *De stille kracht* is part of a larger body of works. Couperus' work was published in the Amstel Boeken paperback series, which featured various other authors. *De stille kracht* became also available in a cheap edition, as part of the popular Flemish Phoenix series that presented the best of world literature. Finally the Couperus Collected Works and *Boekenclub* editions definitely identified *De stille kracht* as a classic of Dutch literature.

Various paratexts

The most remarkable development in the paratexts of *De stille kracht* in this period is the disappearance of the footnotes which translate the Malaysian terms. They are still present in Veen's 1951 fourth edition and in the *Het Kompas* edition of the same year. The Collected Works edition, however, does not feature these footnotes anymore. Instead at the end of the book an "explanation of a few words, derived from Malaysian or Javanese. The translations, provided with an asterisk, are by Louis Couperus himself."⁷⁴ Then a list of five pages containing foreign words is presented, expanded by extra translations besides the translations already provided by Couperus. Apparently the editors of the *Collected Works* thought the translations of the previous editions to be insufficient. It is likely that after the loss of the Dutch East Indies Malayan and Javanese terms and phrases were not understood in the Netherlands and thus additional translations were needed. After the appearance of *De stille kracht* in the *Collected Works* none of the later editions features the footnotes any more, nor do they, however, feature a glossary of Malayan words as the *Collected Works* had done. These editions do not translate any of the foreign terms or words, which is quite remarkable because even Couperus himself regarded such translations as necessary when the first edition appeared in 1900. Why this decision was made remains unclear.

⁷³ Marc Galle, *Couperus in de kritiek* (Amsterdam: Polak & Van Gennep, 1963), p. 80.

⁷⁴ Couperus, *Verzamelde werken IV* (Amsterdam/Antwerp: De samenwerkende uitgevers, 1953), p. 754. Original Dutch: "verklaring van een aantal woorden, aan Maleis of Javaans ontleend. De vertalingen, voorzien van een sterretje, zijn van Louis Couperus zelf."

The *Collected Works* edition besides the glossary features two other examples of paratext: a short justification and a colophon. The justification explains the origins and early publication history of *De stille kracht*, as well as the history surrounding the other works to be found in this volume of the *Collected Works*. In this text, *De stille kracht* is branded as one of Couperus' best works. The translations of Malayan words by the editors is acknowledged and their inclusion in the glossary with supplementary translations is explained. Why the choice was made to translate additional words is, however, not mentioned.⁷⁵ The colophon lists the people responsible for this volume and the publishers involved.⁷⁶

Like in the early editions paratexts in the 'traditional' sense of Genette are still not very much present in the editions of *De stille kracht* of the 1950s and 1960s. Actually, the only textual paratext of the early editions - the Malayan translation footnotes - completely disappears after the publication of the novel in the *Collected Works*. It is the *Collected Works* that provides the most paratext in the form of a justification, glossary and colophon which help the reader understand the context of the edition they are reading.

What changes can be observed in the editions of *De stille kracht* in the 1950s and 1960s? There are a few trends discernible. The most important is the implicit classical status awarded to Couperus' entire oeuvre through the *Collected Works* and the mention of *De stille kracht* as one of his most important works. Thus *De stille kracht* has become something special, even within Couperus' body of work. This 'classic' status is confirmed later on by the publication of *De stille kracht* as part of *De Nederlandse Boekenclub's* classics series. Another feature is the replacement of the footnotes containing Malayan translations to a larger appendix in the *Collected Works* edition, and their total disappearance in subsequent editions. On the other hand the covers and their blurbs show a renewed interest of *De stille kracht* for a broad audience. The cover illustrations retain their 'mystical' feeling, but now show images directly related to the story itself. Yet, they never depict actual scenes from the novel, but they rely largely on the sense of atmosphere. The same can be said about the blurbs. They do not give an overview of the

⁷⁵ Couperus, *Verzamelde werken IV* (Antwerp/Amsterdam: De samenwerkende uitgevers 1953), p. 751.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, colophon, no page number.

story but rather introduce the writer and the main themes of *De stille kracht*, Dutch colonialism and the mystery of the Orient.

Chapter 3 – Renewed interest (1970-1989)

In the 1970s *De stille kracht* got a huge popularity boost from the TV-series, based on the novel, and broadcast in 1974. *De stille kracht* was number eight on the list of the top ten best sold books of August 1974.⁷⁷ Probably because of the renewed interest in the novel in the 1970s and 1980s Veen published more editions of *De stille kracht* than in the previous decades. These editions appeared in a highly standardised form in the ‘Amstel’ series both as literary classic and as pocket edition. Besides this standardisation an increasing number of special editions were published. This chapter will examine what paratextual elements are present in the Veen series and the special editions of *De stille kracht*.

The structure of this chapter differs from the previous ones. First the Veen ‘Amstel’ series will be discussed. *De stille kracht* went through many editions in this series, but their design and lay-out hardly changed over the years. Therefore, instead of separately discussing every edition a broad overview of what paratextual elements were present or missing in these editions will be given. *De stille kracht* appeared in two different ‘Amstel’ series by Veen, the already existing ‘Amstel-paperback’ and from 1980 onwards in the ‘Amstel Klassiek’ hardcover series. Following the general remarks on the ‘Amstel’ series the special editions of *De stille kracht* that appeared in the 1970s and 80s will be analysed in depth. These special editions are:

De stille kracht was published as a Bulkboek in 1972. Bulkboeken were editions of literary works that were intended for educational purposes. The form and the paratextual elements of these editions are extremely different from all other regular editions of *De stille kracht*. Twelve years later, in 1984, a second Bulkboek edition was published.

In 1974 a TV-series based on *De stille kracht* was aired on Dutch television with considerable success. For this occasion a new edition was published which features stills from the series as illustrations. It is reminiscent of movie

⁷⁷ “Unieboek-top-tien”, *Het Vaderland*, 7 september 1974.

editions of other filmed novels. The paratext, both in text and illustration, is certainly worth discussing in detail.

The 1953 collected works of Couperus saw an identical reprint in 1975. Because nothing has changed in paratext this edition will not be addressed in this chapter.

In 1976 a large print edition of *De stille kracht* was published by the *Grootdruk Uitgeverij* from Eindhoven. Apparently the work was so popular that it was deemed necessary to publish this large print edition so the novel could also be enjoyed by the visually impaired.

Querido published *De stille kracht* in 1984 as a Salamander pocket edition. A second Querido Salamander edition was published in 1988.

Couperus' entire oeuvre was published as a collected works edition again in 1989. This edition was not just a reprint of the 1953 *Collected Works*. It aspired to be the best possible collected edition of Couperus' oeuvre and thus made its own choices for the text and paratext.

Amstel paperback

The first Amstel paperback was Veen's eight published edition of *De stille kracht* and appeared in 1972. *De stille kracht* got published in this series up until the twenty-second edition in 1988.⁷⁸ These fifteen (!) editions are all very alike, although some differences in design and paratext developed over time. The fixed and changing paratextual elements of this series will both be addressed.

⁷⁸ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's, 1972) to Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's, 1988), only the Veen Amstel paperback editions.

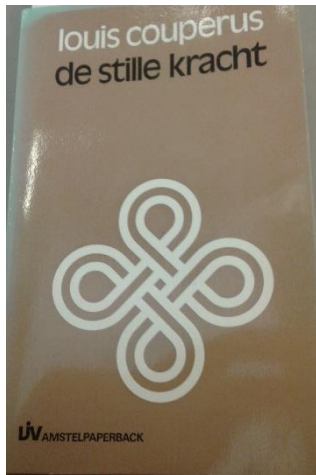


Fig.9. Cover of the eighth to the fifteenth Amstel paperback editions of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1974). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.



Fig.10. Cover of the sixteenth to the eighteenth Amstel paperback editions of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1982). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.



Fig.11. Cover of the nineteenth to the twenty-second Amstel paperback editions of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1984). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

The cover of the eight edition is very simple. It is brown and features the author's name in white at the top. Underneath the title of the novel is printed in black. The only illustration on the cover is a knot-like image and at the bottom the book is identified as Amstel paperback.⁷⁹ This cover design was actually the same for all Amstel paperback books, including Couperus' oeuvre and novels by authors like Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy.⁸⁰ Like the second edition this cover is thus standardised and does not say anything about the story of the novel at all. The Amstel paperback editions of *De stille kracht* featured this simple cover up to and including the fifteenth edition of 1979.⁸¹ In the 1980s the cover of the Amstel paperback received a new, but again standardised cover. From this moment on the cover is white and all information is printed in black. The white background features vaguely visible emblems.⁸² From the nineteenth edition onward the cover changes again. The background of the cover is grey with black handwriting on it. The author's name is printed in white on the top, and that of the publisher at the bottom. The title of the novel is set in red, underneath a painting of a woman and man in a *fin de siècle* interior, by the Danish painter Peter Severin Krøyer.⁸³

⁷⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1972), cover.

⁸⁰ *Amstel paperbacks in nieuwe moderne uitvoering: Hoogtepunten uit de Nederlandse en de wereldliteratuur voor grijpbare prijzen*; text of a leaflet of L.J. Veen publishing house, date not stated, p. 2.

⁸¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1979), cover.

⁸² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1981), cover.

⁸³ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1984), cover and back of cover.

Although this picture has nothing to do with the story of *De stille kracht* it does recall an 'end of nineteenth century' atmosphere.

The back of the covers of the Amstel paperback editions feature several paratextual elements. At the top a picture of Couperus is printed, followed by a blurb. The blurb of the eighth edition reads:

Louis Marie Anne Couperus (1863-1923). Op het ogenblik vindt het veelzijdig schrijverstalent van deze grote Nederlandse prozaïst weer de erkenning die het toekomt. Zijn virtuoos taalgebruik, zijn veelzijdigheid, levenswijsheid en psychologisch begrip hebben onze literatuur verrijkt met een aantal werken die zoveel in zich hebben, dat het verglijden van de tijd hen niet heeft kunnen aantasten.

In zijn werk is duidelijk onderscheid te maken tussen drie groepen van min of meer bij elkaar horende werken. Psychologisch-realistische romans doortrokken van decadente weelde, stadswaan, levensmoeheid en –berusting. Historische romans vol groteske verbeelding, decadentie en pessimisme over alles dat vergaat. Een grote verzameling journalistiek werk, schijnbaar moeiteloos geschreven, waarin hij zijn hele persoonlijkheid openbaart.

Couperus schreef 'De stille kracht' in 1900. Het is een duidelijk hoogtepunt in zijn werk. Een Indische roman, doortrokken van oosters mysterie, menselijke kleinheid en de onpeilbare krachten van liefde en haat. Meesterlijk knap roept hij 'de stille kracht' op, het voor de westerlingen ondoordringbare mysterie van het Oosten, dat hen klein maakt en overweldigt.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1972), back of cover. Translation: "Louis Marie Anne Couperus (1863-1923). At the moment the versatile talent of this great Dutch prose writer again gets the recognition it deserves. His expert use of language, his versatility, wisdom and psychological understanding have enriched our literature with a number of works that have so much in them, that the passage of time has not been able to taint them.

His work is clearly dividable into three groups of works that are more or less coherent. Psychological-realistic novels permeated with decadent opulence, city delusion, world-weariness and resignation to life. Historical novels filled with grotesque imagination, decadence and pessimism about all that perishes. A large collection of journalistic work, seemingly effortless written, in which he reveals his full personality. Couperus wrote *De stille kracht* in 1900. It is a clear highlight in his work. An Indonesian novel, permeated with Oriental mystery, human insignificance and the fathomless forces of love and hate. Masterfully clever he paints 'the hidden force', the for Westerners impervious mystery of the Orient, that makes them small and overwhelms them."

This blurb is reminiscent of that of the fifth edition. Again a synopsis of the story is not given, but the themes of the book are highlighted, as is Couperus' masterful writing. Besides this blurb the back of the eighth edition features a list of other works that appeared as Amstel paperback.⁸⁵ The blurb text remains the same, but the list of other works changes over the years, which is no surprise because new works kept on being published in this series.⁸⁶

Just as the front of the cover changed from the sixteenth edition onward, so did the back. At the top there now is another photo of Couperus. The blurb has changed as well:

In geen enkele roman treft Couperus zo zeker, zo tastbaar de mystieke sfeer van het oude koloniale Indië. De tropische druk, de dreiging van het onbekende, de zwoele sfeer van decadentie en angst rond de mooie, lelieblanke erotische residentsvrouw Leonie van Oudijck. Voelbaar is ook de angst voor de onderdrukten, voor hun stille kracht... 'diep verborgen in de dingen van Indië, in de natuur van Java', de geheimzinnige macht van de Javaan 'niet om zich te bevrijden van het juk, maar wel om ziek te maken, te doen kwijnen, te plagen, te treiteren, te spoken onbegrijpelijk en afgrijselijk'.

Couperus schreef *De stille kracht* in 1990, na een langdurig bezoek aan Indonesië.

Louis Marie Anne Couperus werd op 10 juni 1863 in Den Haag geboren. Tot zijn vijftiende leefde hij in Batavia. In 1889 verschijnt *Eline Vere*, de eerste grote Nederlandse psychologische roman. In 1892, het jaar waarin hij *Extase* schrijft, begint zijn rusteloos reizen. Ontworteld, opgegroeid in het verval van de Haagse aristocratie, zijn pessimisme, zijn melancholie voedend met de verwording van het oude Florence, zijn hang naar mystiek vindend in het oude Indië, ademt zijn taal een fijnzinnige decadentie.

Op 60-jarige leeftijd sterft Louis Couperus op 16 juli 1923 in De Steeg, waar hij zich in maart van dat jaar gevestigd had.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1972), back of cover.

⁸⁶ Compare Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1972), back of cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen 1988), back of cover. The blurb in the latter edition is set in a column on the left, leaving more room to the longer list of other works in the Amstel paperback series.

⁸⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1981), back of cover. Translation: "In no other novel Couperus so precisely, so tangibly describes the mystical atmosphere of the old colonial Dutch East Indies.

The blurb is not very different from the one that preceded it, again focussing on the themes of the novel. However, Léonie, the most prominent personage, is now also mentioned. The redesigned 19th and later editions feature the same blurb text, but no photo of Couperus.⁸⁸

No list of other works published in the Amstel paperback series are mentioned on the back of the cover from the sixteenth edition onward.⁸⁹ From the eleventh edition onward, however, such a list is included on a separate page before the title page.⁹⁰ The titles mentioned in this list changes per edition.

The only other paratextual element in these editions is a glossary at the end. The footnotes from the earliest editions are not used. Instead the glossary features blocks of text containing foreign words and their translation. The first block of text features all foreign terms that start with an A, the second block the foreign terms that start with a B and so on. The foreign text is printed bold and the translations in Dutch follow in normal print. Not only Malaysian terms are translated, but also French, English and even archaic Dutch. Even though the list is ordered alphabetical references to the glossary are not present in the main text. Readers themselves have to go to the glossary at the back on their own to look for the proper translation of a foreign term.⁹¹ The ninth edition adds a reference to the glossary on the first page in a footnote for the word *caladiums*, something that the eight edition did not do.⁹² From the ninth edition onward all editions do feature the same footnote referencing the glossary.

The tropical pressure, the threat of the unknown, the sultry atmosphere of decadence and fear surrounding the beautiful, lilywhite erotic wife of the *resident* Leonie van Oudijck. Tangible is also the fear for the suppressed, for their hidden force... 'deeply hidden in the things of the Dutch East Indies, in the nature of Java', the secret power of the Javanese 'not to free themselves from the yoke, but to make sick, to poison, to tease, to bully, to haunt incomprehensibly and terribly'.

Couperus wrote *De stille kracht* in 1900, after a long visit to Indonesia.

Louis Marie Anne Couperus was born on 10 June 1863 in The Hague. Until the age of fifteen he lived in Batavia. In 1889 *Eline Vere* was published, the first great Dutch psychological novel. In 1892, the year in which he writes *Extase*, his restless travelling begins. Uprooted, brought up in the decadence of The Hague aristocracy, his pessimism, the nurturing of his melancholia with the degeneration of old Florence, his longing for mysticism satisfied in the old Dutch East Indies, his language breathes a subtle decadence. At 60 years old Louis Couperus dies on 16 July 1923 in De Steeg, where he had settled in March of the previous year."

⁸⁸ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1984).

⁸⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1981), back of cover.

⁹⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1974), no page number.

⁹¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1972), 'verklarende woordenlijst', no page number.

⁹² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1973), p. 5 and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1972), p. 5.

The first two versions of the Amstel paperback editions published by Veen from the 1970s and 1980s are visually more boring than any other edition of *De stille kracht* published so far. The cover is standardised for the whole series and thus does not give any information about the work itself, except the fact that it is part of the best works published by Veen. Through the standardised cover *De stille kracht* is linked to all other publications in this series. The cover of the nineteenth and later editions feature a painting that is atmospheric but unrelated to the story of *De stille kracht*. The placing of the novel in a series is enforced through the lists of ‘other works published as Amstel paperback’ that is featured in all titles of the series. The blurbs stress the character of Couperus and his themes, his fondness for decadence taking central stage. As Couperus’ *fin de siècle* world does not exist anymore, it needs to be stressed in the blurb. The glossary too communicates the fact that Couperus’ world is gone, which is the reason why now also archaic Dutch and foreign terms needs to be translated next to the Malayan.

Amstelklassieken

In 1980 *De stille kracht* appeared as part of the ‘Amstel klassieken’ series published by Veen. This series is very similar to Veen’s Amstel paperback series. The only real difference is the binding. ‘Amstel klassieken’ books have hard cover bindings instead of soft covers. The ‘Amstel klassieken’ cover is also standardised and used for every work that is published in this series. The cover is rather stylish brown with the author’s name and the title of the novel stamped in gold. It also features a knot like image, of which the designer is not named.⁹³ Like the same cover of the edition in the Amstel paperback series, it says nothing directly about Couperus’ work except that it is part of a particular literary series. There is no blurb on the back of the cover.

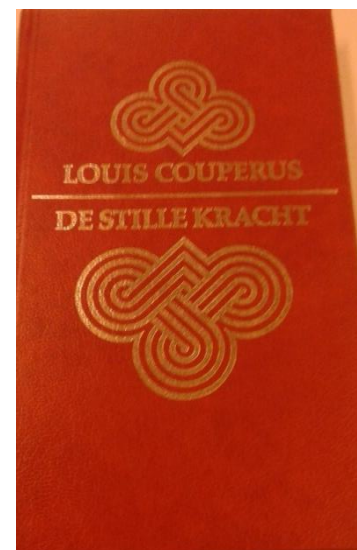


Fig.12. Example of the ‘Amstel klassieken’ cover of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1981). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

⁹³ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1980), cover.

The paratextual elements in the book are exactly the same as with the Amstel paperback series. On a separate page before the title page a list of other works in the 'Amstel klassieken' series is printed.⁹⁴ The first page of the main text features the same footnote for the word *caladiums* that references the glossary at the back.⁹⁵ This glossary is exactly the same as the one in the Amstel paperback editions.⁹⁶ Four editions of *De stille kracht* as 'Amstel klassiek' were published, until 1982.

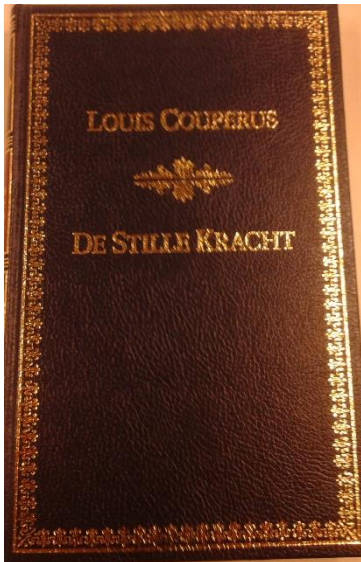


Fig.13. 'Meestervertellers' cover of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1983). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

Veen did publish another hard cover edition of *De stille kracht* a few years later, this time as part of the 'Meestervertellers' (master storytellers) series. The cover looks quite chic, dark brown with the author's name and title of the novel stamped in gold. The front cover is framed by border ornaments also in gold.⁹⁷ There is no blurb on the back of the cover, while the inside of the book is exactly the same as in the edition in the 'Amstel klassiek' editions (footnote, glossary, etc.).⁹⁸ The only thing missing is a list of other works published in this series.

Like the 'Amstel paperbacks' the 'Amstel klassieken' series by Veen is somewhat disappointing with regard to design and paratextual elements. The cover is standardised for the whole series and there are no blurbs. The glossary is the same as in the 'Amstel paperbacks' series. As a result, no new insights can be gained. But as uninteresting as these editions are, the more compelling are the special editions that will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

⁹⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1980), no page number.

⁹⁵ Ibidem, p. 5.

⁹⁶ Ibidem, 'verklarende woordenlijst', no page number.

⁹⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1983), cover.

⁹⁸ Ibidem, p. 5 and 'verklarende woordenlijst', no page number.

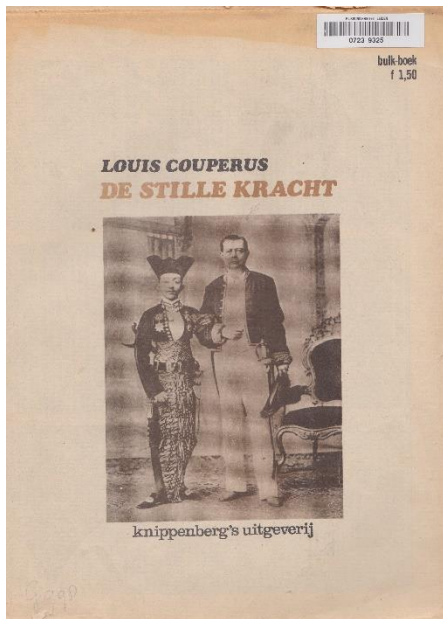


Fig.14. Cover of the first Bulkboek edition of *De stille kracht* (Utrecht: Knippenberg, 1972). Source: Leiden University Library.

Bulkboek editions

The Bulkboek series by publishing house Knippenberg from Utrecht are very cheap editions of literary masterpieces printed on newsprint. They were intended for educational purposes. It was possible to get a subscription to the Bulkboek series. Five times a year one would receive two issues at the same time. Because of the low price this was a great deal for schools.⁹⁹ The fact that *De stille kracht* was published as part of this series indicates that it is part of a literary canon that must be taught to pupils.

As stated before the Bulkboek edition consists of large newsprint sheets that are folded two times.

Because of this the Bulkboek has a side that acts as 'cover'. The price is displayed in the upper right corner. The title of the novel is printed in red underneath the author's name in black. The cover also features a black and white photo of a *regent* and *resident* and the name of the publishing house.¹⁰⁰ Although the photo is a historic document, it communicates the themes and even story of *De stille kracht* very well. At the core of the book lies the conflict between the Indonesians and the Dutch, in the story embodied by the relation between *resident* Van Oudijck and *regent* of Laboewangi. It also ties the story to the actual Dutch colonial history.

The back of the Bulkboek features information on the subscription and costs of ordering individual issues. It lists the persons and agencies that helped create the Bulkboek like L.J. Veen's publishing house. Also, the covers of some other Bulkboeken are reproduced as promotion for the series.¹⁰¹

In order to be able to read the novel the Bulkboek must be folded open, displaying the text in three columns on every half of the sheet. Throughout the book some black and white photos are printed, some with a caption, others without. The photos chosen are historic photos from the Dutch East Indies and photos of Couperus himself. For example there is a photo of a *fin de siècle* interior that is indicated by its

⁹⁹ The back of *De stille kracht* bulkboek (Utrecht: Knippenberg, 1972) states that a subscription cost fl. 15 per year and the front states that this *De stille kracht* edition cost fl. 1.50.

¹⁰⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht: Knippenberg, 1972), cover.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, back of cover.

caption as “a boudoir such as Léonie van Oudijck would have had”.¹⁰² The middle sheet of the Bulkboek shows two pictures, one of Couperus’ future wife Elisabeth Baud and one of Couperus, both at a very young age.¹⁰³ The pictures greatly enliven the otherwise rather simply designed Bulkboek.

Despite the Bulkboek being intended for educational purposes no glossary or footnotes explaining foreign terms is included. Possibly the teacher is supposed to help the pupils, or the publisher decided that the text could easily be understood by pupils. Still, the lack of paratextual elements to aid the reader in this educational edition is rather peculiar.

The last paratext that can be found in this edition is an essay about Couperus written by Rob Nieuwenhuys, himself a writer and man of letters. He is the archetypical *Indo*, the Dutch word for someone born from an European father and Indonesian

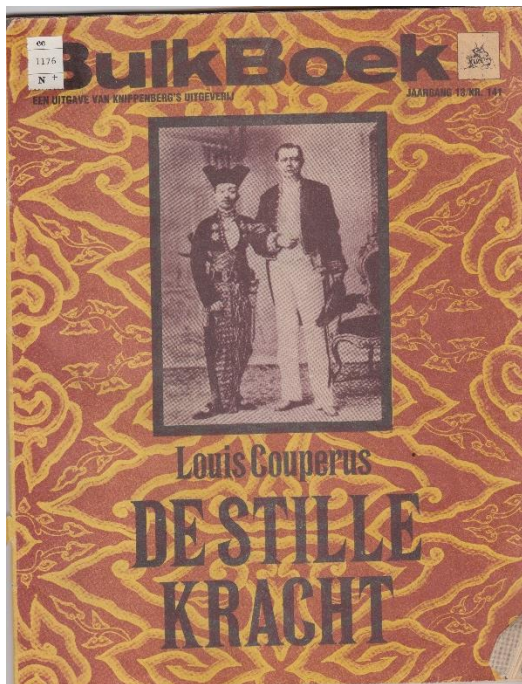


Fig.15. Cover of the second Bulkboek edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Knippenberg, 1984). Source: Leiden University Library.

mother. He was born in 1908 and had lived most of his life in the Dutch East Indies and later in Indonesia.¹⁰⁴ *De stille kracht* clearly was of great importance to him personally. The text is titled ‘*De Indische wereld van Couperus*’ (The Indonesian world of Couperus) and is an excerpt from his work *Oost-Indische Spiegel*, a study of Dutch colonial literature. The excerpt discusses Couperus’ history in the Dutch East Indies and his Indonesian roots, as well as the themes of the book.¹⁰⁵ Although well written, it does seem somewhat difficult for the intended readers, especially because no further context for this text is given, such as a biography of Couperus or information on Nieuwenhuys.

De stille kracht was published as a Bulkboek again in 1984, twelve years later. This new edition features many changes. Although the text is still printed on newsprint,

¹⁰² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht: Knippenberg, 1972), no page numbers.

¹⁰³ Ibidem, no page numbers.

¹⁰⁴ G.J. van Bork & P.J. Verkruijsse (ed.), *De Nederlandse en Vlaamse Auteurs van middeleeuwen tot heden met inbegrip van de Friese auteurs* (Weesp: De Haan, 1985), pp. 410-411.

¹⁰⁵ Rob Nieuwenhuys, ‘De Indische Wereld van Couperus’, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht: Knippenberg, 1972), no page numbers.

it is bound together with smaller sheets so it can be read like a regular book or magazine. The cover is more or less the same. Instead of a blank background the title, author's name and the same photo that was used on the cover of the 1972 Bulkboek are printed in an Oriental pattern of red and yellow.¹⁰⁶ The back of the cover does not feature a blurb, but reproduces the text of what appears to be a short newspaper article. A photo of Couperus and his wife on an Atlantic steamer is positioned on the left and on the right a short text informs the reader about Couperus' return to the Dutch East Indies. *De stille kracht* is also mentioned. No source for this text is given, but it appears to be a newspaper article written at the start of Couperus' last visit to Indonesia.¹⁰⁷ It was probably published in the Dutch weekly *Het Leven* in 1921.¹⁰⁸

Just like the first Bulkboek this edition is enlivened with historic photographs. Their few accompanying lines are not descriptive captions as in the first Bulkboek, but quotes from the novel. For example, the first photo in the main text displays a Dutch colonial residence. It is accompanied by the following lines from *De stille kracht*: "Aan het einde der Lange Laan lag diep in zijn voortuin het Residentiehuis."¹⁰⁹ The house in the picture is of course not the fictional house mentioned in the book, but it illustrates nicely what such a house might have looked like. Every photo in this Bulkboek edition is used in such an associative way.

The main text is preceded by two introductory texts. The first one, entitled 'Reizen en Schrijven' (Travelling and writing) is by Peter Brill. It starts with a biography of Couperus in which his homosexuality plays a major role and ends with a list of highlights from his oeuvre. *De stille kracht* is not mentioned but referenced, giving the impression that this text was not written especially as an introduction to *De stille kracht*.¹¹⁰ The second text is by Rob Nieuwenhuys and is entitled 'Het Drama van de Resident' (The Drama of the *Resident*). It is an edited version of an article Nieuwenhuys wrote for the weekly *Haagse Post* of 14 September 1974. It first discusses the genesis of the novel and Couperus' travels to the Dutch East Indies, followed by an explanation of the supernatural and occult themes of the novel. Nieuwenhuys even points out some

¹⁰⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Knippenberg, 1984), cover.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, back of cover.

¹⁰⁸ The photo and article are referenced in: "Couperus.", *Algemeen Handelsblad*, (Amsterdam: 10 October 1921).

¹⁰⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Knippenberg, 1984), p. 13. Translation: "At the end of the Long Avenue lay deep in its front garden the house of the *Resident*."

¹¹⁰ Peter Brill, 'Reizen en Schrijven', *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Knippenberg, 1984), pp. 4-6.

mistakes Couperus made. In the final part Nieuwenhuys explains how the structure of *De stille kracht* resembles that of a classical tragedy.¹¹¹ Like the previous text by Nieuwenhuys in the first Bulkboek edition it is well written but perhaps too difficult to understand for schoolchildren.

The 1984 Bulkboek edition actually does feature a glossary at the end. In alphabetical order foreign and archaic Dutch terms are translated.¹¹² It appears that the publisher realised that this might aid the young readers of *De stille kracht*. The last paratextual elements are a list of all Bulkboek editions that have so far appeared and some information on subscriptions and ordering separate issues.¹¹³

These two cheap Bulkboek editions for education purposes of *De stille kracht* are greatly enlivened by contemporary photos. The story is thus linked to the history of the Dutch East Indies. The reader therefore both learns something about Couperus' novel and actual history. Both editions feature introductory texts that might be a bit too hard to understand for school pupils but introduce the themes and writing process of *De stille kracht* quite well. The second edition features a glossary, something that the first edition curiously missed. The series also indicate that *De stille kracht* is part of Dutch literary history that must be taught at school.

TV-Series edition

De stille kracht was turned into a TV-series directed by Walter van der Kamp and was broadcast by AVRO TV broadcasting in 1974. Quite a few well-known Dutch actors starred in the series, like Bob de Lange as Otto van Oudijck, Willem Nijholt as Theo van Oudijck and Hans Dagelet as Addy de Luce. The most iconic role was for Pleuni Touw as Léonie van Oudijck.¹¹⁴ Her scene in the shower where she gets soaked in Sirih juice is legendary, just like it is the best known part of the novel. *De stille kracht* was a miniseries of up to a 240 minute run-time.¹¹⁵ It was quite well received at the time and gave the novel a popularity boost.

¹¹¹ Rob Nieuwenhuys, 'Het drama van de resident', *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Knippenberg, 1984), pp. 7-9.

¹¹² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Knippenberg, 1984), p. 69.

¹¹³ Ibidem, pp. 70-71.

¹¹⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Bussum: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1974), no page number.

¹¹⁵ Back of DVD cover *De stille kracht: de volledige serie* (Just Bridge Entertainment, 2010).

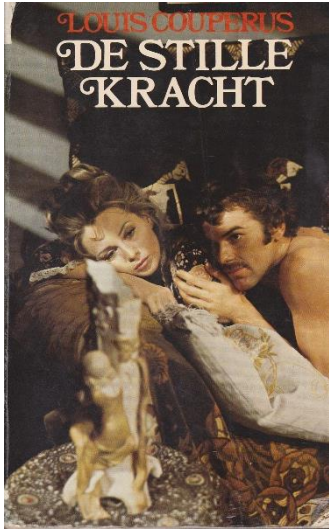


Fig.16. Cover of the TV-series edition of *De stille kracht* (Bussum: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1974). Source: Leiden University Library.



Fig.17. Picture from the TV-series edition of *De stille kracht* (Bussum: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1974). Source: Leiden University Library.

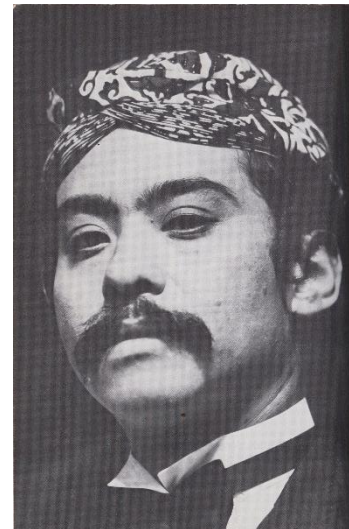


Fig.18. Picture from the TV-series edition of *De stille kracht* (Bussum: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1974). Source: Leiden University Library.

Just like nowadays many films based on books spawn a ‘film-edition’, the TV-series of *De stille kracht* was accompanied with a ‘TV-series’ edition published by Amsterdam publisher Van Holkema & Warendorf in 1974. Vein provided a licence to print Couperus’ novel for this occasion to Van Holkema & Warendorf. What paratextual elements can be discerned in this edition?

The cover features a still from the TV-series. We can see Pleuni Touw lying on a sofa, with Hans Dagelet as Addy de Luce with her. The author’s name is printed in red at the top with the title of the novel in white underneath. The cover reflects the TV-series’ focus on the human drama of the novel instead of its supernatural elements. The two well-known actors also should draw attention. The cover in addition showcases the art-design of the series, which was quite atmospheric.¹¹⁶ The back of the cover displays a pencil drawn portrait of the author – the name of the artist is not stated - and a blurb. This blurb is quite peculiar because it is composed of snippets of the 1972 Amstel paperback blurb, but shortened and in a different order.¹¹⁷

Before the start of the main text a page containing the cast of the TV-series is printed, as the explanation that the photos in the book are from the TV-series.¹¹⁸ In this way the characters in the novel get tied to the actors who play them. This is reinforced

¹¹⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Bussum,:Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1974), cover.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, cover.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, no page number.

through the inclusion of photos from the TV-series at set places in the book. These are not accompanied by an explanation and appear to be placed randomly regardless of the text surrounding it. Some of these photos are in colour and some are in black and white. When reading this edition the reader thus needs to pause from reading every so often and gets visual feedback through these photos, also reminding him or her of the link between TV-series and the novel.¹¹⁹

The TV-series edition has a glossary at the back that is the same as the one in the Amstel paperback series.¹²⁰ It is remarkable that despite this edition being published later than the ninth Amstel paperback edition, it does *not* feature a footnote at *caladiums* referencing the glossary.¹²¹

Despite the special occasion for the publishing of this edition of *De stille kracht*, in its execution it is very much like the Amstel paperback series. The blurb and glossary are copied from those editions. However, the TV-series edition of *De stille kracht* is communicating the feel of the book in a very different way to the reader. It is filled with stills from the TV-series where we can see actors in their roles as characters from the novel. People who enjoyed the series will recognize them and be tempted to purchase the book. Although there are not many paratextual elements present in this edition, the book itself is saying a lot about the story and the TV-series.

Large print edition

Perhaps the most surprising of the selection of *De stille kracht* editions for this chapter is the large print edition published by the *Grootdruk Uitgeverij* (Large Print Publishing House) in 1976. *Grootdruk Uitgeverij* apparently got the rights from Veen to publish *De stille kracht* in their large print series. Now visually impaired people could read Couperus' novel as well.

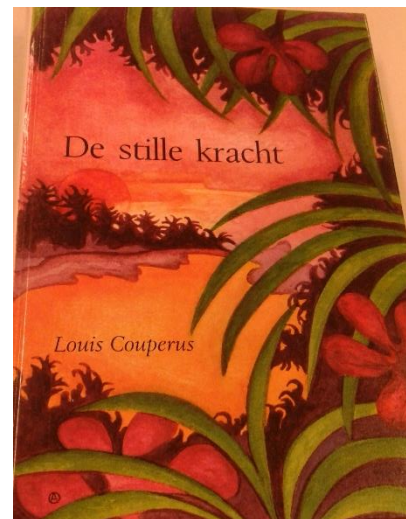


Fig.19. Cover of the large print edition of *De stille kracht* (Eindhoven: Grootdruk Uitgeverij, 1976). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

¹¹⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Bussum: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1974), photos between pages 32-33, 64-65, 96-97, 128-129, 160-161 and 192-193.

¹²⁰ Ibidem, 'verklarende woordenlijst', no page number.

¹²¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Bussum: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1974), p. 5.

The cover is reminiscent of the earlier Veen covers, as it displays the Indonesian jungle in vibrant colours. The author's name and title of the novel are printed relatively small and in black, so that the reader's focus remains with the picture. The colourful image conveys the exotic setting of *De stille kracht*, but the use of subtle black tree lines at the horizon also give the cover illustration an ominous feeling.¹²² This is the only edition along with the Querido Salamander editions to be published in the 1970s or 80s with this kind of cover.

The back of the book features a short blurb:

In dit boek beschrijft Louis Couperus het vooroorlogse Indië.

Hij ontleedt het milieu, hij plaatst zijn figuren tegen de achtergrond van het geheimzinnige Oosten met zijn 'zwarte kunst'.

De mensen uit het Westen, ze komen er tot grote prestaties, ze hebben lief en ze haten hun eigen Indië en blijken maar nauwelijks opgewassen tegen de machten die hen tot afhankelijke schepsels maakt.¹²³

Like the many other blurbs of *De stille kracht* the *Grootdruk Uitgeverij* opted not to give a synopsis of the plot, but rather to describe the themes and atmosphere of the book. This blurb is of course also printed with a large typeset.

This edition does not feature a glossary to translate footnotes or archaic Dutch. One would expect an edition that is made to facilitate the reading of *De stille kracht* to include such aides, but this is not the case. The only other paratextual element in this book is a list of other books published by *Grootdruk Uitgeverij*. These books are a mix of novels by different Dutch authors mostly from the early or middle of the twentieth century.¹²⁴ They do not have any connection to Couperus' work, so any remarks about the importance of this series for *De stille kracht* cannot be made.

¹²² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Eindhoven: Grootdruk Uitgeverij, 1976), cover.

¹²³ Ibidem, back of cover. Translation: "In this book Louis Couperus describes the pre-war Dutch East Indies. He dissects the society, he places his figures against the backdrop of the mysterious Orient with its 'black magic'. The people of the West, they achieve great things, they love and hate their own East Indies and are barely able to cope with the powers that make them independent creatures."

¹²⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Eindhoven: Grootdruk Uitgeverij, 1976), pp. 348-352. Authors named are: Jos Ghysen, Jan de Vries, B. Nijenhuis, Anne de Vries, Cor Bruijn and Annie Oosterbroek-Dutschun.

Querido editions

The Amsterdam publishing house Querido in 1984 published its own edition based on the first edition of *De stille kracht* as part of their 'Salamander' pocket series. Salamander can be considered as the Dutch equivalent of Penguin pocket editions. In 1988 Querido published a second Salamander edition of *De stille kracht*.

The cover of these two editions features a rather plain pencil drawing by book illustrator Anjo Mutsaars (b. 1953) in white and teal green of a man in *fin de siècle* uniform with a walking stick. He appears to be strolling along an avenue flanked by exotic trees. The man is half transparent and a large also transparent silhouette of himself appears behind him.¹²⁵ The man is easily identified as Van Oudijck and the setting might even be the Long Avenue from the novel. His transparency and the silhouette convey the mystic themes of *De stille kracht*. The 1988 edition features the same illustration, but the author's name and title of the novel are now printed in a white box, instead of directly on the cover illustration.¹²⁶

The back cover of the first Salamander edition does have a blurb, but a very unusual one. It is an excerpt from the letter Couperus wrote to L.J. Veen on 1 August 1900 – that has been discussed in Chapter 1 – in which he expresses his enthusiasm for the Batik cover of the first Veen edition.¹²⁷ The story and its themes are not introduced, and the cover discussed in the blurb is a totally different one from the Salamander cover. Why Querido opted for this particular excerpt is a mystery. It was not considered a mistake though, because four years later the second Salamander edition has the exact same blurb, now with a short introduction on Couperus added.¹²⁸

The first Salamander edition has two lists of other Salamander works. One list of works by Couperus that have also appeared as a Salamander edition is printed at the

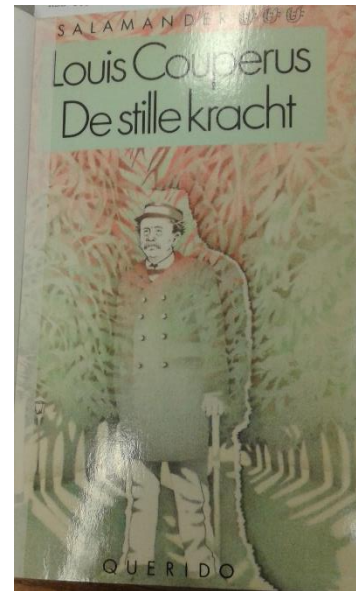


Fig.20. Cover of the 1988 Salamander edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam, Querido, 1988). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

¹²⁵ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1984), cover.

¹²⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1988), cover.

¹²⁷ Compare Van Vliet (ed.), *De correspondentie*, p. 196 and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Querido: Amsterdam, 1984), back of cover.

¹²⁸ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1988), back of cover.

beginning of the book and a longer list several pages long of all works published as Salamander is included at the end of the book.¹²⁹ This is also the case in the second Salamander edition. In addition to that the 1988 version furthermore provides an afterword by F.L. Bastet, Couperus' biographer. Bastet explains how Couperus wrote *De stille kracht*, what the reception of the novel was and to what extent the novel was based on real-life events.¹³⁰

The Querido Salamander editions are very different from Veen's Amstel paperback series. The book received its own cover and the Veen glossary that was also used in non-Veen publications of *De stille kracht* at the time is nowhere to be found. Instead, the second Querido edition includes an afterword by Bastet. Couperus and *De stille kracht* apparently were in need of an introduction to the reader in 1988. At the same time, the publication of *De stille kracht* as Salamander pocketbook indicates that it is considered an important and popular literary classic.

Complete works

After the publication of the collected works of Couperus in the 1950s, a new 'complete' works edition was published from 1988 to 1996 in 50 volumes. *De stille kracht* appeared in 1989. It is one of the greatest honours for an author to have his or her entire oeuvre published in a deluxe edition, firmly establishing one's position as one of the 'literary greats'. Is this perceivable in the paratextual elements of *De stille kracht* that appeared as part of this complete works?

The cloth binding of each volume in the series is standardised and very simple: linen and in silver. It has a dustcover, also in silver, with a brownish circle on which the title and author's name are printed. The publisher (Veen) is



Fig.21. Cover of the Complete works edition of *De stille kracht* (Utrecht/Antwerpen: L.J. Veen, 1989). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

¹²⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1984), no page numbers.

¹³⁰ Bastet, 'Nawoord', Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1988), pp. 239-249.

mentioned in a square of the same colour at the bottom.¹³¹ The blurbs are located on the inside of the dust cover. On the left-hand flap we read:

Begin maart 1890 vertrok Couperus met zijn vrouw naar Indië. Hij zou daar bijna een jaar blijven. Vanuit Pasoeroean, waar hij bij zijn zuster Trudy en zijn zwager Gerard Valette logeerde, schreef hij zijn uitgever Veen dat hij van plan was 'een Indische roman te schrijven uit de ambtenarenwereld'. Zijn zwager, resident van Pasoeroean, zou hem aan de benodigde gegevens helpen. Op 8 oktober 1899 begon Couperus aan *De stille kracht*. Met Kerstmis was driekwart van de roman voltooid. Het laatste gedeelte schreef Couperus half april 1900, na terugkeer in Europa.

De stille kracht werd in het najaar van 1900 eerst in twee achtereenvolgende afleveringen van *De gids* gepubliceerd. De boekuitgave bij L.J. Veen volgde een maand later, in november 1900. De roman veroorzaakte zowel in Nederland als in Indië grote opschudding. Vooral de figuur van Léonie van Oudijck, de vrouw van de resident in de roman, werd scherp veroordeeld. De criticus Lapidoth noemde haar een 'afschuwelijk vampyrwif'. Couperus zelf heeft het thema van de roman omschreven als 'de geheimzinnige vijandschap van Javaanschen grond en sfeer en ziel, tegen den Nederlandschen veroveraar.'

Tijdens Couperus' leven beleefde de roman één herdruk (1911) en werd hij vertaald in het Duits (1902; herdrukt in 1904) en in het Engels (1922). In 1916 verscheen *De stille kracht* als feuilleton in de Noorse krant *Aftenposten*. Vlak voor zijn dood verkocht Couperus via zijn Amerikaanse uitgever de filmrechten van de roman, maar een verfilming is niet tot stand gekomen.¹³²

¹³¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht/Antwerpen: L.J. Veen, 1989), cover.

¹³² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht/Antwerpen: L.J. Veen, 1989), inside dust jacket. Translation: "At the start of March 1899 Couperus set out for the Dutch East Indies with his wife. He would remain there for almost a year. From Pasoeroean, where he stayed with his sister Trudy and his brother-in-law Gerard Valette, he wrote to his publisher Veen that he wanted to write 'an Indonesian novel set in the world of the Dutch officials'. His brother-in-law, *resident* of Pasoeroean, would provide him with the information he needed. On 8 October 1899 Couperus started to write *De stille kracht*. At Christmas three quarter of the novel was finished. The last part Couperus wrote half April 1900, after his return to Europe. *De stille kracht* was published in the autumn of 1900 in two consecutive issues of *De Gids*. The book edition by L.J. Veen appeared a month later, in November 1900. The novel caused quite some commotion both in the Netherlands and in the Dutch East Indies. Especially Léonie van Oudijck, the wife of the *resident* in the novel, was sharply criticized. The critic Lapidoth called her an 'appalling vampire hag'. Couperus himself has described the theme of the novel as 'the secret animosity of the Javanese soil and atmosphere and soul, against the Dutch conqueror'.

On the right hand flap another short blurb is printed:

Louis Couperus is een van de grootste Nederlandse schrijvers uit deze eeuw. Zijn inmiddels klassiek geworden oeuvre geeft en meesterlijk beeld van de fascinerende wereld rond 1900. De stormachtige ontwikkelingen in het politieke, maatschappelijke en culturele leven van die dagen heeft hij in zijn romans en verhalen vereeuwigd.

Couperus is een auteur met vele gezichten. De omvang van zijn oeuvre is indrukwekkend. Met een onuitputtelijke fantasie schreef deze geboren verteller psychologische, mythologische en historische romans, verhalen, sprookjes en gedichten. In zijn reisbeschrijvingen en feuilletons toonde hij zich zowel een superieure stilist als een scherp observerende journalist.

De lezer wordt dank zij die veelzijdigheid in steeds weer andere werelden gevoerd, die beheerst woorden door enkele beklemmende thema's: noodlot, tragisch voorgevoel en verval zijn karakteristiek voor zijn oeuvre.

De Volledige Werken Louis Couperus beogen een leeseditie te zijn. In 50 delen krijgt Nederland voor de eerste maal de beschikking over een betrouwbare uitgave van het omvangrijke de boeiende oeuvre van deze nationale schrijver van internationaal niveau.¹³³

The writing and publishing history of *De stille kracht*, along with the importance of Couperus are the central themes of these blurbs. Interesting is the final part of the

During Couperus' life the novel was reprinted once (1911) and was translated in German (1902; reprinted in 1904) and in English (1922). In 1916 *De stille kracht* appeared as a serial in the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*. Just before his death Couperus sold through his American publisher the film rights of his novel, but a film was never made."

¹³³ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht/Antwerpen: L.J. Veen, 1989), inside dust jacket. Translation: "Louis Couperus is one of the greatest Dutch authors of this century. His nowadays classic oeuvre provides a masterful image of the fascinating world around 1900. The tempestuous developments in the political, social and cultural life of those days he has eternalized in his novels and stories. Couperus is an author with many faces. The size of his oeuvre is impressive. With an inexhaustible imagination this naturally born storyteller wrote psychological, mythological and historic novels, stories, fairy tales and poetry. In his travel accounts and serials he proved himself to be both a superior stylist and sharply observing journalist.

Thanks to his versatility the reader is transported to a different world each time, that is controlled by a few haunting themes: fate, tragic premonition and decay are characteristic of his oeuvre.

The *Collected Works Louis Couperus* aspires to be a reading edition. In fifty volumes a reliable edition of the comprehensive and intriguing oeuvre of this national writer of international allures becomes available in the Netherlands for the first time."

second blurb. Apparently the editors of this edition were not happy with the earlier collected works.

Before the main text starts a few lines of text are printed on who collaborated on this edition and which official institutions aided in its publication.¹³⁴ The edition was created “under the auspices of” the *Bureau Basisvoorziening Tekstedities der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* (Bureau basic service for text editions of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences). It was subsidised by the ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture.¹³⁵ The novel does have the original footnotes in this edition, and at the end a comprehensive justification is included. It is not stated which editor(s) wrote this justification. It starts with a short description of the writing process of *De stille kracht*. Next the available sources that were used for the Complete Works edition are discussed, as is the novel’s complicated early publication history. The justification ends with a long list of corrections made by the editors in the main text.¹³⁶

The most striking aspect of this edition of Couperus’ complete works is that it is presented as an edition made for reading and not for research. Yet, although, translations of foreign terms are lacking, the justification is thorough and meticulously researched. This edition firmly establishes Couperus’ reputation as one of the greatest Dutch literary geniuses. In his oeuvre *De stille kracht* is viewed as one of the best works. From this point on the novel is undeniably a ‘classic’.

The seventies and eighties were a defining period for *The stille kracht*. More editions than ever before were published, partially thanks to the success of the 1974 TV-series. The Veen editions become more uniform in design and were exclusively published as part of the ‘Amstel paperback’ or ‘Amstel klassieken’ series. Paratextual elements in these editions reflect this through standardised covers and the repetition of the blurbs and glossaries. Special editions were published as well, which stand out in their use of paratextual elements. These special editions include the Bulkboek editions, the TV-series edition, the large print edition and the complete works edition. This last edition, along with the publication of *De stille kracht* in Querido’s Salamander series, definitively established the novel as a classic. Over time, the paratext become more elaborate, for instance with the inclusion of short explanatory texts in the Bulkboek series, Bastet’s

¹³⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht/Antwerpen: L.J. Veen, 1989), pp. 2, 4.

¹³⁵ Ibidem, p. 4.

¹³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 228-270.

afterword in the second Salamander edition and, finally, the comprehensive justification in the complete works edition.

Chapter 4 – Multiple series (1990-2015)

The trend that started in the 1970s and 80s of an increasing frequency and variety of editions of *De stille kracht* continues to today. *De stille kracht* was reprinted as part of a series by Wolters-Noordhoff (Lijsters), Brilliant Books (Grootste Werken), Querido (Salamander), Pandora (Pandora Klassiek) and Veen (L.J. Veen Klassiek). Only two ‘standalone editions’ were published in this period, one by the book club ECI in 1990 and another in 1996 as a Reader’s Digest edition. The Complete Works had a huge influence on the subsequent editions of *De stille kracht*. Almost all editions that are mentioned in this chapter have used the text of the Complete Works as its basis. Nonetheless, all the editions, whether published in a series or by itself, are very different from one another. In this chapter, the two ‘standalone editions’ will be discussed first, followed by the series mentioned above. No attention will be given to the 1994 reprint of the Complete Works, as it was identical to the earlier edition.

Two standalone editions

In 1990 the Dutch book club ECI (*Europaclub Internationaal*) published *De stille kracht* after obtaining a license by Veen.¹³⁷ The cover is very straightforward. On a silver background we see an oval photo portrait of Couperus. The blurb on the back of the cover is the same as that of the sixteenth (1981) Amstel paperback edition, discussed in the previous chapter.¹³⁸ On the inside flaps of the dust cover this text is printed again.¹³⁹ The text does not feature footnotes for translations and no glossary or other paratextual elements are to be found in this edition. The design is very Spartan and the book seems sloppily constructed. Hardly any paratextual elements are present, and the ones that are, are taken from other editions. ECI

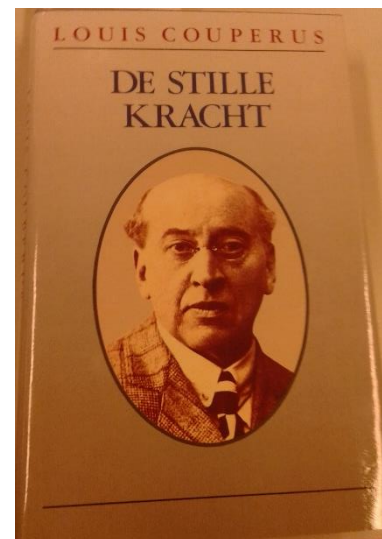


Fig.22. Cover of the ECI edition of *De stille kracht* (Vianen: ECI, 1990). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

¹³⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Vianen: ECI, 1990), copyright information.

¹³⁸ Compare Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Vianen: ECI, 1990), back of cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1981), back of cover.

¹³⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Vianen: ECI, 1990), inside dust jacket.

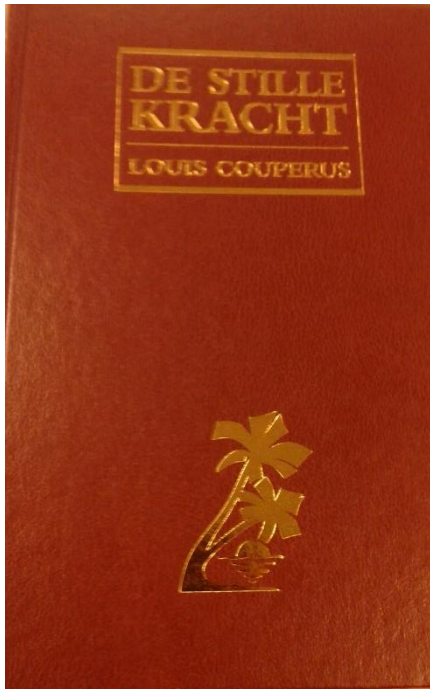


Fig.23. Cover of the Reader's Digest edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: The Reader's Digest, 1996). Source: Leiden University Library.

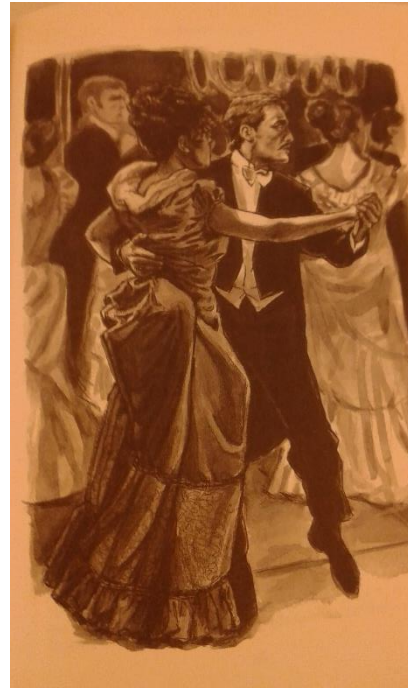


Fig.24. One of Robles de Medina's illustrations in the Reader's Digest edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: The Reader's Digest, 1996). Source: Leiden University Library.

clearly wanted to keep down the cost by not spending much attention to paratext.

The 1996 Reader's Digest edition is more exciting. The cover is very luxurious, a dark brown cardboard hard cover with the author's name and title of the novel stamped in gold. At the bottom of the front cover an image of a setting sun behind a couple of palm trees is set – also in gold.¹⁴⁰ Although it seems a rather stereotypical 'tropical' illustration, it fits the novel very well. One can even say that the setting sun references the decay of the Dutch colonial system that is an integral theme of *De stille kracht*. The back of the cover does not feature a blurb. The motto of Reader's Digest on the title page is interesting: “*s wereld meest geliefde boeken*” (the world's most beloved books).¹⁴¹ For *De stille kracht* to appear as a Reader's Digest edition thus confirms its status as an important classic of world literature, as was already indicated by the Complete Works edition. The main text does have the original footnotes by Couperus himself that translate Malaysian words, but no glossary. This edition features illustrations by illustrator Sabrina Robles de Medina. She was asked by Reader's Digest “to create

¹⁴⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: The Reader's Digest, 1996), cover.

¹⁴¹ Ibidem, titel page.

realistic, dark black and white drawings which would illustrate the mystical atmosphere of the book.”¹⁴² Interestingly the images are drawn after stills of the TV-Series. The actors are clearly recognisable, as are the compositions of the ‘shots’. Contrary to the 1974 TV-Series edition the images appear now among relevant parts of the novel, instead of being placed without any order.¹⁴³ Apparently the TV-Series was still very influential in 1996. It perfectly conveys the atmosphere of the book, therefore it is not surprising that Robles de Medina used it as a template for her drawings.

Lijsters

Groningen publisher Wolters-Noordhoff published *De stille kracht* in their Lijsters series. Lijsters are cheap editions of literary works intended for school children to read for their *leeslijst* (in the Netherlands high schools students are obligated to read literature for their ‘reading list’, hence the name *Lijsters*, ‘Listers’; *Lijster* is also the Dutch word for thrush). In that sense the series follows the Bulkboeken formula.

De stille kracht has been published three times as Lijster, in 1993, 2001 and 2010. The 1993 edition has a beautiful cover featuring two photos: the Indonesian jungle at sunset as the background and an Indonesian mask at the front. The author’s name and title of the novel appear vertically in white on the left hand side.¹⁴⁴ The dark photos perfectly convey a brooding mystery and the mask represents the ‘strange’ Orient.

The blurb at the back of the cover is made up of parts of other, older blurbs. It begins like the blurb to the sixteenth (1981) Amstel paperback edition, with a few sentences on the atmosphere of the novel. It then takes a bit from the Complete Works blurbs, where Couperus himself explained the themes of the book. The last part of the

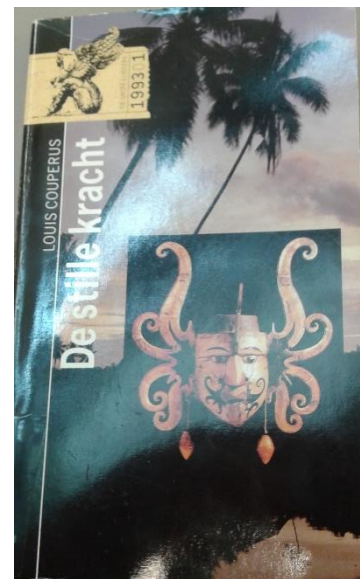


Fig.25. Cover of the first Lijsters edition of *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

¹⁴² Sabrina Robles de Medina, ‘Readers Digest Publishers’, <http://www.roblesdemedina.nl/readers_uk.shtml> (20 June 2015).

¹⁴³ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam, The Reader’s Digest, 1996), images on pp. 5, 21, 45, 77, 87, 91, 119, 133, 141, 169, 183 and 199.

¹⁴⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen, Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993), cover.

blurb is also from the Complete Works, describing the commotion the work caused at its publication.¹⁴⁵ This text is set to a background that consists of a drawing of a European style residence behind some palm trees, an obvious reference to the colonial past that is the setting of the novel.¹⁴⁶

At the front of the book a list of other works published as Lijster is given.¹⁴⁷ In addition, the copyright information states that the text of is taken from the Complete Works edition.¹⁴⁸ It therefore also features footnotes with translations, but not the justification. It does, however, have an afterword written by Tonny van Winssen, an editor at *Elsevier's magazine* with a degree in Dutch language and literature.¹⁴⁹ Her text is divided into two parts. The first part is an extensive biography of Couperus. She then explains the reception of *De stille kracht*.¹⁵⁰ This afterword gives the young reader a good introduction to Couperus' life and the controversy *De stille kracht* caused at its first appearance without giving away the plot and themes. Just like the supplementary texts in the Bulkboek editions this afterword seems a bit complicated for the intended audience.

The 2001 Lijster edition of *De stille kracht* has a very simple cover. The only ornamentation is a small window through which we can see part of the title set to the first page of the novel as background.¹⁵¹ There is no blurb on the back of the cover. Just like the 1993 edition this Lijster has also a list of other works published as Lijster in the front of the book.¹⁵² The main text is taken from the earlier edition, based on the Complete Works.¹⁵³

Except for the footnotes no other paratextual elements are present in this edition.



Fig.26. Cover of the second Lijster edition of *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

¹⁴⁵ Compare Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993), back of cover to Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1981), back of cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht/Antwerpen: L.J. Veen, 1989), inside dust jacket.

¹⁴⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993), back of cover.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Elsevier, 'Tonny van Winssen', < <http://www.elsevier.nl/Auteurs/Redactie/Tonny-van-Winssen/>>, (20 June 2015).

¹⁵⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen, Wolters-Noordhoff, 1993), p. 217-222.

¹⁵¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen, Wolters-Noordhoff, 2001), cover.

¹⁵² Ibidem, p. 2.

¹⁵³ Ibidem, p. 4.

The cover of the 2010 Lijster edition remarkably has no relation to the story or atmosphere of *De stille kracht*. The main title is splashed in different colours on an ugly yellow background.¹⁵⁴ This is now the standardised cover for all Lijsters. The blurb on the back of the cover, however, is new:

In *De stille kracht* (1900) laat schrijver Louis Couperus twee werelden met elkaar botsen: die van de nuchter en zakelijk denkende westerse mens en die van het geheimzinnige Oosten. Hoofdpersoon is Otto van Oudijck, die als resident op Java zijn zaakjes aardig op orde lijkt te hebben. Tot zijn vrouw Léonie roet in het eten gooit. Zij heeft – deels uit verveling – diverse relaties, onder meer met de zoon van haar man Otto uit diens eerdere huwelijk. Tegelijkertijd vinder er allerlei geheimzinnige, dreigende gebeurtenissen plaats en uiteindelijk wordt de situatie onhoudbaar.¹⁵⁵



Fig.27. Cover of the third Lijster edition of *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Noordhoff, 2010). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

In a few sentences this blurb skilfully conveys story, themes and atmosphere of the novel. It is simply written and should attract the attention of pupils interested in colonial history or supernatural thrillers.

It is also the first edition to feature an introduction. The author of this text is not mentioned. In just a few pages the introduction covers quite a lot of ground. It starts by explaining both the plot and themes of the novel. Special attention is given to the prophetic nature of *De stille kracht*; how Couperus expertly dissected the rotten Dutch colonial system. The introduction also explains the fuss that was made about the novel when it was first published and some attention is paid to the later history of the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia.¹⁵⁶ It is written comprehensibly enough for school children to

¹⁵⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Groningen: Noordhoff, 2010), cover.

¹⁵⁵ Ibidem, back of cover. Translation: "In *The hidden force* (1900) Louis Couperus lets two worlds collide: that of the sober and business-minded Westerners and that of the secretive Orient. The main character is Otto van Oudijck, who as *resident* on Java appears to have his act together. Until his wife Léonie puts a spanner in the works. She has – partially out of boredom – several affairs, one of which is with the son from an earlier marriage of her husband Otto. At the same time several secretive, threatening events take place and eventually the situation becomes untenable."

¹⁵⁶ Ibidem, p.5.

understand and it helps them in interpreting the novel. No other paratextual elements are present in this edition.

Although part of the same series, the three Lijster editions are hugely different from one another. The first 1993 edition was very much inspired by the Veen editions but had an original cover and interesting afterword. The 2001 edition did not have any paratextual elements other than the cover and footnotes. The latest edition of 2010 has a boring cover but excellent introduction and blurb. All three are intended for school children and especially the last edition succeeds in making the century-old novel accessible.

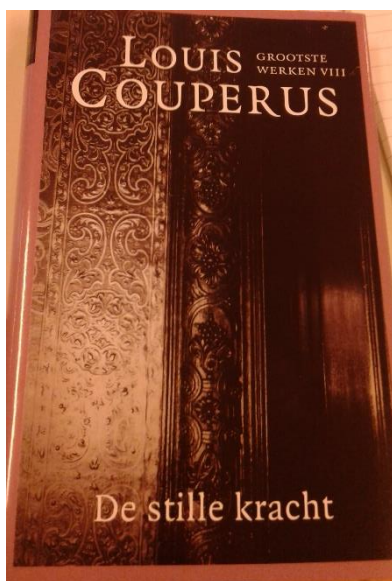


Fig.28. Cover of the hardcover Grootste Werken edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Brilliant books, 2004). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands

Grootste werken

In 2004 and 2006 *De stille kracht* was published as part of a series called *Grootste Werken* (Greatest Works), which consist of a selection of Couperus' oeuvre: *Eline Vere*, *Noodlot* (Footsteps of fate), *Extase* (Ecstasy), *De koningsromans* (The kingly novels), *Metamorfose* (Metamorphosis), *Psyche/Fidessa*, *Langs lijnen van geleidelijkheid* (The law inevitable), *De stille kracht* (The hidden force), *De boeken der kleine zielen* (The books of the small souls) en *Van oude mensen, de dingen, die voorbijgaan...* (Of old people, the things that pass).¹⁵⁷ The

2004 and 2006 editions were published by two different publishers. The first edition is by Brilliant Books, the

second by Uitgeverij 521. There are a few small differences between the two editions.

The 2004 edition has a hard cover with dust jacket, the 2006 edition a paperback. Still, both feature the same cover image, a black and white close-up photo of *fin de siècle* wall or cupboard ornamentation. The title, author's name and title of the series appear in white.¹⁵⁸ The back of the covers of both editions are the same as well, displaying a large black and white photo of Couperus and below it the opening sentence of the

¹⁵⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Brilliant books: 2004), inside dust jacket.

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem, cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij 521, 2006), cover.

novel.¹⁵⁹ The 2004 edition has an additional blurb on the right hand flap of the inside of the dust cover:

Louis Marie Anne Couperus (1863-1923) wordt door menigeeen beschouwd als een van de grootste schrijvers die Nederland ooit heeft voortgebracht. Zijn indrukwekkende, veelzijdige oeuvre omvat psychologische, mythologische en historische romans, verhalen, sprookjes en gedichten. Zijn werk geeft een fascinerend beeld van de wereld rond 1900. Vaste thema's in de werken van Couperus zijn het tragische voorgevoel, het noodlot en het verval. Couperus beschikte naast zijn fenomenale schrijfstijl en onuitputtelijke fantasie over de gave om zijn karakters zo helder en met zoveel mededogen te schetsen, dat ze een onuitwisbare indruk op de lezer maken. Hij is dan ook ongetwijfeld tot op de dag van vandaag een van de meest geliefde auteurs uit het Nederlandse taalgebied, wiens werk door de jaren heen niets aan kracht heeft ingeboet.¹⁶⁰

The text is very reminiscent of the blurb in the dust cover of the Complete Works, focussing on Couperus as writer, not on the contents of the novel.¹⁶¹ This fits with this edition being part of a series of works by Couperus.

On both title pages a very small illustration of an Indonesian *kris* is printed, a weapon thought to have mystical powers.¹⁶² It suits *De stille kracht* quite well. There are no footnotes in these editions, but they do have a glossary similar to the Veen 'Amstel' editions.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Brilliant books, 2004), back of cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij 521, 2006), back of cover.

¹⁶⁰ Ibidem, inside dust jacket. Translation: "Louis Marie Anne Couperus (1863-1923) is considered by many as one of the greatest authors that the Netherlands have ever produced. His impressive, versatile oeuvre spans psychological, mythological and historical novels, stories, fairy tales and poems. His work present us with a fascinating image of the world around 1900. Recurring themes in the works of Couperus are tragic premonition, fate and decay. Besides his phenomenal writing style and inexhaustible fantasy Couperus disposed over the gift to sketch his characters so clear and with so much pity, that they leave an indelible impression on the reader. He is then undoubtedly until today one of the most beloved authors in the Dutch language, whose work has lost nothing of its power through the years."

¹⁶¹ Compare Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Brilliant books, 2004), inside dust jacket and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Utrecht/Antwerpen: L.J. Veen, 1989), inside dust jacket.

¹⁶² Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Brilliant books, 2004), title page and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij 521, 2006), title page.

¹⁶³ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Brilliant books, 2004), p. 227 and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij 521, 2006), p. 227.

The *Grootste Werken* editions are a bit strange. Although published by two different publishers they are very alike, they were both part of the overarching organisation *Foreign Media Group*.¹⁶⁴ These editions have their own glossary, but the blurb consists of parts from the Complete Works edition blurb. The cover image is rather unclear in what it represents, but the *kris* on the title page is a nice touch.

Salamander klassiek

In the same period *De stille kracht* was published as ‘Salamander Klassiek’ edition: in 1991, 1993, 2001 and 2013. The 2001 edition is the only hardcover edition, the rest are regular cheap Salamander pocket editions. The 2001 and 2013 editions were not published by Querido, but by Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep, a subsidiary of Querido. The last edition of 2013 actually is not part of the ‘Salamander Klassiek’ series, although it was also published by Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep and has some similarities to the Salamander Klassiek editions. That is why that particular edition will be examined under this subheading as well.

The covers of the 1991 and 1993 editions are identical. At the top a small black and white photo of Couperus with a beard is printed. The same photo acts as background for the whole cover. The author’s name and title are printed large in black.¹⁶⁵ These two editions also feature the same blurb of the earlier Salamander editions, discussed in chapter 3. They also have footnotes for the translation of Malaysian terms and at the end the same afterword by F.L. Bastet is printed that was included in the earlier Salamander editions.¹⁶⁶ Both also have a long list of other literary works published as Salamander at the



Fig.29. Cover of the 1991 Salamander klassiek edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1991). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

¹⁶⁴ *Entertainment business*, ‘Foreign Media Group neemt Uitgeverij 521 over’, <<http://www.entertainmentbusiness.nl/nieuws/2005-W11/foreign-media-group-neemt-uitgeverij-521-over>> (27 June 2015) and *De Volkskrant*, ‘Van Royen en Brusselmans bij Kruidvat’, <<http://www.volkskrant.nl/economie/van-royen-en-brusselmans-bij-kruidvat~a708052/>> (27 June 2015).

¹⁶⁵ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1991), cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1993), cover.

¹⁶⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1991), p. 239 and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1993), p. 239.

end of the book.¹⁶⁷ In addition the 1991 edition also has short descriptions of three particular Salamander works that are thematically linked to *De stille kracht*, i.e. *Van oude mensen, de dingen, die voorbijgaan...* (Of old people the things that pass), another famous work by Couperus about a murder in the Dutch East Indies, but set in The Hague; *Max Havelaar* by Multatuli, perhaps the best known and most influential book written about colonial practices in the Dutch East Indies; *De tienduizend dingen* (The ten thousand things) by Maria Demoût, another novel set in the Dutch East Indies.¹⁶⁸

In 2001 Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep, again published *De stille kracht* as Salamander. The new cover is abstract if not a bit psychedelic. The cover image consists of a green pattern that looks like a palm leaf. The title of the novel is printed big in white, with the author's name in the same colour above.¹⁶⁹ The blurb of this edition is exceptional, for it is the most direct and complete plot synopsis to be found in any of the blurbs for *De stille kracht*:



Fig.30. Cover of the 2001 Salamander klassiek edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep, 2001). Source: Leiden University Library.

In Laboewanggi op het eiland Java vindt een aantal onverklaarbare gebeurtenissen plaats. De inwoners wijzen ze toe aan 'de stille kracht', een Indisch mysterie dat de mensen in zijn greep houdt.

De resident Otto van Oudijck vindt de stille kracht maar onzin. Maar als hij een regent ontslaat die zich op een feest onbeschoft gedragen heeft vinden er plotseling vreemde dingen in zijn huis plaats. Zijn vrouw, die hem met meer dan een minnaar bedriegt, wordt in de badkamer op onbegrijpelijke wijze met bloed bespat, een spiegel wordt door een grote steen vernield, glazen breken spontaan in kleine stukjes en er klinkt hamerslag in het huis. Het merendeel van het

¹⁶⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1991), no page numbers and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam, Querido, 1993), no page numbers.

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem, no page numbers.

¹⁶⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep, 2001), cover.

personeel vlucht en Van Oudijck blijft alleen achter. Als hij zich zwakker gaat voelen en ziek wordt, gaat hij steeds meer in de stille kracht geloven.¹⁷⁰

The downside of this focus on plot is that this blurb only highlights one aspect of the novel, albeit the most sensational one. This sharply contrasts with the abstract, atmospheric cover. The main text does have the original footnotes for the translation of Malaysian terms and the afterword by Bastet from the earlier 'Salamander' editions is also included.¹⁷¹ The book ends with a list of other works published as 'Salamander klassiek' and 'Salamander' editions and a short description of Couperus' *Van oude mensen, de dingen, die voorbijgaan...*¹⁷² In 2005 this edition saw an identical reprint, except for the blurb and the addition of a dust jacket. The occasion was the theatrical play based on *De stille kracht*, directed by Ger Thijs, which premiered in 2006. The blurb now provides information on the play and not on the novel itself (i.e. the cast, list of theatres where the play is performed, etc.). On the cover of the dust jacket there is a photo of man and woman embracing each other, actually actors from the play.¹⁷³

Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep republished *De stille kracht* again in 2013, but not as a Salamander edition. It is, however, so similar to the Salamander editions of *De stille kracht* that it can be *de facto* considered as such and therefore will be addressed here. The cover illustration is a close-up colour photo of waterlilies. The title of the novel

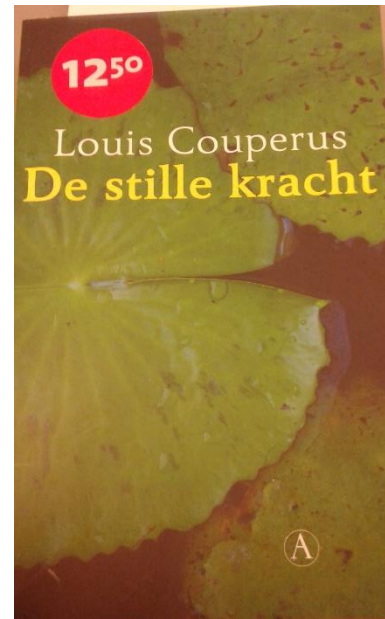


Fig.31. Cover of the 2013 Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep, 2013). Source: Leiden University Library.

¹⁷⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep, 2001), back of cover. Translation: "In Laboewanggi on the island Java a series of inexplicable events take place. The inhabitants assign them to 'the hidden force', an Indonesian mystery that keeps the people in his grasp. Resident Otto van Oudijck thinks the hidden force is nonsense. But after he fires a *regent* who has behaved rude during a party, suddenly strange events take place in his home. His wife, who cheats on him with more than one lover, is inexplicably splashed with blood, a mirror is destroyed by a large rock, glasses break spontaneously in little pieces and the constant sound of hammering can be heard. The majority of the personnel flees and Van Oudijck stays behind alone. When he starts to feel weaker and falls ill, he begins to believe in the hidden force."

¹⁷¹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep, 2001), pp. 239-249.

¹⁷² Ibidem, no page numbers.

¹⁷³ <<http://www.catawiki.nl/catalogus/boeken/series-held-in/stille-kracht-de/1259907-de-stille-kracht?area=2e2ef3f3fb8924c293bc61acd838430d3bdad162>> (28-06-2013).

is printed in yellow, the author's name in white. Although the design looks nice, the direct link to the novel – both atmospheric and story wise – is not clear.¹⁷⁴ The intention probably was to portray Indonesian nature, but the threatening undertones of the earlier covers are lacking. The blurb on the back of the cover is the same one as used in the 2001 Salamander Klassiek edition.¹⁷⁵ Inside the paratextual elements are almost the same as in the previous edition by Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep, featuring the original footnotes and afterword by Bastet. Only the list of 'other works as Salamander' is missing, but a short text explaining that the publisher used FSC approved paper is included.¹⁷⁶

When in the 2000s Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep took over the Salamander series from Querido, some changes were made. The covers now range from simple designs featuring only a photo of Couperus to more abstract, nature inspired graphics. Bastet's afterword is included in all these editions, as are the footnotes for translations. The fact that Bastet's afterword now seems to be considered a standard paratextual element means that the consensus was that *De stille kracht* is a classic novel, the readers of which require additional information to grasp the history and themes of the novel.

Pandora klassiek

Finding copies of the first and second editions of *De stille kracht* as part of the Pandora Klassiek series proves to be very elusive. In second hand bookshops online only the third or later editions of this series can be found. It is the same for libraries. Although the goal of this thesis is to encompass *all* Dutch editions of *De stille kracht*, these two editions remain exceptions.

In 1994 Contact published *De stille kracht* as Pandora Klassiek pocket edition - the third edition. On the cover there is an image of an Indonesian woman in traditional clothes, sitting on a rock flanked by tall grass. The cover thus conveys the themes and

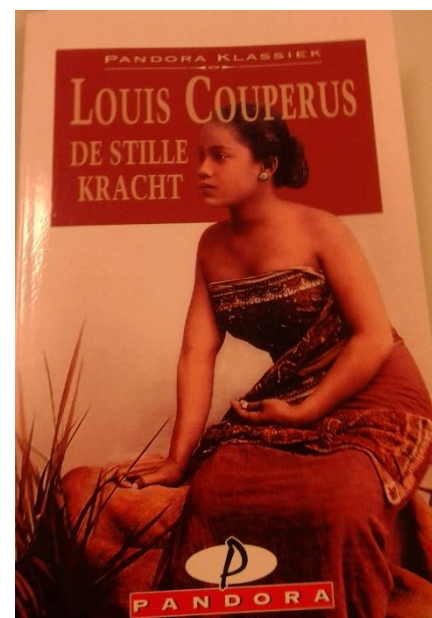


Fig.32. Cover of the 1994 Pandora klassiek edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Contact, 1994). Source: Royal Library of the

¹⁷⁴ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Genneep, 2013), cover.

¹⁷⁵ Ibidem, back of cover.

¹⁷⁶ Ibidem, no page numbers.

atmosphere of the book, as so many covers of *De stille kracht* do. At the back of the book there is a photo of Couperus accompanied by the following blurb:

Drukkende tropische warmte, een zwoele sfeer van decadentie en de dreiging van het wilde en onbekende vormen de achtergrond van het verhaal rond de mooie en erotische residentsvrouw Léonie van Oudijck. Nederlandse nuchterheid tegenover Javaanse mystiek, angst voor seksuele taboes tegenover natuurlijke eenvoud en uitbundigheid, de hoofdpersonen in *De stille kracht* worden verscheurd door tegenstellingen die zijn zelf niet begrijpen.

Het oude koloniale Indië is tastbaar aanwezig in deze roman, die een hoogtepunt vormt in het werk van Louis Couperus (1863-1923). Hij schreef het boek grotendeels tijdens een verblijf bij zijn zwager in Indië. Bij het verschijnen in 1900 veroorzaakte de roman zowel in Nederland als in Indië grote opschudding.

Voor deze uitgave is de tekst gebruikt van de wetenschappelijke editie van de Volledige Werken van Louis Couperus.¹⁷⁷

This blurb is reminiscent of the blurb of the sixteenth and later editions of the Veen Amstel paperback editions. The focus is on Léonie instead of Otto and the themes and commotion surrounding the novel's first appearance are mentioned. In the book itself there are no paratextual elements that could not be found in the Complete Works, such as the footnotes and justification.¹⁷⁸ In 1996 Contact published a fourth edition in the Pandora series, which is identical to the third, except for a short list of 'other works of Couperus as Pandora book'.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Contact, 1994), back of cover. Translation: "Pressing tropic heat, a sultry atmosphere of decadence and the threat of the wild and unknown form the background of the story revolving around the beautiful and erotic wife of the resident Léonie van Oudijck. Dutch sobriety opposite Javanese mysticism, fear for sexual taboos opposite natural simplicity and exuberance: the main characters in *De stille kracht* are torn by contradictions that they do not understand themselves.

The old colonial East Indies is palpable in this novel, which is a high point in the works of Louis Couperus (1863-1923). He wrote the majority of the book during his stay with his brother-in-law in the Dutch East Indies. At its first publication in 1900 the novel caused great commotion in both the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies.

For this edition the text of the scholarly edition of the Complete Works of Louis Couperus is used."

¹⁷⁸ Ibidem, p. 229-270.

¹⁷⁹ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Contact, 1996), no page numbers.

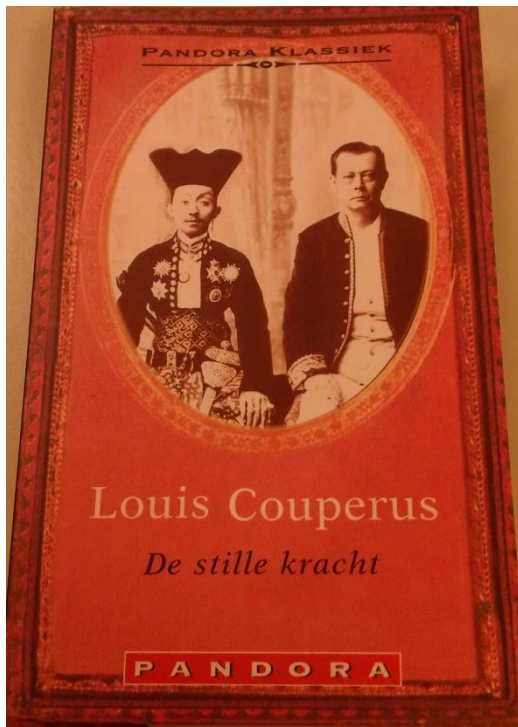


Fig.33. Cover of the 2000 Pandora klassiek edition of *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Contact, 2000). Source: Royal Library of the Netherlands.

A fifth Pandora edition appeared in 2000, this time with a new cover design. The background of the cover is red against which a round photo of a *resident* and *regent* are set, sitting next to each other.¹⁸⁰ These are actually the same people of the photograph that was used as the Bulkboek cover, but now in a different pose. The back of the cover has changed a bit in style (the background is now black), but the blurb text is the same as that of the earlier editions.¹⁸¹ A list of ‘other works by Couperus as Pandora edition’ is still present in the front of the book, but is longer now. The footnotes for the main text and the Complete Works justification are not gone either. The only new paratextual element is a list of ‘other works

in the Pandora series’ which not only mention other works of Couperus, but also other classics of world literature such as several novels by Dostoyevsky and Flaubert.¹⁸²

The Pandora classics editions are not very surprising. Their covers are atmospherically and thematically linked to the content of the novel, the blurb is reminiscent of earlier blurbs. The only thing that stands out is the identification of Léonie as the main character. Paratextual elements in the book between the cover are taken from the Complete Works, the huge influence of which on subsequent editions of *De stille kracht* cannot be overstated. Lists of ‘other works’ are standard for this kind of classics pocket series.

¹⁸⁰ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Contact, 2000), cover.

¹⁸¹ Ibidem, back of cover.

¹⁸² Ibidem, no page numbers.

L.J. Veen klassiek

From 2013 to 2015 publisher L.J. Veen Klassiek, now part of Atlas Contact, published three identical editions of *De stille kracht*, one each year. These latest editions feature painter Kees van Dongen's *Woman in a large hat* (1908) as its cover illustration. Although the painting has no direct relation to the novel, it succeeds in evoking a *fin de siècle* atmosphere and in creating an unnerving mood because of the dead expression of the woman.¹⁸³ The blurb on the back of the cover consists of snippets of other blurbs. It starts with a description of the plot which is the same as the blurb of the 2001 Salamander edition.¹⁸⁴ It then describes the contradictions the characters are facing, copied from the Pandora edition blurb.¹⁸⁵ The only new part is a quote from literary critic Pieter Steinz:

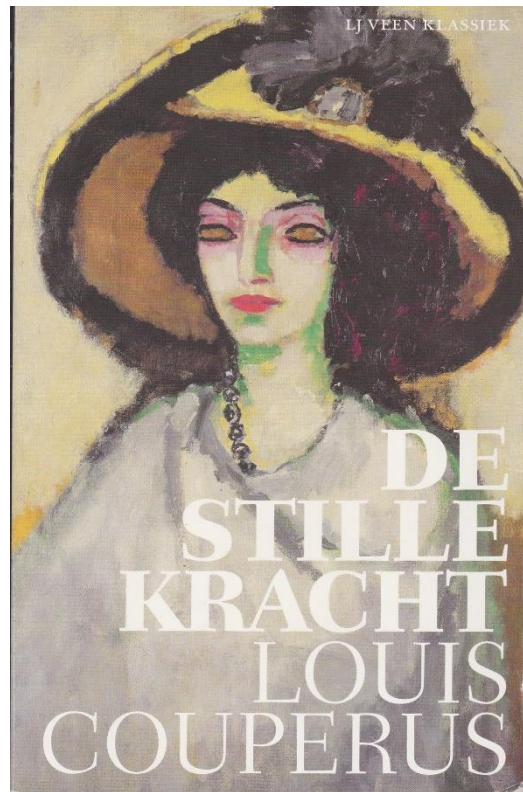


Fig.34. Cover of the 2013 L.J. Veen Klassiek edition of *De stille kracht* (Antwerpen/Amsterdam, L.J. Veen Klassiek, 2013). Source: private collection.

*'De stille kracht, met zijn zinnelijke stijl, zijn vrijmoedige erotiek en zijn intrigerende beschrijving van de oost-westproblematiek is niet alleen Couperus' beste boek, maar ook een van de grote werken van de wereldliteratuur.'*¹⁸⁶

It is the first time that such a promotional quote is used for an edition of *De stille kracht*, possibly because recently this kind of marketing has become more common. In the book a few sentences explain that the paper was produced from FSC approved wood.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Antwerpen/Amsterdam: L.J. Veen Klassiek, 2013), cover.

¹⁸⁴ Compare Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Antwerpen/Amsterdam: L.J. Veen Klassiek, 2013), back of cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep, 2001), back of cover.

¹⁸⁵ Compare Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Antwerpen/Amsterdam: L.J. Veen Klassiek, 2013), back of cover and Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Contact, 1994), back of cover.

¹⁸⁶ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Antwerpen/Amsterdam: L.J. Veen Klassiek, 2013), back of cover.

Translation: "*De stille kracht*, with its sensuous style, its bold eroticism and its intriguing description of the east-west problematics is not only Couperus' best book, but also one of the great works of world literature."

¹⁸⁷ Ibidem, p. 4.

Besides this the only other paratextual elements are the usual footnotes and justification, as this edition also is based on the Complete Works.¹⁸⁸

The L.J. Veen Klassiek editions are very modern in their design, but its paratexts are quite conventional. The cover illustration is atmospheric, the blurb consists of parts of other blurbs, while the Complete Works edition provided all other paratextual elements for this edition. It almost seems as if at this point the best paratext has already been created and no new paratextual additions are necessary.

The most important development in the decades around 2000 is that *De stille kracht* now is almost exclusively published as part of a 'classics series'. Several paratextual elements reflect this status. The afterword by Bastet has become standard paratext to be included in the classics editions of *De stille kracht*. It indicates that the novel is an old book and that its readers need context as a default. The Complete Works editions appear to have been very influential for this period. Its justification, included in the editions that use the Complete Works as a model, fulfils the same function as Bastet's afterword. A list of 'other works published in this series' is hardly ever missing from these editions, placing *De stille kracht* within a classical corpus. The covers follow the design of the earlier editions, choosing to convey atmosphere, themes and the historic past, but not the plot.

¹⁸⁸ Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Antwerpen/Amsterdam: L.J. Veen Klassiek, 2013), no page numbers.

Conclusion

The research question of this study was: 'How did the different aspects of "paratext" change for the editions of Louis Couperus' *De stille kracht* since its first edition of 1900 by the publishing house L.J. Veen?' It appears that the paratextual elements in the editions of *De stille kracht* have changed tremendously over the last 115 years. The most notable change over time is the canonisation of the novel. As time progressed *De stille kracht* has been increasingly published as a 'classic' and the blurbs, introductions and afterwords emphasize more and more the importance of the novel and of Couperus. This development and the other changes in the paratextual elements of *De stille kracht* will be summarized below. To properly structure the conclusions this will be not be done in a chronological way, but the paratextual changes will be explained thematically – i.e. firstly attention will be given to the developments in cover design, followed by the developments in translation foreign terms, etc. Finally, the use of Genette's paratext theory for book history research will be put to the test.

Developments

First of all, an important constant factor is the focus of the paratextual elements on the atmosphere and themes of the novel, instead of on the actual plot. Nearly all cover illustrations of the editions of *De stille kracht* succeed in creating a mysterious and threatening atmosphere. This is done in a variety of ways. For example, the depiction of a European residence in the Indonesian jungle can be seen on a number of *De stille kracht* covers. Other covers show the unfathomable character of the indigenous people of Indonesia to convey the themes of the book. Only a few covers portray actual scenes from the novel – most notably the fifth and seventh Veen editions, while there are also covers with *fin de siècle* paintings to evoke an historic setting and more abstract covers stressing the mysterious undertones of the novel. The same focus on themes and atmosphere can be found in the blurbs. Except for the 2001 'Salamander klassiek' edition by Amsterdam publisher Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep all blurbs either give biographical information on the author or briefly indicate what the major themes of the book are. The same is true for the afterwords and introductions that are present in some editions. They serve to help the reader interpret the novel – within the oeuvre of

Couperus or within the colonial historical context – and never discuss actual plot developments. This strong focus on theme and atmosphere is not surprising, because these are really the novel's strongpoints (although it is excellently plotted as well). In this way this 'constant' or recurring theme in paratextuality does fulfil its role well as threshold between reader and text, for it guides and introduces the reader to the core of the novel.

An important development is visible in the inclusion or exclusion of footnotes or a glossary that provide translations of foreign terms or archaic Dutch words. Such footnotes, written by Couperus himself, are present in the first edition and the subsequent early editions. Except for an inexplicable absence in most editions of *De stille kracht* of the 1950s and 60s the footnotes and/or glossary have again been included in all editions up to the most recent one. Veen developed his own glossary for the novel, which was taken over by other publishers, while the influential Complete Works editions provided the original footnotes by Couperus with a complementary glossary. Over time, obviously more and more words had to be explained. The inclusion of the footnotes in the first edition is also an indication that *De stille kracht* always has been a novel that is somewhat distanced from the Dutch reader and needs these additional paratextual elements to aid the reader with understanding the text. This fits the novel well, as the incomprehension between the West and East is a major theme of the work.

A development that became more apparent in the later publication history of *De stille kracht* was the publication of the novel in a series. The first series *De stille kracht* became part of was the cheap Veen series, in which the second edition appeared (1911). Later, in 1951, the novel became part of Veen's 'Amstel' series – both as a bound classic and as a paperback. The novel also appeared in other series that consists of literary classics aimed at a large readership (from Salamander to Reader's Digest) and in two educational series (Bulkboek and Lijsters). Couperus has had the exclusive honour that his oeuvre has been published first partly in a Collected Works edition (1953) and later in its entirety through a Complete Works edition (1989). This process of canonisation of *De stille kracht* through the series formula started rather early in the 1950s with the Collected Works edition, got a boost with the educational Bulkboek edition, and was definitively established with the Complete Works edition. Recently the novel has been exclusively published in several 'classics' series, such as the Pandora Klassiek, Salamander Klassiek and L.J. Veen Klassiek series.

Similarly, a small corpus of standard paratexts has developed over time. This standardisation started off in the 1970s, a defining period for *De stille kracht*, because the novel regained popularity thanks to the success of the 1974 TV-Series. As a result more editions were published, but these editions started to look more and more like one another with the same paratexts. The Complete Works edition provided the paratextual elements that became standard for the later editions of *De stille kracht*, like its footnote system for the translation of foreign terms and archaic Dutch and its editorial justification, which acts as a *de facto* afterword to the novel. The real afterword by F.L. Bastet, Couperus' biographer, also makes frequent appearances in modern *De stille kracht* editions. The inclusion of these paratextual elements happened more or less synchronously with the canonisation of the novel.

Not all paratextual elements can be explained through such clear developments, however. Many differences in paratextual elements were caused by different publishers, who had their own ideas about the novel. Some changes in fact happened seemingly without reason, such as the change of a cover or a blurb between editions. The final conclusion must be that the editions of *De stille kracht* did change extensively over the past 115 years. It is fascinating to realize how one text (in this case a novel) can be 'packaged' in so many different ways to reach its readers. This thesis presents just one case study, but still it poses many interesting questions about the nature of paratext, its reader perception, developments in book design and the canonisation of literary works.

Genette's relevance

Then how important is Genette's paratext for scholarly literary or book historical research? It comes all down to how much importance is given to the *meaning* attached to paratext. If anything, the research done for this thesis has shown that paratextual elements have meaning and that they are indeed important. *De stille kracht* would be very hard to read without footnotes or a glossary for the translation of foreign terms or archaic Dutch. Also the type of footnotes or glossary used can make a huge difference: footnotes by Couperus himself will translate different words than a modern glossary. Another powerful paratextual element is the cover illustration. It is one of the first things a reader will notice about a book when holding it in their hands in a bookshop or library and it can guide their attention to different aspects of the novel. In the case of *De stille kracht* most covers communicated the 'feel' of the novel to the readers before they

have even started reading. Other covers are more abstract and their modern design may well have appealed to a different kind of reader than the atmospheric covers. The blurbs, introductions and afterwords are also influential tools that can shape the perception of the meaning of a text for readers. If certain themes are highlighted in an introduction, the reader will naturally give more attention to it. Alternatively, the perception of the novel can change after reading an afterword in which Couperus' own ties to the Dutch East Indies are explained.

Many more examples of the importance of paratextual elements for the meaning that readers or scholars ascribe to a text can be given. The meaning of a text is mostly a central theme for literary and book historical research and the importance of paratext cannot be overstated. Genette's paratext does seem to be more tailored to book historical research than literary research. The book historians try to discern the developments in the physical form of what is defined as a 'book', for which paratextual elements are indispensable. As this study has shown, the textual paratexts are only one part of the story. Non-textual elements such as covers, cover illustrations, dust jackets, illustrations and even typographic design all present a text and have *meaning* on their own. In other words, the textual and non-textual paratexts *combined* can heavily influence the reader.

Therefore Genette's paratext theory is very powerful concept to use for book historical and even literary research. If anything, more attention to this 'peripheral' phenomenon should be must be given in book studies. A book or novel is just not its main text, it is that – and so much more.

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