

## Uncovering the Teachings in the Complexity of Serat Jatimurti: Implications for Psychological Well-being and Self-Understanding

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### Abstract

This study explores Serat Jatimurti to uncover its teaching on reality and human nature. The focus is mainly on its complicated textual form consisting of metaphors, abstract terms, and contradicting statements. No study has explored the relationship of such textual elements especially the usage of multiple metaphors in the spiritual teaching of this text or texts of Kejawen spirituality that Serat Jatimurti belongs to. The finding shows that by using a form consisting of the complicated relationship between its elements primarily metaphors, the text teaches that realities, human nature, or God are too abstract to describe in straightforward language. Second, Serat Jatimurti has a negative outlook on realities but a dialectical view on human nature. The finding means that Serat Jatimurti's dialectical expression and complicated forms could offer a hint of better relation or engagement with the adherents of such spirituality.

### Keywords:

Hidden teaching, spirituality, dialectical thinking, metaphor, human nature, reality

### 1. Introduction

Serat Jatimurti is a rich text that belongs to New Javanese Literature. (Badriya, 2016) Most researchers such as Asmara categorize it to the literature of folk religion or Kejawen spirituality (Asmara, 2013). Ahmad Kholil, who studies the Javanese or Kejawen mystical texts points out that Serat Jatimurti belongs to a spiritual teaching that conveys the origin and goal of human existence and methods to unify human's substance with God's (Manunggaling kawula gusti) by living with virtues in this world.(Kholil,

2008) From the philosophical study, scholars such as Siswanto classify Serat Jatimurti as a text on metaphysics (Joko Siswanto, 2016)

The adherents of Kejawen folk beliefs or popularly known as Kebathinan or Penghayat are around 138,791 people. (Putra, 2017) Until 2016, the government of Indonesia only recognized six Indonesian major religions. Therefore, since the beginning of the country in 1945, many of the Kejawen spiritual adherents were coerced to join any major religion and somehow hide their belief. In her study, Dahlia Lubis states that until this decade the Kejawen followers still become a marginalized minority in Indonesia although in 2017, for the first time, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia recognized their rights. The Aliran Kebathinan children are "forced" to learn other religious teachings at their school, such as Islam, Christian, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism. (Lubis, 2019)

This study chooses Serat Jatimurti for the uniqueness of its features. First, most texts of Kejawen spirituality chooses suluk or poetic high language form. On the contrary, Serat Jatimurti uses common folks' language which might indicate an intention to reach the simple folks as Siswanto states in his (Siswanto, 2010:4). With simple language, even some researchers who do not come from the Javanese culture could analyze its content such as Dicky Domingus who uses it in his theological study (Dominggus, 2019).

Second, the form of this text consists of multiple metaphors added with direct statements and unexplained abstract terms in dialectical sentences. Thus far, there has not been any scholar trying to discover the reason of the writer of Serat Jatimurti to utilize such complicated text form.

Third, the text does not consist of any negative or judgmental tone as if the writer fosters an egalitarian view. Such a feature is atypical in hierarchical Javanese traditional culture.

Raden Soedjonoredjo, the writer was a school principal in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was also a spiritual disciple of Kejawen spirituality named Hardo Pusara, a community that his teacher started in the last decade of the

19<sup>th</sup> century. (Erda, 2019) From his Master, Soedjonoredjo learned to *rasa* or human perception to arrive at perception. Even though formally, he is a Muslim, Soedjonoredjo was a prominent student in Hardo Pusara circle. Aside from Serat Jatimurti, he wrote many other texts: Madurasa, Serat Wewadining Rasa, Serat Kaca Wirangi, Serat Kridhagraita, and Wedhatama. A century later, separately, Pujo Prayitno (Prayitno, 2014) and Setiyo Purwanto (Purwanto, 2010) translate the text into Indonesian after in 1930 Tan Khoen Swie from Kediri East Java published it.

The goal of this study is twofold. First, to explore the richness of the text style that might relate to the Javanese pattern of thought. Second, to uncover its core spiritual teaching, mainly about reality and human nature that the text does explicitly expresses it.

The result of the study could be used by those who want to engage, appreciate, and dialogue, with the Kejawen spiritual followers. This study could also enrich people from different spiritualities to redefine and convey the core of their teaching for their dialogue partners. At the same time, each will get a deeper and richer insight about the deepest core of their faith. At least the benefit is they will be able to develop a different mode of communication or teaching while maintaining their core spirituality intact. By doing so, they might learn to appreciate other spirituality that might remain hidden. Hopefully, the misunderstanding or marginalization of this unrecognized minority group will disappear.

## 2. Methodology

Qualitative analysis will become the methodology of this study with textual interpretation serves as its primary approach. As the main method, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 2020) will become the foundation especially when the text use metaphors to convey its main teachings.

Scholars have accepted CMT as they agree that metaphor is not only a linguistic ornament but represents abstract (Thibodeau et al., 2019)

The CMT states that in each metaphor there are two domains. The first is the concrete domain while the second is the abstract domain. In metaphor, a concrete thing explains the abstract and complicated concept. Some experts use a different term, a source domain and a target domain. People can emphasize a few aspects of the concrete concept while hid other aspects to

explain certain features of the target concept/domain.

Jaekel and Slingerland, who study the relationship between metaphor and religion, proves that some abstract concepts in religious metaphysics could only be understood through metaphor (Jäkel, 2002); (Slingerland, 2004). CMT also points out the significant role of metaphor in spiritual life. Habermann or Jamrozik mentioned in the mystical life, people use metaphors much as many concepts cannot be explained otherwise. (Habermann, 2012);(Matusitz & Kramer, 2011); (Jamrozik et al., 2016).

CMT also suits the communication pattern in Soedjonoredjo's culture which often uses unspoken messages (Bowe & Martin, 2007). Even the feature of Javanese literature among others is full of indirect messages. (Robson, 1983) Dhanu Prabowo, an expert in the Javanese culture and language, states further that even Suluk Javanese Christian text is closely intertwined with metaphors (Prabowo, 2006).

This study also refers to the multimodal theory of metaphors which points out that messages and abstract concepts can also be conveyed through metaphors in other non-word forms. At last, analogies as an important linguistic feature as described by McInerny (McInerny, 2019) also receives discussion in the study. With such a combination, the study offers a thorough interpretation of Serat Jatimurti.

## 3. Results

Through reading and interpreting the text, several teachings is not difficult to recognize and their flow is logical.

### 3.1. Two kinds of Reality

The first teaching of Serat Jatimurti is about the two kinds of reality. Its beginning appears on the first page of the text: *Rehning ana kahanan jati, iya ana kahanan kang ora sejati. Barang kang ana iku temene maune mula ana, Sing ora ana, maune ya ora ana.* The transliteration is, "In essence, there is a true reality and there is also an elusive one. What exists from the beginning, truly exists from the beginning. What does not exist, does not really exist." (Purwanto, 2010:1); (Soedjonoredjo, 1980:6)

The first teaching uses the form of a direct sentence that consists of a subject, predicate, and object. It conveys that there two kinds of reality. The English translation of the sentence is "Truly, there is a true reality and a non-existing/false

reality. The true reality exists from the beginning. The other does not exist.” It seems straightforward, but in this sentence, there is the term *ana* which in the Javanese language among others means “exist” but could be multi-interpretable.

Afterward, another direct sentence follows. “Ora ana apa-apa, Mung Allah kang Ana, Yaiku kang ana sa-bener-benere. Kasebut: Kahanan Jati, tegese: Kang Temen Anane.” (Soedjonoredjo, 1980:11) The transliteration is “There is nothing that exists, only God is the true reality. It is called Kahanan Jati, in short: True Reality.” (Pujo Prayitno, 2018:1).

In short, the core of the first teaching of Serat *Jatimurti* is about two realities. Only God is the true reality since the beginning. Therefore, Serat *Jatimurti* names God as the True Reality. The other realities are untrue, not real, or elusive. Until this point, the teaching is understandable although in certain parts it is a bit vague. A big question then emerges after such teaching that is how to distinguish between the true reality and the elusive one.

### 3.2 Description of the realities

The second teaching that follows the first is about the explanation of the two kinds of reality. At this point, Serat *Jatimurti* uses multiple metaphors. It seems that Soedjonoredjo does not consider it suffices to use only direct sentences and abstract terms to convey his teaching on this topic. The metaphors seem simple for readers to understand their meaning. However, deeper exploration is needed as Soedjonoredjo uses many metaphors to explain a single abstract concept.

#### 3.2.1. Ocean Metaphor: Waves, water, and Wind

The first metaphor is the wave as shown in the following sentence:

Kepriye anggone di arani ana, wong anane kaya pendhukule ombak, mendhukul, nuli ilang, njur ana pendhukul liya maneh, ning ya njur ilang maneh, mangkono sabanjure. Cetha ing kene, yen si-pendhukul iku temene ora ana. Sing tetep jeneng ana iku: banyune, kang mendhak–mendhukul, dudu si pendhukule

The transliteration

How could it really exist as it exists like waves, go up and down, then disappear, and

followed by a huge wave and disappears again... everything is only water. Thus, the wave does not exist. The real existing one is water that moves, wavy becomes waves. (Soedjonoredjo, 1980:6)

Although the sentence uses the word “like” which in linguistics indicates an analogy (McInerney, 2019), in this sentence the word *wave* serves as a metaphor because it points out to an abstract concept which needs concrete concept to explain it. Thus, in the framework of CMT, it is obvious that the concrete domain of this metaphor is a wave.

The wave as the metaphor has several features: fluctuating, ever-changes, and observable. Then, Soedjonoredjo emphasizes the seawater as the primal cause of waves. In other words, waves are not true reality. The true reality of the waves is water. If we borrow the concept of Western Philosophy, such as Kant and Heidegger, water is the essence and the waves are existence. (Artemenko, 2015)

Referring to the study of metaphorical familiarity (Figar, 2019) for the Javanese, this water metaphor is quite widely used in daily or political discourse. Thus, Soedjonoredjo does not add something foreign or peculiar in this metaphor.

A deeper analysis might yield embedded or even hidden teaching in this metaphor. Water cannot become waves without the force of the wind. The role of wind is the core of the true reality. It is unseen but immensely powerful. Thus, the metaphor implicitly conveys that behind water there is still a hidden power. The wind as the metaphor serves to signify the abstract concept of the true reality which is hidden and powerful and serves as the prime mover. Related to Soedjonoredjo’s other statement that Allah is the True Reality or Kahanan Jati, the metaphor of water points to God who is the powerful prime mover, hidden, abstract, unseen, and unpredictable. (Soedjonoredjo, 1980:6)

#### 3.2.2. Fireworks metaphor

After the wave metaphor, Serat *Jatimurti* uses the fireworks metaphor. The aspects of the concrete domain to be emphasized are colorful, keep on changing, noisy, and attractive. Fireworks also exist up in the sky for a short time. Thus, this concrete domain of the metaphor tries to point out the temporal, noisy, attractive, but only illusive existence. The illusion is the abstract. This concrete domain does not point out that there is

no firework without a hand to light the fire. The hand is the hidden aspect of this concrete domain that points out to the abstract concept. This concept points out to God as the *prima causa*.

### 3.2.3. Movie Screen

The movie screen becomes the third metaphor that Serat Jatimurti uses to explain reality. In its concrete concept, it conveys that pictures on the screen are merely the representatives of the true reality. Soedjonedjo writes *Kang digambar mau wujud jisim dumunung ing jirim bisa manggon ana ing sajabaning geber* (Soedjonedjo, 1980:7) meaning whatever depicts on the screen is only a form of the essence which exists outside such two-dimension screen. whatever seems to exist on- screen actually or only exists in human sensory perception. The hidden aspect of this concrete domain is the role of human's feeling of watching the film. Another hidden aspect is the role of the movie director and the film script. With such a way of interpreting the metaphors as used by Jamrozik et al (Jamrozik et al., 2016) through the above concrete domains, Serat Jatimurti conveys that reality which influences human beings are merely the result of their sensory perception. The true reality is hidden and the *prima causa*.

After the teaching about reality in those three metaphors, there are there more metaphors to explain about the human journey. This article will not delve into such metaphors as it is beyond the focus of this study.

### 3.3. Human Nature and the Complexity of realities

After the teaching of reality, Serat Jatimurti explains human's difficulties in making a distinction between the True Reality from the elusive one. The text states,

Bedane luwih denig gedhe, ora mung basa beda, malah dudu timbangane, tegese: Dudu mestine katadhingaeke. Gedhene tengu lan gekdhene Bumi, sanajan banget anggone ora timbang, ewadene meksa kena ditimbang, marga karo-karone padha bangsane jirim. Nanging, yen kahanan jati karo kahanan ndonya, dudu bangsane, dadi ora kena ditandhing babapisan.

The Transliteration:

The difference is so huge, not only distinct but incomparable. In short, it is impossible to compare. The size of a bacterium with

the size of the earth, although incomparable, it is still comparable as they belong to the world of form and mass. True reality and temporal one could not be categorized as belonging to one category, therefore, incomparable (Soedjonedjo, 1980:12)

To stress the differences, the text uses an analogy: *Apa ukuran tigo liter kena ditandhing karo tigohektar? Apa iyo kena ditandhing karo godhong?* The translation is "how you compare three liters with three acres?" (Soedjonedjo, 1980:32)

### 3.4. Root of Human's Difficulties

The fourth teaching of Serat Jatimurti explains the root of human's difficulties to understand reality as described in the text:

*Kepriye sebabe kahanan jati ora kena kinaya ngapa, utawa sebabe sarwananing kahanan ing alam kabeh ora kena dianggo ngumpamakake kahanan jati. Kapriye nalare dene kahanan jati ora kena kinira kira utawa cinakrabawa ing manungsa. Kapriye pangretine; kahanan jati dumunung ing batinne sakehing kahanan tur ora kajaba ora kajero, sarta: "Sakehing kahanan wis karo jatine apadene: Sajatine ora ana apa-apa mung Dzat Kang Ana.* (Soedjonedjo, 1980: 33)

The Transliteration

Why can't the true reality be understood, or nothing in the world could be compared to it? Why does the true reality reside inside all minds of creatures yet, it is not inside or outside them? And: whatever exists has been in its substance exists. In truth, there is nothing real except the Real Substance.

Then, as the continuation of the statement:

*Rasa-pangrasane wong utawa pancandriya, yaiku: pikiran, nafsu, bunga, susah, lara, kepenak, dhemen, gething, wedi, isin, gatel ..... lan liya-liyane. Iku kabeh rasa kang dudu sajati, kang anyar anane, kang lunga teka sajroning Rasa kang sajati. Rasaning pancandriya kena kaumpamakake ayang-ayanganing Rasa kang sajati.* (Soedjonedjo, 1980:33)

## The Transliteration

Rasa (Feeling) and human emotion or sensory perception are thought, lust, joy, suffering, pain, love, hatred, fear, shame, itch, and others... All of them are existing feelings, come and go, only the True Feeling is real. The other sensory feelings can be described as the shadow of the True Feeling.

Serat Jatimurti states that elusive reality is the result of human feeling or perception. Human feeling is different from True Feeling. As whatever true is God, it means that humans depend on their feeling instead of God's feeling. Therefore, they fail to recognize the differences between True Reality with the Illusion or False Reality. Only with God's feeling humans can distinguish them.

To underline the teaching, Serat Jatimurti states that humans and their nature is flawed. Therefore, they often overestimate themselves. In the text its stated as "simply nganggit ngira nuju." It means "they assume that they can comprehend it." Such a phenomenon happens as all creatures glorify sang Pribadi. Literally, the word sang Pribadi means the Person. Serat Jatimurti continues with the statement that people fail to distinguish sang Pribadi from Diri. In Javanese, Diri means a person or personal identity. The term Person means God, and personal identity means human selfhood. In plain language, the teaching points out to human tendency to glorify themselves instead of the Self or God. Thus, with such a tendency they fail to distinguish True reality from a perceived one. According to Soedjonoredjo, the difficulties to make distinction are extremely powerful. (Soedjonoredjo, 1980:21). Yet, inherently, Serat Jatimurti points out that God's Self resides in the human inner life.

### 3.5. The Step toward Perfection

Fifth teaching gives guidance to live properly or the Steps toward Perfection. After teaching about reality and human nature, Soedjonoredjo teaches that there are three steps to enter the True Reality. The steps are kasucen, kawicaksanan, and kasampurnan (holiness, wisdom, and perfection). Kasucen is cleaning the heart from negatives and filling it with positive things. Kawicaksanan is a heart that detaches from traps of perception, both the perceived goodness or bad

things. Kasampurnan is divine union or unio mystica. Thus, human beings could control the bondage of "diri" and "rasa" by entering solitude, quietness, and surrendering to the True Reality aka God. In other words, they need humility added with efforts to enter a harmonious relationship with God, others, and themselves. Furthermore, the follower of such a spiritual way should enter True Reality by living with continuous reflection.

### 3.6. Integration of the teachings

To integrate the above findings is not easy especially, to find the purpose of the usage of multiple metaphors, abstract terms, and dialectical sentences. For modern major religions in Indonesia that originated outside Asia might find language, the pattern of thought, or metaphors used by Javanese spiritual or mystical texts forbidding. Yet, in the past, many spiritual writers or editors have used in the same expression or literary patterns such as in the form of the Ecclesiastes and other Wisdom Literature that used the dialectical pattern of thought or hidden teaching. In the Sufi circle, such as in the work of Ibnu Al Arabi or Al Ghazali, they place the hidden teaching underneath many statements.

Kurdawiria and other scholars mention that in Javanese culture it is customary to communicate through forms, flows, metaphors, and a combination of all of them. Such a method is also normal in Javanese literature. (Kurwidaria et al., 2019) The study of Nugroho about meaning and communication (Nugroho, 2018) sums up that often the real meaning does not seem obvious in the process of communication or its channel. Parallel to the study of Nugroho, the study of Cox-joseph (Cox-joseph, 2020) sums up that hidden or embedded message is pervasive in literature, arts, or cultural events. Further, Mustolehudin and Muawanah stated that it is not unusual that the main teaching of mystical texts of Kejawen is hidden. (Mustolehudin & Muawanah, 2017) The influential scholar of modern communication study, Marshall McLuhan in 1980 even states that the medium is the message.

Based on the above-mentioned studies, it could then be summarized as the finding of this exploration that the cultural context of Serat Jatimurti caused the writer to use the combination between the direct language, dialectical thought, abstract terms, and multiple metaphors. In short, the writer uses the complicated forms of the text

to convey hidden teaching. The complicated form gives cues that the readers or listeners should delve deeper to uncover it as Salzman and Berman have studied. (Salzman & Berman, 2000)

To uncover the hidden message of teaching as the second focus of this exploration, several points will need elaboration.

Serat Jatimurti evidently uses various metaphors to explain one abstract concept. Yet, there is no pattern in its textual complexity similar to the pattern of Javanese culture which often uses metaphors and combines them with simple words such as shown in the study of Wulandari (Wulandari, 2017). Neither the text uses synesthesia or sensory-based metaphor (Suwatno, 2016) that is popular in Java.

Borrowing from the study of the multi-modal metaphor which states that metaphor could be conveyed in words or in other forms such as, pictures, contour, or forms, it can be summarized that the message and metaphor can also be conveyed through the forms or flow of a text. (Forceville, 2011) Therefore, the complicated combination used in the text of Serat Jatimurti conveys something. To clarify its meaning, a visual scheme based on CMT can be instrumental.

Concrete domain	Emphasis on aspects:	Hidden Aspects	Abstract concept as the target domain	The emphasis in the abstract concept
Wave	Powerful, movement, water, fluctuation, unpredictability	Wind as the cause	Allah (God)	Allah as the Prime Mover
Fireworks	Colorful, noisy, temporary, unpredictable	Hands who lit the fireworks	Kahanan Jati (Ultimate reality)	Allah sebagai penyebab utama
Movie Screen	Two dimensions, surface, story, enjoyable, similar to real life	Actors and Film Director	Gusti	Allah as the controller and planner

Table 1. Hidden and Stressed Aspects in Concrete Domain

Thus, Serat Jatimurti uses three metaphors added with many abstract terms and dialectical sentences simply function to convey its core teaching: reality is overly abstract and complicated or multi-dimensional that no human word or text suffices to describe it.

1. Serat Jatimurti also uses abstract terms. For example, the term “God’s movement” which is multi-interpretable. Nagamoto in his study on pradnjaparamita text can explain such features of Serat Jatimurti. Through his study, Nagamoto points out that there is Asian neither-this-nor-that-to-become-this logic. (Nagamoto, 2000) (Hoffman, 2001) Such logic is different from logic mostly used by people in the West today: either-or logic. Those who used to such logic face some difficulties to appreciate the neither-nor and both-as-well-as patterns of thought which in Asia especially in Java is widely used. The underlying of such a pattern of logic also lies in a spiritual conviction that reality, human being, or the Creator is a complexity that cannot be explained merely through linear or common logic.

2. The dialectical and abstract teaching of Serat Jatimurti indicates the spiritual type of Soedjonoredjo. As studied by Yang Seung Joon, two scholars in modern spirituality, Holmes and Corrine Ware classify spirituality into several types. Therefore, there is a spirituality rooted in cataphatic theology. Cataphatic theology is a view that the Almighty wishes to reveal Him or Self to human beings to be understood or felt. On the contrary, there is a spiritual type that roots in apophatic theology. In this type, God is believed as full of mystery. Human can access God by contemplation meditation, and mystical union (Yang, Seung Joon, 2018); (Prokhorov, 2014). Based on the framework, the teaching of Sudjonoredjo belongs to apophatic-based spirituality. Thus, the teaching Serat Jatimurti about reality and human nature which is the focus of this study points out many unknown, dialectical, paradoxical mystery. Serat Jatimurti guides people to realize their place in realities and at the front of True Reality which is God. On the one hand, it teaches that human beings live continuously with rasa or “self that imprisons them”. On the other hand, God resides in human substance, a potential that enables them to enter union with God. Such a dialectical approach is also to point to the limitation in human nature to arrive at a complete comprehension of their reality and God. In daily life, dialectical teaching

will emphasize humility and harmony when dealing with mystery in interaction with others. It also teaches continuous reflection in life.

3. After those five teachings, the closing part of the teaching of Serat Jatimurti is the most puzzling and multi-interpretable as far as teaching goes.

Manungsa nggayuh marang kajaten iku wajibe. Bisa widhadha: Kudu nganti pracaya marang pangawasa kang dumunung ing dhirine. ... manungsa anggone nggayuh kasampurnan, sajatining apngaling Pangeran, dadi yang manungsa ora percaya marang dhirine, prasasat ora percaya marang apngaling Pangeran, utawa ora ngandel marang kawasaning Pangeran. Yen ora percaya marang kawasaning Pangeran kang dumunung ing dhirine, dalaning widada kapepetan ing pamaidone dhewe, wekasan dhirine bisa uga dadi apes temenan marga saka anggepe pribadine. ((Soedjoneoredjo, 1980:35)

The Transliteration:

It is the duty for human beings who are in the process of searching for the True Reality to accept salvation. Trust the power in themselves, human movement, and mind or heart to arrive at perfection is truly God's movement. Thus, whoever does not believe in themselves, do not believe in God's movement. Or do not believe in the power of God. If one does not believe in God's power in him or her, the road to salvation is close. (Soedjoneoredjo, 1980:46)

Thus, at one side Serat Jatimurti teaches a rather pessimistic human nature as they live with perceptual bondage, but on the other side, an optimistic one because of God's essence in their substance. The text uses God's movement as a term that is multi-interpretable that might serve as a room for dialogues. For Judaism and Islam, God's movement is mainly understood as He gives His laws to human beings. For the Christian, God moves by giving grace in Jesus Christ to redeem human beings and bring them to live and grow continuously.

## Discussion

Compared to the spirituality of non-Asian religions such as the Abrahamic ones, Serat Jatimurti bears some resemblance to them. Essentially human comes and belongs to God. Reality is also derived from God, the Prima Cause. Such similarities could serve as a space for mutual appreciation and enrichment.

Then, Serat Jatimurti stresses two kinds of reality while the Abrahamic religions declare only one reality in which human beings live and work. The view of Serat Jatimurti and many other Kejawen texts about God are either monistic or pantheistic or neither monistic nor pantheistic. At that point, the differences between such a spirituality with the Abrahamic religions or spirituality is quite evident.

Serat Jatimurti does not teach much about sin—a concept that is significant central in Islam or Christian spirituality. Instead, Serat Jatimurti teaches about wrong presumption or salah anggapan. Unfortunately, the text does not elaborate on the meaning of such a term.

Aside from the above-mentioned similarities and essential differences of the teaching about reality and human nature, Serat Jatimurti exemplifies a method of communicating spiritual teaching by embedding its core view in the textual forms. Difficulties to appreciate and study the folk religion or Kejawen spiritual texts might have roots in the unique complicatedness of the textual form or also in the view of the Europeans who met it in the last century such as Kramer (Zoetmulder, 1991:348). They failed to distinguish them from superstitious belief, animism, prophetic text, and the like. However, after 1981 when Christian leaders in the world started to delve into more holistic pneumatology, there is some openness to hear more closely the spirit of the folk religions. (Kärkkäinen et al., 2013) In Islam, there are many different views of Kejawen spirituality. Yet, it seems their success in embracing them is more obvious as written by Firdausy. (El Firdausy, 2017)

The findings could potentially give hints to those, especially the major non-Asian religions in Indonesia the best approach to relate to the followers of the spirituality of Serat Jatimurti or even larger Kejawen followers. They need to utilize complicated forms, multiple metaphors, and dialectical language expressions in engagement. Above all, such an encounter or dialogue process will challenge all spiritual

believers to discover the core of their spirituality, redefine, and communicate it without losing its core and integrity but in a way that others could understand and engage easily. The process of redefining the core will hopefully become a deeply spiritual experience.

The teaching of Serat Jatimurti about reality and human nature is dialectical and follows a both-as-well-as pattern of expression. The goal is to remind the readers of the human's limitation to describe themselves, their perception of reality, and the True Realities. Compared to the Abrahamic religions in Indonesia, such a stance of belief or spirituality is expressed in a softer and more humble mode especially, when the conviction is shared with other people. However, in modern life, such complexity that they emphasize might not be attractive and operative for most people. Yet, deeper, such a spirituality teaches or reminds people to embrace temperance and humility in life.

## Summary

In its teaching, Serat Jatimurti and similar Kejawen spirituality might enrich other religions by inviting them to enter deeper recognition of human nature mainly, their limitation. At the same time, the text also assures human beings that they do not live alone as God is in their substance. It is then conclusive that the core value of such folk religion or Kejawen spirituality is humility and harmony. Such a value has permeated the lives of many members of the Javanese population regardless of their religious status.

Outsiders might judge that such spirituality might cause adherents to be lacking determination and aggressiveness in their lives. They even might formally join any major religion to avoid conflict. As insiders, they share their perspectives on realities and human nature. Contributions of Kejawen spirituality as shown in Serat Jatimurti to Indonesia is obvious, most of its adherents could endure all kinds of hardship that they have been experiencing as a hidden minority group without losing their core belief, an example of fluid spirituality that can adjust to different contexts of life.

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