

# The obstacles of the spiritual journey in *Serat Jatimurti* and the *Exodus Homily of Origen*



## Authors:

Robby I. Chandra<sup>1,2</sup>   
 Veronika S.S. Nugraheni<sup>1,3</sup>   
 A.C. Jonch<sup>1,4</sup>   
 Budiman Widjaja<sup>5</sup> 

## Affiliations:

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Theology, Cipanas Theological Seminary, Cianjur, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>The Indonesian Christian Church, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Suluh Insani Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Faculty of Theology, Sekolah Tinggi Theologia Iman Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>5</sup>Cipanas Theological Seminary, Cianjur, Jakarta, Indonesia

## Corresponding author:

Robby Igusti Chandra,  
 Robbycha@yahoo.com

## Dates:

Received: 29 Aug. 2022  
 Accepted: 18 Nov. 2022  
 Published: 06 Mar. 2023

## How to cite this article:

Chandra, R.I., Nugraheni, V.S.S., Jonch, A.C. & Widjaja, B., 2023, 'The obstacles of the spiritual journey in *Serat Jatimurti* and the *Exodus Homily of Origen*', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79(1), a8055. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8055>

## Copyright:

© 2023. The Authors.  
 Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

## Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

Many religions use figurative language to convey their teachings on the spiritual journey. Identifying their similarities and differences might deepen the recognition of each core faith and create mutual appreciation. This article compared *Serat Jatimurti*, a Javanese indigenous spirituality text with the *Exodus Homily of Origen*, a text from antiquity. This article is a qualitative study to compare their teachings on the stages of the spiritual journey and the obstacles. The finding showed that both *Serat Jatimurti* and the *Exodus Homily of Origen* teach that there are several stages of the spiritual journey. It also found out that the main obstacle of the spiritual journey lies in the human inner tendency to rely on self-centred perception that prevents them from recognizing reality and the will of God for them. Both texts differ significantly in their views concerning the human capability to start a spiritual journey.

**Contribution:** This study offers clues on the path to having mutual understanding between people who embrace different spiritual journey concepts and their obstacles. It also gives the voice of indigenous spirituality proper appreciation. Such an understanding might serve as a starting point for a deeper appreciation of each other and to development of further dialogues while deepening one's recognition of the core of their faith.

**Keywords:** Spiritual journey; obstacles; figurative language; human perception; reality.

## Introduction

Percy Adams states that travelling is one of the oldest and the largest clusters of metaphors in any language (Adams 1983:14). George Lakoff and Mark Turner state that the journey metaphor points out several significant life elements: the traveller, the goal, the starting point and the path (Lakoff & Turner 1989:60–61). In religious contexts, Rene Lockwood, an Australian scholar, states that a journey or pilgrimage metaphor helps people to understand the contexts of a religion that creates them (Lockwood 2012:118). Thus, concerning the journey or pilgrimage metaphors, *Serat Jatimurti*, which consists of many metaphors, could shed light on one of the Javanese indigenous religion's views of reality, while the *Exodus Homily*, which uses allegorical interpretation, is related to the Christian views and Greek philosophy of its era.

Many Christian thinkers use journeys figuratively to teach about the spiritual journey. Some examples are Abraham's journey, the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, Psalm 23 and the *Via Dolorosa* or the suffering journey of Christ. There are also explorations and emphases on the beauty of the destination of the spiritual journey, such as those by Schindler (2018:393). However, there are seldom discourses about the obstacles of the traveller to starting the journey, especially a comparative study on the obstacles.

Kurwidaria and other scholars mention that in Javanese culture, it is customary to communicate through figurative language, such as metaphors and allegories and a combination of all of them. Such a method is also normal in Javanese literature (Kurwidaria, Rahadini & Wijayanti 2019). Mustolehudin and Muawanah stated that it is not unusual that the main teaching of mystical texts is hidden (Mustolehudin & Muawanah 2017). Salzmann and Berman state in their study that with such a method of communication, the audiences are engaged to uncover or decipher the embedded teachings Salzmann and Berman have studied (Salzmann & Berman 2000).

*Serat Jatimurti* as an indigenous Javanese mystical text describes realities as shadows, firecrackers and waves that people have to go through. In the Javanese culture, people are accustomed to using indirect expressions and metaphors to explain abstract ideas. *Serat Jatimurti* was written by

Soedjonoredjo, an adherent of one of the Javanese indigenous mystical beliefs (Siswanto 2016:3–4). Its basic teaching is similar to one of the popular phrases used among the Javanese, that is, 'life is like a moment to stop and drink' (Kasnadi & Sutejo 2018:41), which teaches the temporariness of reality and life. Kholil points out that in its essence, *Serat Jatimurti* discusses the origin and the goal of human existence and methods to unify the human substance with God (Kholil 2008). Meanwhile, from philosophical study, scholars such as Siswanto classify *Serat Jatimurti* as a text on metaphysics (Siswanto 2016). Although the Javanese indigenous mystics have existed since ancient times, society often discriminates against them. Despite this situation, they have shown resiliency up to the present day (Hakiki 2011).

The *Exodus Homily* is one of the numerous works of Origen. It describes the human journey towards the Divine. Human beings do this as their souls gradually engage with the eternal God. As a prominent Christian thinker in antiquity (Ehrman 2014:315), he centred his insights on Christology and a view of God's incorporeality. With such a framework, he posits that the human spiritual journey is embedded in narratives of the Israelites' exodus journey. By treating the journey narratives as allegories, he even describes the stages of such human spirituality (Moye 1990:595).

With both texts focusing on the spiritual journey, the first objective of this study is to find the similarities or differences between the views of Origen and those of Soedjonoredjo. The second objective is to compare the obstacles to the journey that humans have to deal with based on the teachings of each text. Thus far, there has been no study conducted to compare *Serat Jatimurti* and the *Exodus Homily*. These are two unique texts from different contexts, yet they both use figurative language that common folk can understand, a fact that might indicate the writers' intention to reach ordinary people (Siswanto 2016:4).

The study is to enrich mutual understanding between spiritual heritages, especially in Indonesia. Christians, who mostly are influenced by Europeans or Americans, need to learn more about the indigenous spiritualities that have been misunderstood by other religious adherents. The aim is to develop a mutual appreciation by recognising the different teachings and the universality of certain aspects of the spiritual journey. It can also clarify the differences in the core beliefs. Comparing the teachings of its obstacles might deepen understanding of each core faith while learning to appreciate others.

## Methodology

Qualitative analysis is the methodology of this study, with textual interpretation as its method. The metaphors in *Serat Jatimurti* were used as the main data to be analysed. In the analysis, the *conceptual metaphor theory* (Lakoff & Johnson 2020) served as the main approach. In the theory, there are two domains to be explored in each metaphor. The first is the concrete domain, while the second is the abstract domain. In the concrete domain, the communicator emphasises a few

aspects of something that people are familiar with while hiding other aspects that point to certain concepts in the abstract domain. This theory was chosen as some abstract concepts in religious insights could only be understood through metaphor (Jäkel 2002; Slingerland 2004).

For data analysis on Origen's *Exodus Homily*, a similar analysis is used to delve into Origen's interpretation of events in the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. Using the locations where the Israelites passed through as allegories, Origen connects each of them with meanings outside of the narrative (Crisp 2005:325). This study analyses his framework through such interpretation.

With such a combination, the study gives an interpretation of *Serat Jatimurti* and the *Exodus Homily* before comparing the teachings of the spiritual journey and its obstacles.

## Results

### The journey and obstacles in *Serat Jatimurti*

Raden Soedjonoredjo, the writer of *Serat Jatimurti*, was a school principal who had a high social status in the first decade of the 20th century, when Java was still under the *Nederland Indische* government. At that time, teachers had to learn languages such as Dutch, Javanese and even Malay. He was a disciple of Hardopusara, a Javanese indigenous mystical community that began in the last decade of the 19th century (Direktorat Kepercayaan Kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa) and still exists today.

*Serat Jatimurti* was published in the Javanese traditional language in 1918, while the Latin edition appeared in 1930. In 1980, Joyoboyo Foundation and an anonymous translator made the text available in the Indonesian language. Three decades later, Pujo Prayitno (2014) and Setiyo Purwanto (2010) also translated the text into Indonesian and uploaded it on their websites. Because of the Javanese common language used by the text, no significant differences appear in those translations.

In the eighties translation of *Serat Jatimurti*, in its 63 pages, there are 12 parts with many teachings in it. The first teaching is about the two kinds of reality. The following statement appears on its first page:

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, truly does not exist. (Soedjonoredjo 1980:1)

In this sentence, there is the term *ana*, which in the Javanese language might mean 'exist' but could be interpreted as 'being present' and more. Afterwards, another direct sentence follows: 'Nothing exists, only God is the true reality, ...' (Soedjonoredjo 1980:1). Thus, the core of the first teaching of *Serat Jatimurti* is about two realities. God is the true reality while other realities are untrue, not real or illusions.

In the second teaching, *Serat Jatimurti* uses multiple metaphors such as oceans, fireworks and movie screens to

describe the realities that humans live in. The first metaphor is a wave:

How could it 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 ... wave ... becomes waves .... (Soedjonoredjo 1980:2)

By using the conceptual metaphor theory, the concrete aspects of the metaphor are movement, dynamics and power. The abstract concepts or the hidden messages of this metaphor are the power of wind and water. Thus, the metaphor teaches that a wave as a reality only exists in human perception as it is merely water that is moved by wind.

After using the metaphor of wave, *Serat Jatimurti* uses the metaphor of fireworks. The concrete domain emphasises colourful, noisy and attractive entities that exist up in the sky for a short time. Thus, this metaphor tries to depict reality as perceived through its noise and attractiveness, but it is temporary and illusive. The hidden teaching in this metaphor is the fact that fireworks need hands to light the fire. The abstract concept points out a hidden hand as the *prima causa* of this reality.

The movie screen becomes the third metaphor in explaining reality. Soedjonoredjo writes 'whatever depicts on the screen is only perceived forms as the real one exists outside the such two-dimension screen' (Soedjonoredjo 1980:4).

Analysing those metaphors as the data, by using the framework of Jamrozik et al. (2016) concerning the concrete and abstract aspects of the metaphor, it can be concluded that the wave, firecrackers and movie screen indicate that they are realities that exist only in human sensory perception, and thus they are temporary.

How much is the influence of such perception? Soedjonoredjo (1980) invites the readers to explore the root of difficulties to understand True Reality by posing a question:

Why can't the true reality be understood, or nothing in the world could be compared to it? Why does the true reality be elusive to be understood or calculated by human beings? What does it mean that the true reality resides inside all minds of the creature yet, 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. (p. 23)

In his answer to the question:

*Rasa* 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, that come and go .... (Soedjonoredjo 1980:32)

To interpret the term *rasa*, Sulastuti mentions that in Javanese, the word *rasa* can be translated as 'human sense: and is related to the domains of religion, aesthetics, and social relation or ethic while popularly, the term means "feeling" or

"meaning-making" (Sulastuti 2012:2). Geertz also states that the term derives from Indian culture, in which *rasa* can be translated as sensory perception, personal view or response (Clifford 1992:61). Moreover, the term *rasa* or sense can also mean human cognitive responses (Sulastuti 2012:5). Thus, there are feelings, sensations or sensory perceptions that deceive humans into accepting the illusive reality. This kind of illusive reality is merely the creation or result of human sensory perception. Therefore, the obstacle to starting a spiritual journey lies in human perception. It drives humans only to focus on whatever they deem valuable and important. Based on the above analysis, it can be stated that the nature of human perception makes it difficult to distinguish between true reality and perceived or illusive reality. In short, perception is the obstacle for humans to begin their spiritual journey.

To elaborate on the role of human perception as an obstacle, *Serat Jatimurti* describes the three stages of a spiritual journey that humans have to undergo. The text depicts a human as a tiny bug that crawls slowly.

- In the first stage of the journey, the bug only follows other tiny bugs crawling along a line on the palm of the hand. The bug adjusts its speed and direction based on its perception of the others' movement. Thus, it follows the crowd (Soedjonoredjo 1980:16). For the bug, the line is perceived as reality to be walked in.
- Later, in the second stage, when the bug tries to stop and step aside, it realises that reality is more than just a single line. The palm of the hand is wider than their earlier perception and open for exploration. It is a flat surface rather than a line (Soedjonoredjo 1980:17). The surface of the palm is the second metaphor that explains the characteristics of this stage of the journey. At this stage, the bug realises that the world is larger than the previous one. It dares to abandon the line and find its way. There is more freedom of movement, either to the left or right, backward or frontward. The bug might continue doing so as it perceives it is wandering into the true reality.
- In the third stage of the journey, the bugs realise that beyond the flat surface of the palm of the hand, there is more to explore where it can walk through. It can crawl even to the other side of the palm. Only after realising such a reality is the bug able to understand that the new reality is only a part of the whole human body (Soedjonoredjo 1980:18). In the end, no metaphor can describe the last stage of the journey that the bug has to go through. In short, the bug enters an experience of being in a union with God. The bug learns to realise that it is a part of a large unmeasurable entity (Soedjonoredjo 1980:33).

In short, while describing the stages of the journey as the concrete domain of the metaphors, Soedjonoredjo teaches that the obstacles of the journey lie in humans' tendency to follow the crowd or to perceive others as the important factors to be followed. This tendency might be related to the cultural context of the Javanese. Primarily, they are very communal, and harmonising oneself with others is viewed as

an important cultural value. They also perceive the reality they walk on as the ultimate reality. It means that for them the direction or movement of others becomes the utmost important factor to define the journey. Together with the three metaphors about reality, those factors point to an abstract domain that shows that human perception plays a dominant role as the obstacle to the beginning of a spiritual journey and also in the process of continuing the journey to True Reality.

*Serat Jatimurti* also describes humans' ability to start the journey as a result of the essence of human beings. The text teaches that they belong to the Divine or even describes them as part of God. In other words, the soul of a human is part of the essence of God, as concluded by Joko Siswanto (2016):

[...]human beings are the creatures who are closest to the Lord, even the Lord can be found in the inner life of a person. In the essence of a human, the Lord can be thoroughly experienced because human beings can be conscious and reflective. (p. 13)

Thus, humans cannot start the journey except by doing one step. Soedjonedjo wrote 'the puppet does not exist, only the creation of the puppet master. In short, what humans should do is only: stop and embrace silence' (Soedjonedjo 1980:14). The expression 'stop and embrace silence' in Javanese is *meneng*, which means to become still, be calm or embrace quietness. Applying it in daily life, one should live with wisdom, exercise self-control or nurture holiness. If they fail to do so, they will only focus on the realities that they like and perceive to be important.

According to Mulder (2005), the Dutch expert on Javanese indigenous culture, the teaching of Soedjonedjo is similar to the views of other Javanese indigenous spiritualities:

[T]he obstacles are in the human perceptions and lack of awareness concerning their essence and larger reality or the obstacle also lies in the lack of mastery of rationality and lust. (p. 33)

In conclusion, *Serat Jatimurti* teaches that humans have a core capability that derives from God to start and continue their spiritual journey. Without God, who arranges and gives such capability, no journey can take place. *Serat Jatimurti* also states that at the end of the journey, there will be a union between humans with God. Such a view starts with the concept that humans have the essence of God staying inside their souls or that human souls are emanations of God (Asmara 2013:162). Furthermore, *Serat Jatimurti* teaches in its metaphors that the main obstacle to beginning or continuing the spiritual journey lies in the human tendency to rely on their perception of reality, including the perception of others whom they perceive as reference points to be followed. In short, they do not realise God's essence in them. Thus, the exploration of this study finds those two results.

## The Exodus Homily of Origen

### Origen and his unique contribution to Christianity

Origen lived between the years 185 and 254 CE. His notable contribution is in his method of interpretation of the Old

Testament by using the New Testament and Christ's redemptive works as his framework (Origen 2009:xxvii–xxix). In *De Principiis*, he states that the purpose of the Scripture is to convey the mystery of salvation to those who have received it while concealing it from those who could not endure the burden of investigating its importance (Origen 1966:Chapter 8). Thus, Olden and Bray state that Origen's homiletical works should be viewed as material aimed to edify Christian souls by bringing out the embedded meaning of the Old Testament, chiefly based on the imitation of Pauline or Hebrew methods of Old Testament interpretation (Origen 2009:XXVII).

Ludlow mentions that Origen does not suggest that the structure of the actual text of Scripture depicts the journey of the soul; rather, his interpretative framework is based on the concept of progress. The framework is used to connect the various elements of the Old Testament and the narratives in it (Ludlow 2002:11). Another scholar, McKenzie, mentioned that Origen's interpretation of the Bible is called the spiritual exegesis, as appeared in his main works such as *Peri Archon*, *Contra Celsus* and his homilies (McKenzie 1951:365). He treats many narratives of the Old Testament as figurative language. Similarly, Ursache also states that in the *Exodus Homily*, Origen draws allegorical connections between the narratives of Exodus and spiritual life (Ursache 2014:111). Thus, for Origen, as salvation is the starting point towards the union with God, in the Exodus narratives, each location is viewed as a symbol for stages or progression of spiritual development towards divine union.

### Exodus as allegories and metaphors

Around 230 CE, in Caesarea, Origen wrote his homilies on Exodus in Greek. In 1982, an English translation of the work appeared (Origen 1982:25–43). In 1985, a more critical edition of the text was published in French (Origen 1985). Such interpretation of the Israelites' exodus appears not only in his homily about Exodus but also in the homily about the Book of Numbers.

These are the stages of the children of Israel when they went forth out of the land of Egypt with their power by the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote down their starting places and stages by the Word of the Lord, and so forth (Nm 33:1–2). (Dupré & Wiseman 2001:27)

Thus, for Origen, Exodus' events describe the spiritual stages and signify a progression from spiritual bondage to the fulfilment of a union with God. In the narratives, he finds allegories and embedded meanings related to a human spiritual journey. He focuses on some locations, although in the Pentateuch there are some irreconcilable varieties in the sequences of the journey, as discussed by Durham in his book (Durham 1987:54).

**The beginning of the journey is Ramesse in English or Ramesse in Latin (Nm 33:3), a place where Pharaoh rules:** Dupré and Wiseman mention that Origen states:

Now the first starting point is from Ramesse; and whether the soul starts from this world and comes to the future age or is converted from the errors of life to the way of virtue and knowledge, it starts from Ramesse. (Dupré & Wiseman 2001:29)

Exodus 1:11 depicts Ramesse as a location where slavery and forced labour exist. Those scholars also state that the soul struggles in a state of discomfort or the soul is entrapped in the mortar and brick (Dupré & Wiseman 2001:29). Thus, at this point, the obstacle to beginning a journey lies in the unwillingness to leave slavery or something that a person has been accustomed to. In other words, the obstacle to beginning a spiritual journey lies in the wish to remain in their situation. In short, they have to struggle inwardly to move out of the situation of slavery in which they use to live.

#### **Based on Exodus 12:37, Succoth is the second destination:**

Origen relates the word Succoth to 'camps' or 'tents' (Dupré & Wiseman 2001:32). This is the stage when the traveller has left the bondage and starts recognising that he or she travels in a temporary condition. Embedded in this narrative, at this stage, the obstacle lies in one's unwillingness to recognise the temporariness of reality, to perceive present reality at this stage as the destination of the journey.

#### **Etham is the third location, based on the description of Exodus 13:20:**

For Origen, Etham means a valley, a state where humans are in a low condition on the journey. At this point, there is a battle between the desire to focus on God and succumbing to the forces that prevent it (Charles 2018:208). There is a battle between staying focused on God and succumbing to the blocking enemy forces (Charles 2018:208). Therefore, according to Origen, the obstacle at this stage of the journey lies in the failure to be aware of the Devil's force and the consequences, it is then necessary to fight and move forward.

Origen interprets many more locations and their spiritual meaning. For this study's purpose of analysing the obstacles of the journey, it suffices to explore two more locations and Origen's interpretation of their meanings.

**Mountain of Abarim near Nebo:** Abarim might mean 'something beyond' (Cheyne & Black 1899) or 'on-the-other-side' (Miller 1989:589). It is the place where Moses saw the promised land (Diderot 2018:10). At this stage, like Moses, human beings start to leave the attachment to the world and look to the next stage. The travellers are to focus more on the soul and start to have a strong expectation to experience a mystical union with God. The obstacle lies in the unwillingness to abandon worldly matters and look beyond.

**The last stage is the plain of Moab by the Jordan:** According to Dupré and Wiseman, for Origen, Jordan is 'the river of God'. There, humans are freshened by the water and cleansed to enter the promised land or the home of spiritual life (Dupré & Wiseman 2001:38).

Origen's teachings derive from his view that humans can start the spiritual journey, as they have souls and free will

after receiving God's redemption in Christ, as he stated 'Then, it is not the results of man's will or effort, but God's mercy' (ed. Bettenson 1969:209). Simut also states something similar. Thus, for Origen, the starting point of the spiritual journey is God's grace in Christ (Simut 2022:7). A spiritual journey is a process through suffering, because the travellers struggle continuously to align their will with God's will and power. The further the travellers walk, the closer they move to God by connecting and surrendering more fully to God's will. The journey's destination is the mystical union with God. In the journey, they must pay the price by leaving many attachments to material things and then must gradually abandon self-centredness. Therefore, the main obstacles lie in the unawareness or unwillingness of human beings to pay the price for union with God.

## **Discussion on similarities and differences**

- *The obstacle:* The figurative language in both *Serat Jatimurti* and the *Exodus Homily* similarly identifies the inner struggle of human beings in their journey. The obstacle to the spiritual journey, which is the focus of this study, is recognised. It originates in the tendency of human beings to centre on themselves and overlook the need to step out of their comfort zone. For Soedjonoredjo, the tendency to rely on the perception that prevents them from viewing reality more thoroughly and concurring with others is the main obstacle of the spiritual journey. Origen points out that the attachment to worldly things and self-centredness or sin are the main obstacles. Thus, the obstacles to the human spiritual journey lie in their unawareness of God's grace and that they have to pay the price by abandoning the world along the way.
- *Stages of the journey:* In each stage of the journey, both texts describe obstacles and choices. The further the journey, the more difficult it is for humans to recognise and overcome the obstacle, as the new stage demands them to leave feelings of security and comfort or attachments. A dualistic view of life seems to serve as the framework of *Serat Jatimurti* and the *Exodus Homily*. For *Serat Jatimurti*, it is a perceived reality versus True Reality, while in *Exodus Homily*, it is the worldly matters against the spiritual reality that leads to the union with God.
- *Starting point:* Concerning the starting point of the journey, for Soedjonoredjo, humans have the capability by entering stillness or *meneng*, as God's essence exists in their souls. They can also continue the journey from one stage to another by regularly being aware of the realities more fully. In comparison, Origen teaches that it is God who gives grace to human beings to use their will to start their journey. Thus, compared to Soedjonoredjo, Origen has a more anthropomorphic view of God. Although debatable, both seem to point to God's sparks in human souls, which is similar to Gnostic views.

- *Method of conveying their views: Serat Jatimurti* uses various common metaphors to explain its teaching on the spiritual concept and its obstacles. Comparatively, Origen uses various parts of biblical narratives as allegories to convey his teaching, which is based on God's redemption and the struggle of humans on their journey. In short, the indirect teaching method by using figurative language with embedded meaning is evident in both the texts, although they have different cultural contexts.

## Summary

The texts from two different cultural contexts and eras show some similar views on the obstacles, the stages of the journey and the human essence. *Serat Jatimurti* might enrich the adherents of other religions by plainly emphasising the limitations of human beings, especially their perceptions, which become an obstacle to a spiritual journey, but it assures readers that human beings have God's essence, enabling them to enter quietness and then realise their false perception. The *Exodus Homily* emphasises that God is active in giving grace and free will to humans who have received salvation to start their journey and leave their attachment to the world. By recognising such similarities and differences, communication with adherents of different spiritual traditions can be more effective. Dialogue can deepen the realisation of one's core spirituality.

## Acknowledgements

The idea to write this manuscript has been appreciated by a few leaders of indigenous spiritual communities.

## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

## Authors' contributions

The authors declare that this article was the result of literary research of the four authors. R.I.C. contributed to the main concept of the article and methodology and started writing the first manuscript. V.S.S.N. read and gave contributions to some of the Javanese indigenous concepts, mainly about the obstacles. A.C.J. gave his contributions mainly concerning Origen and also helped with the writing and editing. B.W. also read the whole manuscript and gave ideas related to the flow of the thoughts and paragraph editing.

## Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

## Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

## References

- Adams, P., 1983, *Travel literature and the evolution of the novel*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.
- Asmara, A., 2013, 'Dimensi Alam Kehidupan dan Manunggaling dalam Serat Jatimurti', *ATAVISME* 16(2), 162. <https://doi.org/10.24257/atavisme.v16i2.90.153-167>
- Bettenson, H. (ed.), 1969, *The early Christian fathers, a selection from the writings of the fathers from St. Clement of Rome to St. Athanasius*, transl. H. Bettenson, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Charles, F., 2018, *Metaphysical bible dictionary*, Sublime Books, Floyd, VA.
- Cheyne, T. & Black, J.S., 1899, *Abarim, encyclopaedia biblica*, vol. 1, A to D. Adam and Charles Black, London and The Macmillan Company, New York.
- Clifford, G., 1992, *Kebudayaan dan agama (Culture and religion, translation of Hardiman)*, 1st edn., Kanisius, Jakarta.
- Crisp, P., 2005, 'Allegory and symbol – A fundamental opposition?', *Language and Literature* 14(4), 323–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947005051287>
- Diderot, D., 2018, *Abarim, encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert – Collaborative translation project*, p. 10, Michigan Publishing, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Direktorat Kepercayaan Kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, 2010, *Hardo Pusoro, Ensiklopedi Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa. (Encyclopaedia of the Indigenous Beliefs)* (2010), Direktorat Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan yang Maha Esa (Directorate of the Indigenous Beliefs), Jakarta.
- Dupré, L.K. & Wiseman, J.A., 2001, *Light from light: An anthology of Christian mysticism*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, KY.
- Durham, J., 1987, *Word biblical commentary, Exodus*, vol. 3, Thimas Nelson, Nashville, TN.
- Ehrman, B.D., 2014, *How Jesus Became God*, HarperOne, San Francisco, CA.
- Hakiki, K.M., 2011, 'Aliran Kebatinan Di Indonesia', *Al-Adyan* 6(2), 63–76.
- Jäkel, O., 2002, 'Hypotheses revisited: The cognitive theory of metaphor applied to religious texts', *Metaphorik* 2, 20–42.
- Jamrozik, A., McQuire, M., Cardillo, E.R. & Chatterjee, A., 2016, 'Metaphor: Bridging embodiment to abstraction', *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 23(4), 1080–1089. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-015-0861-0>
- Kasnadi, K. & Sutejo, S., 2018, 'Islamic religious values within Javanese traditional idioms as the Javanese life guidelines', *El Harakah* 20(1), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v20i1.4850>
- Kholil, A., 2008, 'Islam Jawa: Sufisme dalam Tradisi dan Etika Jawam (Javanese Islam: Sufism in Javanese Tradition and Ethics)', *El-Harakah* 9(2), 87. <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v9i2.4644>
- Kurwidaria, F., Rahadini, A. & Wijayanti, K., 2019, 'Metaphor symbols in Javanese traditional expression as manifestation of the cultural heritage in Javanese Community', *Proceeding for 2nd Workshop on Language, Literature and Society for Education*, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia, December 21–22, 2018.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M., 2020, 'Conceptual metaphor in everyday language', in S.D. Sarasvathy, N. Dew & S. Venkatarama (eds.), *Shaping entrepreneurship research*, pp. 475–504, Routledge, Abingdon.
- Lakoff, G. & Turner, M., 1989, *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Lockwood, R., 2012, 'Pilgrimages to the self: Exploring the topography of western consumer spirituality through the journey', *Literature & Aesthetics* 22(1), 108–120.
- Ludlow, M., 2002, 'Theology and allegory: Origen and Gregory of Nyssa on the unity and diversity of scripture', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 4(1), 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1463-1652.00072>
- McKenzie, J., 1951, 'A chapter in the history of spiritual exegesis: De Lubac's *Histoire et Esprit*', *Theological Studies* 12(3), 365–381. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056395101200305>
- Miller, J.M., 1989, 'The Israelite journey through (around) Moab and Moabite Toponymy', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108(4), 577. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3267181>
- Moye, R.H., 1990, 'In the beginning: Myth and history in Genesis and Exodus', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109(4), 577–598. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3267364>
- Mulder, N., 2005, *Mysticism in Java: Ideology in Indonesia*, Penerbit Kanisius, Yogyakarta.
- Mustolehudin, M. & Muawanah, S., 2017, 'Kejawen spiritualism: The actualization of moral values at paguyuban Suci Hati Kasampirnaan in Cilacap', *El Harakah* 19(2), 177–193. <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v19i2.4029>

- Origen, 1966, *On the first principles, being Koetschau's text of De Principiis*, transl. G. Butterworth, Harper & Row Publisher, New York, NY.
- Origen, 1982, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus (The fathers of the church. A new translation)*, transl. R.E. Heine, vol. 71, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC.
- Origen, 1985, *Origène: Homélie sur l'Exode*, Le Cerf, Paris.
- Origen, 2009, *Homily on numbers*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL.
- Prayitno, P., 2014, *Membuka rahasia dimensi ke empat dalam Serat Jatimurti*, Djojobojo, Kediri.
- Purwanto, S., 2010, *Petikan dan Terjemahan Serat Jatimurti (Quotations from and Translation of Serat Jatimurti)*, viewed 8 August 2022, from <https://setiyo.wordpress.com/2010/08/03/petikan-terjemahan-serat-jatimurti/>
- Salzmann, Z & Berman, L., 2000, 'Speaking through the Silence: Narratives, Social Conventions, and Power in Java', *Language* 76(4), 848. <https://doi.org/10.2307/417238>
- Schindler, 2018, 'Introduction: Peace and Homo Viator', *Communio* 45(3), 391–397.
- Simut, C.C., 2022, "Renewal in its various stages of progress": Spiritual formation as divine journey in Origen adamantius', in *Spiritual formation: A Concise Introduction and Guide*, pp. 7–12, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Siswanto, J., 2016, 'Metafisika Serat Jatimurti', *Jurnal Filsafat* 20(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.12612>
- Slingerland, E., 2004, 'Conceptual metaphor theory as methodology for comparative religion', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72(1), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfh002>
- Soedjonoredjo, 1980, *Serat jatimurti*, transl. Anomim, 2nd edn., UP Yayasan Djojobojo, Surabaya.
- Sulastuti, K.I., 2012, 'Konsep rasa dalam kehidupan masyarakat Jawa', *Gelar: Jurnal Seni Budaya* 10(1), 1–24.
- Ursache, L., 2014, 'Origen's interpretational framework', *Hermeneia, Journal of Hermeneutics, Arts & Criticism* (14), 107–116.