

Epistemological Approach to Understand Religious Principles in *Serat Wedhatama*

Farid Mustofa

Department of Philosophy of Religion, Universitas Gadjah Mada
Jalan Olah Raga, Catur Tunggal, Depok, Sleman, Indonesia
Email: faridmustofa@ugm.ac.id

Abstract This study aims to examine the epistemology concept written in *Serat Wedhatama*. *Serat Wedhatama* is the masterpiece of King Mangkunegara IV (1811–1881). It teaches the principle of “*Agama Ageming Aji*,” meaning religion as the grip for the king, the concept of human beings, the purpose of life, relationship between people and with God, including the efforts to achieve the perfect life. It is known to be a handbook and guiding principle for Javanese people. The study on the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* done here intends to put the concept of knowledge as a core to understand ethical teachings as the central point of the manuscript. A comprehensive and holistic understanding is necessary to explain *Wedhatama*’s moral thought for not being partially disconnected from its epistemological basis. In addition, this study aims to explore the field of epistemology in the Eastern philosophy, especially Javanese philosophy. So, far, Javanese philosophy is given less attention than it should be. The study is conducted by assessing *Serat Wedhatama* as a material object, and epistemology (philosophy of knowledge) is used as the perspective of the study.

Key words Epistemology; *Serat Wedhatama*; religious principles; thought on ethics; ethical teachings; concept of knowledge

Author **Farid Mustofa** is Lecturer of the Department of Philosophy of Religion, Faculty of Philosophy, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM). He is graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy of Universitas Gadjah Mada and at the same time graduated from the Faculty of Islamic Law (Syariah), Islamic State University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga. He continued his study in the University of Leipzig in 2009.

Introduction

Human knowledge is always engaged in two place scenes, namely, spontaneous, and

reflective knowledge as it was explained in Montmarquet (94-103) and Vigotsky books¹. Both types of knowledge are distinctive in man, proving that man can know that he knows, he is true, he is mistaken, he adds knowledge, and so on. In the process of evolutionary consciousness (Lewis 104-133), humans are commonly faced with problems that spur the fast growth of new consciousness because it is disputed². Examples are the problem of disagreements, choice of dilemmas, making of mistakes, and occurrence of conflicts between transcendent and immaterial knowledge, materials and principles, senses, and mind, singular and compound, subjective and objective, and relative and absolute (Velmans 125).

Given that human beings are always in the quest for the quality of knowledge, knowledge is developed, which further breeds various types of systematic knowledge, such as philosophy, science, technology, theology, and ideology (Matthews 1397). Each type of systematic knowledge grows with its own distinction, even though they remain as a type of knowledge (Lynch 202, 218). Human beings then question the criteria of knowledge certainty and validity, direct and indirect knowledge, and the sole or the composed and accumulated knowledge from various types of knowledge (Hofer and Pintrich 22). Such a process occurs because knowledge is a part of life, interacting with time, surrounding environment, and fellowmen, related to historicity and the social; thus, this process is constantly racing and growing from the level of pre-reflective knowledge toward that of the reflective one (Zalabardo 147).

The phenomenon on the quest for the quality of knowledge, as described previously, corroborates to the concept of knowledge contained in *Serat Wedhatama* (Wibawa 2). The manuscript (*Serat Wedhatama*) is written by King KGPA (Kanjeng Gusti Pengeran Arya) Mangkunegara IV (1811–1881), one of the influential Javanese King from Kasunanan (Kingdom) Surakarta. The manuscript can be considered a handbook for some Javanese, especially those who live in or around Surakarta and Yogyakarta in Java Island. The manuscript that contains the principle of “*agama ageming aji*” (religion as the king’s grip) is a little more about human

1 Vygotsky wrote books on the analysis of the nature of verbal thought as based on word meaning to understand cognitive processes. The following books were used in this study: “Thought and Language” (Vygotsky, Lev Semyonovich. *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: The MIT Press, 1986) and “Thought and Speech” (Vygotsky, Lev Semyonovich. *Thought and Speech*. Moscow, Russia: Labyrinth, 2005).

2 Ventegodt and co-workers also explained this in the human development model as written in the article of Ventegodt, S., Hermansen T.D., Elensborg-Madsen, T., Raid, E., Nielsen, M.L., Merrick, J. “Human Development IX: A Model of the Wholeness of Man, His Consciousness, and Collective Consciousness”. *Scientific World Journal* 14 No. 6 (2006): 1454-1459.

beings, the purpose of life, the relationship with others, the relationship with God, and the effort to achieve perfection¹. Therefore, it is significant to study the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama*.

The epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* is an interesting one to study for two reasons. First, epistemology is essentially a human endeavour to investigate the knowledge of life and life itself, understand human identity, and eventually realize human position in front of God and with relation to the universe. Epistemology itself is the theory of knowledge, as well as the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and scope of knowledge as it is written by Moser in the Oxford Handbook of Epistemology². As a “man in a journey” or “a constantly keeping search kind of creature” (*Homo viator*), people cannot stop revealing how to gain knowledge, what tool should be used to measure truth, and how the nature and pattern of knowledge are acquired. The fact on the human endeavour implies how epistemological study is fundamental to life³. Second, *Serat Wedhatama*’s epistemology is relevant to the world’s actual problem. The various crises that hit the world and nations today are not economic, social, political, and legal matters, but are essentially rooted in the moral issues that are misguided from the mentality of the nation⁴. The sublime and profound moral teachings from inheritance seem to have been forgotten and abandoned in modern life. Reviewing and appraising *Serat Wedhatama* remind nations about the sublime moral values as provisions for us to understand where life must be oriented. The epistemological study of *Serat Wedhatama* is expected as a nonmaterial contribution to provide views to overcome our alienations as human beings.

The study on the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* is also important because the manuscript generally contains teachings on ethics. When a deep and profound study is conducted, ontological, axiological, and epistemological

1 Previous studies have been done extensively regarding *Serat Wedhatama* contents, such as the ones by Satyapranawa et al. and Anjar Any. However, none used epistemological approaches.

2 Moser, Paul K. *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002.

3 Tan and Crawford in their book wrote about necessary conditions to gain knowledge including some theories of truth, e.g. coherence, correspondence, or pragmatism (Tan, C., Crawford, L. *Knowledge, and Inquiry: An Introduction to Epistemology*. New Jersey, USA: Prentice Hall, 2006).

4 There are some issues as described by Thomas, Davis. *Contemporary Moral and Social Issues: An Introduction Through Original Fiction, Discussion, and Readings*. New Jersey, USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014 as well as issues described by Ristovski, Ljupco. “Morality and Ethics in Politics in the Contemporary Societies”. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 2 No. 3 (2017): 83-93.

views are found. The ontological view of the manuscript is demonstrated by its fundamental description of God, human beings, the universe, and the relationship among the three. The axiological view is seen in *Wedhatama*'s teaching, which is full of ethical values, as a life guiding principle and an aesthetic value shown by "*tembang macapat*" or a specific Javanese stanza used to deliver the content of *Wedhatama*'s thought (Sulistyo 97). Meanwhile, the epistemological view of *Serat Wedhatama* is known from the way the manuscript puts the concept of knowledge as a core to understand ethical teachings and how it has been put as the central point of the manuscript. Although the concept of knowledge in *Serat Wedhatama* is not as explicitly written as its ethical concept, the core of the manuscript is less understandable, unless it is thoroughly studied in terms of its concept of knowledge.

The epistemological view of *Serat Wedhatama* must be investigated based on two reasons. First, the study intends to understand the teachings of *Serat Wedhatama* more comprehensively and holistically than before. The entire content of *Serat Wedhatama* should be unanimously and completely understood, so that the moral teachings, for example, are not partially disconnected from the underlying epistemological concept. Second, the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* must be studied to enrich the field of epistemology that refers to Western philosophy more than other philosophies. Eastern philosophical thinking, especially Javanese philosophy, is still a wide area to be studied. The interest, attention, and orientation of the discourses in philosophy so far, including the tendencies in the discipline of philosophy in Indonesia, tend to refer to Western philosophy. Therefore, the treasures of Eastern philosophy (especially Javanese philosophy) have not received adequate attention as they should.

The existence of *Serat Wedhatama*, in addition to the other masterpieces of the works of Javanese poets, undeniably makes a valuable contribution to philosophical treasures. Therefore, the study of *Serat Wedhatama* remains relevant and actual. In such a framework, the study on the epistemological view of *Serat Wedhatama* is necessary to anticipate the unbalance of Western-Eastern philosophy orientation as described above.

Foundation of Theories, Hypothesis, and Methods

Foundation of Theories

Philosophical research conducted to discover the essence of something should be based on three important aspects, namely, ontology, epistemology, and axiology¹.

1 In this study, the epistemological method for qualitative research from De Gialdano was used as an approach.

In the context of philosophical study, epistemology is intended to examine the nature of knowledge, which includes knowledge source or origin, nature and type, boundaries, as well as the issue on the legality of its validity and reliability (Aliyu et al. 10-12). Epistemology questions how knowledge is obtained, from which the source is, and what its true character and nature are¹. The sources of knowledge are empiric, ratio, intuition, and authority, all of which further determine the type of knowledge whether it is empirical, rational, intuitive, and authoritative knowledge, respectively². Therefore, the source and type of knowledge can further determine its truthful nature.

Hypothesis

In this study, epistemology, which plays the underlying role of each knowledge structure, becomes a formal object to examine *Serat Wedhatama* as a material object. Epistemological study is conducted by exploring the source, type, and truthfulness of *Serat Wedhatama* knowledge. The hypothesis of this study is that the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* can be found in the concept of *Sembah Raga* (worship by physical conduct), *Sembah Cipta* (worship by controlled mind conduct), *Sembah Jiwa* (spiritual or soul worship), and *Sembah Rasa* (worship by sensing or worship beyond rituals). The four *Sembah* or worships show that the knowledge of *Serat Wedhatama* comes from an authoritative teacher, as well as from rational, empirical, and intuitive knowledge which have different forms, patterns, and truths.

Research Materials

This research is a literature study on the concept or philosophical view of a manuscript named *Serat Wedhatama*, with the study on the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* as the focus. With this concern, the author sets *Serat Wedhatama* as the primary source of literature. Other studies, writings, and reviews on *Serat Wedhatama*, as well as literature related to epistemology as a formal object in this study are used as secondary libraries for the present research. The primary library in this study is *Serat Wedhatama*, a masterpiece written by KGPA Mangkunegara IV, which is published in two language versions, namely, *Wedhatama Kawedhar* (written

1 Chevsky and Wolfmeyer (2015) clearly explain about ontology, axiology, and epistemology although it is limited to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics areas.

2 While Juhos (1976) wrote about three sources of knowledge in the selected papers in epistemology.

in Javanese) and *Wedhatama Winardi* (written in Bahasa Indonesia)¹.

The secondary libraries used to investigate the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* are the following books entitled *Menyingkap Serat Wedhatama* by Anjar Any², *Wedhatama (Karya Sri Paduka Mangkunegara IV) bagi Orang Modern* by Anand Krishna³, and various writings in the magazines, journal articles, and academic papers about *Serat Wedhatama*⁴. Other secondary libraries related to epistemology as an object are *Epistemology: The Theory of Knowledge* by Bahm⁵, *Filsafat Ilmu Sebuah Pengantar Populer* by Suriasumantri⁶, *Epistemologi: Filsafat Pengetahuan* by Hadi⁷, *The Philosopher's Dictionary* by Martin⁸, *Element to Philosophy* Katsoff⁹, and *Living Issues in Philosophy* by Titus and co-workers¹⁰.

Analysis

In this study, *Serat Wedhatama* was set as a material object, and epistemology was used as a formal object to construct the perspective of the study. The analysis was performed using the following methods in philosophical research: (1) Interpretation: the process of searching, reviewing, and interpreting *Serat Wedhatama* to capture its philosophical basis and values in the manuscript. Appraisal is then applied on

1 The manuscript written by Mangkunegara was the main object in this study (referred to Mangkunegara IV, K.G.P.A, Hadisutjipto, S.Z. *Wedha Tama*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Pradnya Paramita, 1979). For in depth reading, the following books were also investigated: “Wedhatama Kawedhar” that was published in Javanese by Boekhandel Pasarpon (Solo) in 1936 and “Wedhatama Winardi” (3rd edition) was in Indonesian published by PT Citra Jaya Murti (Surabaya) in 1988.

2 Any, Anjar. *Menyingkap Serat Wedhatama*. Semarang, Indonesia: Aneka Ilmu, 1983.

3 Krishna, Anand. *Wedhatama (Karya Sri Paduka Mangkunegara IV) bagi Orang Modern*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1999.

4 For comparative readings, the following books from Soedjonedjo were also used as references: Soedjonedjo, Raden. *Wedhatama Winardi*. Kediri, Indonesia: Boekhandel Tan Khoen Swie, 1937 and Soedjonedjo, Raden. *Wedhatama Winardi*. Surabaya, Indonesia: Citra Jaya, 1987.

5 Bahm, Archie J. *Epistemology: Theory of Knowledge*. Chicago, USA; World Book, 1995.

6 Suriasumantri, Jujun S. *Filsafat Ilmu Sebuah Pengantar Populer*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Sinar Harapan, 1984.

7 Hadi, Protasius H. 1994. *Epistemologi: Filsafat Pengetahuan*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Kanisius, 1994.

8 Martin, Robert M. *The Philosopher's Dictionary*. Calgary, Canada: Broadview Press, 1994.

9 Katsoff, Louis O. *Element of Philosophy*. New York, USA: Ronald C. Press, 1986.

10 Titus, H., Smith, M., Nolan, R. *Living Issues in Philosophy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994.

the findings¹; (2) Internal Coherence: the process of determining the linkage among all elements behind the thought in *Serat Wedhatama* (Morrow 250)²; (3) Holistic: the epistemological process in which knowledge origin, nature, and correctness are determined, is used as a study tool³; (4) Historical Continuity: the process of connecting the development and existence of the thought⁴ in *Serat Wedhatama* to the historical, socio-political, philosophical, and cultural backgrounds and situations, as well as the influence of these situations on the thought; (5) Heuristic: the process by applying the epistemological perspective and approach to find distinctive philosophical foundation in *Serat Wedhatama*⁵.

Results and Discussion

Epistemology comes from the Greek word, *episteme*, meaning knowledge, and *logos* which means science or theory. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* states epistemology as a theory of knowledge that investigates the issue of the authenticity of knowledge, the relationship between knowledge and certainty, and the relationship between knowledge and misperception⁶. Epistemology is then interpreted as the theory of knowledge (Bawengan 47).

Archie J. Bahm introduced “theory of knowledge” or “epistemology” as a science originating from the question, “What is knowledge?” It involves many other questions, such as “What is truth?” and “What is certainty?” and their opposites such as “What is ignorance?”, “What is falsity?”, and “What is doubt?”. Each of these questions involve other questions, such as “What is consciousness?”, “What is

1 This method is called meta-interpretation in qualitative research as also previously written by Yanow, D., Schwartz-Shea, P. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. New York, USA: M.E. Sharpe, 2014. A reference by Weed (2005) was also applied in this study.

2 This is also recommended in an article by Levitt, H. M., Motulsky, S. L., Wertz, F. J., Morrow, S. L., Ponterotto, J. G. “Recommendations for Designing and Reviewing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Promoting Methodological Integrity”. *Qualitative Psychology* 4 No. 1 (2017): 2–22.

3 This is the approach suggested by Wilson, D. R., Wilson, W. A. “A Holistic Approach to Research”. *Journal of Community and Health Sciences* 3 No. 1 (2008): 59-67.

4 The historical continuity is suggested by Olejniczak, T., Pikos, A., Goto, T. “In Search of Continuity: Theoretical and Methodological Insights from a Case Study of a Polish Centennial Company”. *Journal of Management History* 25 No. 4 (2019): 565-584.

5 The heuristic approach is referred to Kleining, Gerald, Witt, Harald. “The Qualitative Heuristic Approach: A Methodology for Discovery in Psychology and the Social Sciences. Re-discovering the Method of Introspection as an Example”. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1 (2000): 13.

6 Blackburn, Simon. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016.

awareness?”, “What is intuition?”, “What is inference?”, and “What are sensation, perception, conception, memory, and imagination?” (Bahm 1).

Another term closely related to knowledge is *logos*. *Logos* means the mind, adjacent to the word *nous* which means favour. Sometimes, epistemology is also called logic, the science of thinking. Logic learns the matter of knowledge, truth, and certainty, which has the same scope as in epistemology. Indeed, logical thinking does not necessarily mean critical thinking. Logical thinking or reasoning, which is considered an ordered way of thinking, does not always contain truth and certainty.

According to Hadi¹, epistemology is sometimes identified as a discipline called *critica* or *criteriologia*, a systematic knowledge of criterion or benchmark, to determine correct knowledge and unrighteousness. *Critica* and *criteriologia* are derived from the Greek word *krinomai* which means to prosecute, decide, and determine. Prosecuting true and incorrect knowledge is somewhat close to *episteme* as a cognitive-intellectual process to set something in place.

Epistemology investigates three fundamental issues. First, the question on the origin of knowledge, which studies the source of knowledge, from where true knowledge comes, and how to know. Second, the question on the character of knowledge, which investigates the nature of knowledge, whether a world that is completely out of mind should exist, and how to discover it. Third, the question on truth, which studies the standard of measuring truth. Knowledge comes from four sources, namely, empiric or the experience of sensing, authority or testimony, ratio or intellectuality, and intuition or inspiration. The question on the character of knowledge investigates whether something is real, or whether it is objectively and completely beyond the human mind, or whether the world is only conceived by reasoning. Subjectivism puts the object of experience to be in mind, not the one outside the mindfulness. The perceived object, which is sensed by the senses, is dependent and unseparated from its consciousness. As Edmund Husserl says, consciousness “will always be consciousness” (Laskey 99). By contrast, objectivism puts the perceived object, and the quality of the sensed object exist and are free from human consciousness. Without any interference, object or objective matter will always be as it is.

The knowledge correctness issue relates to three categories. First, the type of knowledge built; second, the way in which the knowledge is obtained; third, a dominant subject–object relationship in the knowledge formation process (Mc

1 In his book, Hadi explained on about epistemology and transformed the knowledge into local language as referred to: Hadi, Protasius H. 1994. *Epistemologi: Filsafat Pengetahuan*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Kanisius, 1994.

Carthy 423-424). With these categories, the possibility that every knowledge subject will differ in perception and understanding is reasonable, in addition to the diversity of the correctness verification that appears from it. The first category derives four types of knowledge, with their distinct natures, namely, ordinary, scientific, philosophical, and religious knowledge.

Based on the truth standpoint, several theories are found as the basis. Correspondence truth theory states that knowledge is true when it corresponds to reality. "A belief is called truth if it corroborates with a fact", as mentioned in the book by Randall and Buchler¹. A statement is true if the material of the knowledge contained in the statement corresponds (relates) to the object addressed by the statement. Coherence theory explains that a thing is true if it is coherent or consistent with the previous thing considered true. Both theories are used in scientific thinking. For example, Blackburn found theoretical reasoning based on deductive logic. Meanwhile, pragmatic theory considers truth as something that can be practiced in a situation. In pragmatic theory, if the statement is functional and useful, then it is considered correct, but if the statement is no longer functional and useful, then it is abandoned. Another benchmark of truth is related to the logic of language called syntax truth theory which was developed by a language philosopher. This theory considers a statement is true when it is grammatically correct. Meanwhile, semantic truth theory states that the correctness of a true proposition depends on its meaning. The key point is whether a clear valid reference exists or not. Logical superfluity truth theory comes from the idea that a truth discourse is a kind of language chaos because what should be proven already has its degree of self-righteousness.

Meanwhile, in accordance with the material object of this study, *Serat Wedhatama* is etymologically derived from the word "Wedha" which means knowledge or doctrine, and the word "Tama" which means good (Ismawati 115)². Thus, "Wedhatama" means knowledge of the main goodness or doctrine. The content of the manuscript written by the late KGPA Mangkenegara IV in the structure "tembang macapat" (a specific Javanese stanza derived from a song) is divided into four parts, namely, about ethics in the form of "Pangkur," the law of causality in the form of "Sinom," the science and sincerity in the form of "Pocung," and the teachings of worship in the form of "Gambuh" (Sulistyo 97). These four

1 Randall, J.H., Buchler, J. *Philosophy: An Introduction*. New York, USA: Harper & Row, 1971.

2 As it is originated from the work of Mangkunegara IV, K.G.P.A, Hadisutjipto, S.Z. *Wedha Tama*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Pradnya Paramita, 1979

forms (“Pangkur,” “Sinom,” “Pocung,” and “Gambuh”) are the branches of “*tembang macapat*.”

It reveals that *Serat Wedhatama* is composed of five basic principles. These five principles are about the existence of God, human relationship, knight soul (*jiwa ksatria*), respect for other opinions, and struggle of life teachings. The entire teachings of *Serat Wedhatama*, which are summarized in the 100 Canto (verse)¹, lead to the perfection of a human being, in his efforts towards the Creator. The purpose toward the perfection of a human being is pursued by the practice to train the body and soul. The practice of training behavioral manner and way of thinking results in a strong personality that is ready to understand the profound substantial concept written in the manuscript.

Although the content of *Serat Wedhatama* seems to be fragmented and written in different forms of “*tembang macapat*,” it is found to be systematically and holistically integrated. Starting with the objective of the writing, KGPA Mangkunegara IV systematically and hierarchically wrote about fundamental and spiritual teachings, with a converged peak on the principles of *Sembah Raga*, *Sembah Cipta*, *Sembah Jiwa*, and *dan Sembah Rasa*. The four *Sembah* concepts are the essence of the philosophical thought in *Serat Wedhatama* (Ardani 38). Ardani and Simuh² relate the four *Sembah* concepts in *Serat Wedhatama* with four stages in Islamic teachings, namely, *Shari’a* (Islamic religious law which covers all aspects of human life), *Tariqat* (a path of spiritual learning), *Hakikat* (truth, reality), and *Makrifat* (attainment of spiritual knowledge). Therefore, in this point, the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* is found in the concept of *Sembah* (worship). As explained, epistemology questions knowledge in terms of the source, character, and measure of truth. The source, character, and measure of the truth of knowledge can be derived from the four *Sembah* concepts in *Serat Wedhatama*.

The first worship taught in *Serat Wedhatama* is *Sembah Raga*. The principle of *Sembah Raga* (worship by physical conduct) is done through self-sanctification with water. It must be practiced regularly, diligently, and carefully in the form of ablution prior to the five times prayer. The result of *Sembah Raga* is a healthy and fresh body, which is ready to integrate thoughts and feelings. The practice of *Sembah Raga* shows the knowledge gained from the authority and empiric. Authority enables

1 As it was studied in a book of Ardani, Mohammad. *Al Quran dan Sufisme Mangkunegara IV*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Yayasan Dana Bhakti Wakaf, 1995.

2 In his book, Simuh studied the relationship between the level of worship in *Serat Wedhatama* with the concept of mysticism in Islam (Simuh, Simuh. *Sufisme Jawa: Transformasi Tasawuf Islam ke Mistik Jawa*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1995).

knowledge to be obtained simply, without undergoing empirical experiences. Authority can also be reflective or intuitive. The source of the knowledge gained can come from a person who is an expert or a relevant and trustworthy teacher. In the case of *Sembah Raga*, it is the teacher who teaches the procession of *Sembah Raga*.

The next knowledge source found from the concept of *Sembah Raga* is the senses (“*indriya*” in Javanese). *Indriya*, as a knowledge source, is composed of two elements: physiological senses (*indriya lahir*) and inner or soul senses (*indriya batin*). Physiological senses refer to perception and observation, demonstrated by the five senses of human beings which function to perceive things. Soul or inner senses function to perceive imaginary senses and their meanings, unifying or dividing them, conceiving ideas, memorizing the conceived ideas, and remembering or recalling such ideas. In this context, knowledge is obtained based on the perception in the form of a physical object. *Sembah Raga* is such a physical or physiological sensing; therefore, the knowledge obtained from the process cannot describe the essence of reality, or it is considered far from the essential truth¹.

The truthfulness of the knowledge of *Sembah Raga* (worship by physical conduct) is correlated to three categories. First, the type of the knowledge built; second, the way the knowledge is obtained; third, a dominant subject–object relationship in the process of knowledge formation. The first category spawns four types of knowledge, with different natures of truth, namely, ordinary, scientific, philosophical, and religious knowledge (Mc Carthy 424). *Sembah Raga* is categorized as ordinary knowledge. Ordinary knowledge has a subjective essence of truth, depending on the subject. Its nature is always true, as far as the means to obtain is normal or no deviation exists.

The second worship written in *Serat Wedhatama* is *Sembah Cipta* (worship by controlled mind conduct). This *Sembah* no longer emphasizes physical activity. What to do is self-training to carefully control desires. According to *Sembah Cipta* teachings, people who succeed in carrying out a *Sembah Cipta* becomes a wise man. Based on the nature or characteristic of the way the knowledge is acquired, *Sembah Cipta* belongs to intellectual knowledge which is derived from ratio or reasoning. Knowledge obtained by reasoning is considered universal and immaterial.

1 The understanding and perspective were also concluded by Endraswara in his books on “Buku Pinter Budaya Jawa: Mutiara Adiluhung Budaya Jawa” (Endraswara, Suwardi. *Buku Pinter Budaya Jawa: Mutiara Adiluhung Budaya Jawa*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Gelombang Pasang, 2005) and “Falsafah Hidup Orang Jawa” (Endraswara, Suwardi. *Falsafah Hidup Jawa*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Penerbit Cakrawala, 2006).

Observing the human body only results in sensing knowledge (*pengetahuan inderawi*). However, observing human beings while investigating their essence results in the conclusion that human beings are creatures of thought (*animal rationale, hayawan nathiq*), thus gaining a universal abstract rational knowledge of human beings. This type of knowledge, according to rationalists, is gained by using deductive methods. The premise used in the reasoning process is derived from a clear and acceptable idea, which is not really a creation of the human mind, but it has been existing for a long time. In this case, the human mind only functions to recognize it.

Sembah Jiwa (soul worship), as a third worship written in the manuscript, aims to understand identity as a human being. *Sembah Jiwa* is truly dedicated toward



Figure 1. Etymologically, *Wedhatama* is originated from the words *wedha* and *tama*. *Wedha* means knowledge and *tama* means main goodness. It contains 5 basic principles about the existence of God, human relationship, knight soul (*jiwa ksatria*), respect for other, and struggle of life teachings. The manuscript is written in the form of Javanese stanza (Javanese poetic rhythm), which is divided into 4 forms of stanza: namely *Pangkur* (7 lines), *Sinom* (9 lines), *Pocung* (4 lines), and *Gambuh* (5 lines).

God and is the last path to the level of finding the essence¹. *Sembah Jiwa* is done by always remembering God (*zikr*). Implementing *Sembah Jiwa* involves four stages, namely, through experiencing *Ngangkah* (reaching), *Ngukut* (positioning and mastering), *Ngiket* (binding), and *Ngruket* (hugging), with the highest peak in the condition of “forgetting and being forgotten” (*Kanyut*, in Javanese), wherein macrocosm lives in microcosm. The condition of “forgetting and being forgotten” is where the conscious and unconscious minds melt and integrate with the overall reality. In *Sembah Jiwa*, the object of *Ngangkah*, *Ngukut*, *Ngiket*, and *Ngruket* is called *triloka* (three worlds), which refers to material, mental, and spiritual worlds. Thus, to reach, to position, to bind, and to hug are significant steps to integrate and master *triloka* into the inner self. Integrating and mastering *triloka* into inner self requires doing practices taught in *Sembah Raga*, controlling desires and self through *Sembah Cipta*, and contemplation and *zikr* through *Sembah Jiwa*. If this condition is achieved, then macrocosm lives in microcosm (inner self).

The fourth worship written in the manuscript is *Sembah Rasa* (worship beyond rituals or worship by inner soul) which does not require any further practices.

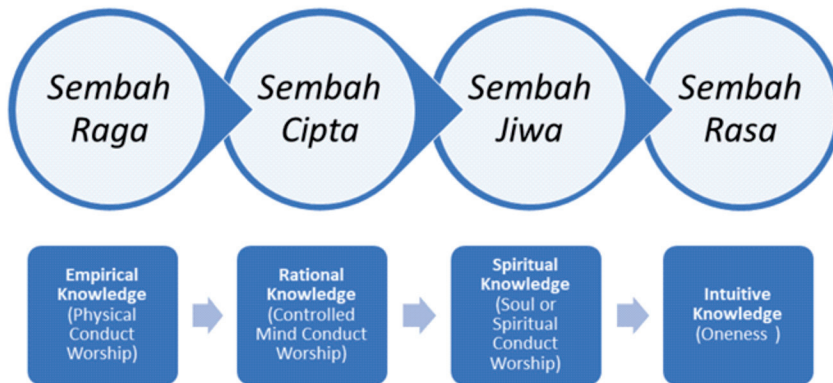


Figure 2. Epistemologically, the moral thought in *Serat Wedhatama* is the transformation from empirical knowledge, rational knowledge, spiritual knowledge, and intuitive knowledge. Perfection in doing physical conduct worship which is based on physiological sensing (motoric and sensory) is the entry point to the perfection of intellectual worship which is based on clear and pure reasoning. Perfect intellectual worship will transform human being into highly intensive spiritual worship to achieve the truth which is based on intuitive knowledge.

1 This spiritual sides of the Javanese philosophy found in Javanese literatures were also studied intensely by Suwondo and co- workers (Suwondo; T., Riyadi. S., Priyoprabowo, D., Sukardi, M.P. *Nilai-nilai Budaya Susastra Jawa*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, 1994).

Sembah Rasa only requires an agile and firm inner soul. Once it is achieved, human beings only feel the essence of life. Both *Sembah Jiwa* (the third worship) and *Sembah Rasa* (the fourth worship) belong to intuitive knowledge because the knowledge source is intuition or inspiration. When knowledge is obtained rationally and empirically, the process used is reasoning. Intuitive knowledge is gained without the process of reasoning. This phenomenon can be found in situations where one who focuses on a certain problem and suddenly finds the answer to the problem without going through a tough process of reasoning.

True intuition is a shortened path toward knowledge which is supposed to be expressed by senses and reflective thoughts. Therefore, those with much experience in their field can easily have intuition. A profound spiritual view, for example, can appear among those who are consistently busy with spiritual thoughts. Aesthetic inspiration comes to those who intensively relate to the world of art. Likewise, religious intuition arises from those who are intensively close to religious matters. Intuition is personal and cannot be foreseen. Intuition is not reliable to be considered and used as a basis to construct systematic knowledge. Intuitive knowledge can be used as a hypothesis for subsequent analyses in determining the correctness of a statement.

Based on the nature or characteristic of the way the knowledge is acquired, it is clearly observed that each *Sembah* in *Serat Wedhatama* has its own category in science (e.g., logic or *akal budi*, empirical, rational, and intuitive). A methodological measurement such as correspondence, coherence, pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, and logic truth theorem can be used and applied respectively, depending on the type of knowledge inside *Sembah* teachings, expressed in the manuscript. Nevertheless, the four *Sembah* in *Serat Wedhatama* is integrated and directed to gain a type of religious knowledge, based on Islamic teachings. Therefore, the implication is that to meaning the worships can evolve dynamically, but the content of the meaning is not changed and absolute because it is derived from the holy book. The absolute nature of the manuscript has an implication that belief should be put as the basis to understand truth in knowledge inside *Serat Wedhatama*.

Conclusion

In this study, epistemology is used to understand the overall intent of *Wedhatama* as a moral teaching. Understanding the proper philosophy of knowledge or the epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* is found to help understand the concept of moral messages comprehensively. The epistemology of *Serat Wedhatama* is found in the concept of four *Sembah* or worships, namely, *Sembah Raga*, *Sembah Cipta*,

Sembah Jiwa, and *Sembah Rasa*. The sources, characteristics, and truths from the epistemological perspective in *Serat Wedhatama* can be explained in the four worships. The epistemological approach for *Serat Wedhatama* opens the possibility of explaining the hidden values and presenting the values and moral teachings systematically not only for *Serat Wedhatama* but also for other Javanese manuscripts which are generally more intuitive than empirical and rational. The contents of literature constructed using empirical and rational knowledge capture meanings easier than those of that constructed by intuitive knowledge. Unfortunately, in-depth messages are often conveyed intuitively, as observed in *Serat Wedhatama*.

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