

Mapping the Sufi Ethics of the Self: A Study of Seven Virtues and Vices in *Serat Nitiprana* within Javanese Islam

Raha Bistara

UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia
e-mail: rahabistara07@gmail.com

Hasan bin Jali

Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Institute of Information Technology,
Malaysia
e-mail: hasan.jali@unikl.edu.my

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sistem etika sufistik dalam *Serat Nitiprana* karya Kiai Yasadipura I dengan menelaah konstruksi tujuh sifat baik dan tujuh sifat buruk sebagai kerangka nilai ke-diri-an dalam konteks budaya Islam-Jawa. Studi ini merespons disorientasi moral dan krisis spiritual yang kian melanda masyarakat Muslim Jawa kontemporer dengan menggali kembali teks spiritual klasik yang memadukan ajaran tasawuf dengan strategi pedagogis lokal. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis teks, penelitian ini mengkaji struktur tembang macapat dalam naskah untuk mengidentifikasi pola simbolisme moral dan instruksi spiritual. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa *Serat Nitiprana* membangun kerangka etika yang bersifat dualistik secara sistematis: sifat-sifat baik seperti sabar, rendah hati, dan kesadaran diri diposisikan sebagai maqāmāt (tingkatan spiritual), sementara sifat-sifat buruk yang digambarkan sebagai dorongan nafsu dan godaan iblisiah menjadi rintangan utama dalam suluk (perjalanan ruhani). Selain itu, teks ini juga menyusun visi tentang *insān kāmil* (manusia paripurna) melalui idiom-idiom simbolik seperti *sangkan paraning dumadi* dan *sedulur papat lima pancer*, yang menampilkan kosmologi sufistik khas Jawa. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa karya sastra sufistik klasik dapat difungsikan sebagai perangkat pendidikan moral dan spiritual yang kontekstual di tengah erosi nilai-nilai tradisional. Keaslian penelitian ini terletak pada pemetaan sistemik terhadap unsur moral yang saling berlawanan dalam *Serat Nitiprana*, yang berbeda dari studi-studi sebelumnya yang cenderung berfokus pada aspek historis atau filologis semata. Penelitian ini menafsirkan teks sebagai sistem etika sufistik lokal yang utuh dan masih relevan untuk diskursus pendidikan dan spiritualitas masa kini.

Kata Kunci: Pedagogi budaya; insān kāmil; Islam Jawa; Serat Nitiprana; etika sufistik.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the Sufi ethical system in *Serat Nitiprana* by Kiai Yasadipura I by examining the construction of seven virtues and seven vices as a framework of ethical selfhood within the Javanese-Islamic cultural context. The research responds to the growing moral disorientation and spiritual crisis among contemporary Javanese Muslims by revisiting a classical spiritual text that integrates Sufi teachings with local pedagogical strategies. Using a qualitative textual analysis approach, this study examines the macapat poetic structure of the manuscript to identify patterns of moral symbolism and spiritual instruction. The findings reveal that *Serat Nitiprana* systematically constructs a dualistic moral framework: virtues such as patience, humility, and self-awareness serve as progressive maqāmāt (spiritual stations), while the vices, framed as *nafs* impulses and satanic temptations, represent barriers in the *sulūk* (spiritual journey). Furthermore, the text outlines a vision of *insān kāmil* (the perfect self) through symbolic idioms like *sangkan paraning dumadi* and *sedulur papat lima pancer*, articulating a deeply localized Sufi cosmology. These results imply that classical Javanese Sufi literature can serve as a contextual tool for moral and spiritual education amid the erosion of traditional values. The originality of this study lies in its systematic mapping of oppositional moral elements in *Serat Nitiprana*, which, unlike previous historical or philological studies, interprets the text as a comprehensive and localized Sufi ethical system that remains relevant for contemporary pedagogical and spiritual discourse.

Keywords: Cultural pedagogy; insān kāmil; Javanese Islam; Serat Nitiprana; Sufi ethics.

Introduction

In recent decades, Javanese Muslim society has faced a profound crisis in ethical and spiritual orientation. This crisis is marked by the growing dominance of materialism, hedonism, and the increasing spiritual dryness within formal religious practices. Traditional values such as *nrimo ing pandum* (acceptance of one's destiny), *tepa selira* (empathy), and *memayu hayuning bawana* (harmonizing and beautifying the world) have been eroded by the forces of modernity and urbanization (Suciati, 2015; Tupan, Lattu, & Therik, 2022). Simultaneously, tensions between traditionalist and reformist Islamic groups have intensified the fragmentation of religious identity, leaving segments of the community in a state of religious ambiguity or even estrangement from Islamic values themselves (Ricklefs, 2007, 2012).

In this context, there is an urgent need to rediscover spiritual and ethical foundations rooted in local wisdom. One such source is the Sufi literary work *Serat Nitiprana* by R. Ng. Yasadipura I, which conveys teachings on self-awareness, the control of desire (*nafs*), and the ethical framework of seven virtues and vices as moral and spiritual guidance. Amidst the prevailing value disorientation experienced by Javanese Muslims, this text becomes highly relevant as an alternative reference offering a pathway toward self-awareness and spiritual perfection (Fauzi, 2012; Hefner, 2011).

A substantial body of previous studies has significantly contributed to understanding the intersection between literature and Sufism within Islamic traditions, particularly in the context of transmitting spiritual values through classical literary works. The first category of research focuses on the process of Islamization in Java through cultural integration. A key theme in the Islamization of Java, widely explored in scholarly work, is the emphasis on the fusion of Islamic values with local traditions. Studies on communities such as Penginyongan and Jalawastu demonstrate that cultural practices like *sedekah bumi* (earth-offering ceremonies), *lengger* (a traditional Javanese dance), and local ritual performances can undergo Islamization without losing their indigenous identity (Asrawijaya, 2022a). Symbolic and linguistic strategies, such as the use of the Javanese language in conveying Islamic messages, have proven effective in embedding Islamic values within local communities (Wicaksono, 2019). Additionally, artistic practices such as *wayang* (shadow puppet theater) have served as engaging and contextually relevant media for transmitting Islamic teachings (Rumbay, Siahaya, & Hutagalung, 2024). The interaction between Islam and local culture has not taken the form of conflict but rather manifests as a mutually enriching dialectical relationship (Susilo & Syato, 2016). The ongoing re-Islamization process, including the identity shift from *abangan* (nominal Muslims with syncretic beliefs) to *santri* (orthodox, observant Muslims), along with the role of youth as agents of religious transformation, further underscores the dynamic character of culturally grounded Islamization in Jawa (Nashir & Jinan, 2018; Parker & Nilan, 2013). However, these studies have yet to examine specifically how literary works such as *Serat Nitiprana* contribute to transmitting Sufi ethical values within this cultural framework.

The second category involves studies on Sufi ethics in Islamic literature, focusing on the moral and spiritual dimensions conveyed through both

classical and modern Sufi works. The literature consistently highlights that Sufi ethics are not solely grounded in adherence to *shari'a* (Islamic law) but also in the cultivation of inner character through spiritual practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *suluk* (spiritual journey or path), and *muhasabah* (self-reflection). Core concepts such as universal compassion (Heck, 2006), repentance and integrity (Khalil, 2023), and moral refinement (Kostadinova, 2023) emerge as central themes in Sufi literary texts. Works by figures such as Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi and Yunus Emre consistently use poetry as a pedagogical tool for instilling virtues such as compassion, sincerity, and the rejection of vices like greed and pride (Bardakçı, 2021). Furthermore, the aesthetic and symbolic dimensions of Sufi literature function as methods for character development and for achieving spiritual balance between the physical and transcendental realms (Karimi, 2024; Yazaki, 2014). Nonetheless, much of this scholarship remains focused on Middle Eastern and Central Asian literary traditions, leaving a significant gap in the study of Sufi ethical frameworks embedded within the literary texts of the Indonesian Archipelago, such as *Serat Nitiprana*. This gap calls for further exploration into localized Sufi ethics within the Javanese-Islamic context.

The third category centers on the moral transformation of Javanese Muslim society, a transformation shaped by a long process of integrating Islamic teachings with local cultural practices. Existing studies reveal that Islamization in Java has been adaptive and dialogical rather than confrontational—evident in interpretative works such as *al-Iklil* by Misbah Mustafa, which emphasize the harmonization of Islamic teachings with Javanese traditions (A. Supriyanto, 2024). Local rituals such as *slametan* (communal prayer-feast ceremonies) and *cowongan* (rituals invoking rain or blessings) are interpreted as expressions of deeply rooted Sufi religiosity within community life (Nasir, 2019; S. Supriyanto, 2023). The propagation of Sufism, brought by the *Wali Songo* (the Nine Saints credited with spreading Islam in Java) and orders such as *Qadiriyya* and *Naqshbandiyya*, has strengthened the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Javanese Islam while simultaneously offering a response to the challenges of modernity and religious radicalism (Rubaidi, Hilmy, Mas'ud, & Basyir, 2023; Sugahara, 2023). Historical research has further contested the notion that Islam was marginal within Javanese culture, demonstrating its substantial role in shaping the social and cultural structures of Java since the early phases of

Islamization (Ricklefs, 2014). However, there remains a scarcity of research examining how this moral transformation is symbolically and narratively encoded within local Sufi literary works such as *Serat Nitiprana*, signaling a critical area for further scholarly inquiry.

This study aims to analyze the system of Sufi ethics embedded in *Serat Nitiprana* by Kiai Yasadipura I by examining the seven virtuous traits and the seven vices as the moral and spiritual construction of the self (*ke-diri-an*) within the Javanese-Islamic cultural context. Furthermore, it interprets the text as a symbolic map of *suluk* (spiritual journey) leading toward the realization of the *insān kāmil* (the perfected human). This research addresses a significant gap in the existing literature by offering a thematic and Sufi-centered analysis of the moral and spiritual framework in *Serat Nitiprana*, which has thus far been predominantly explored through historical, philological, or practical applications without delving into its ethical system as a comprehensive teaching of self-transformation.

Considering the narrative structure and Sufi symbolism embedded in *Serat Nitiprana*, this study is grounded in the hypothesis that the text by R. Ng. Yasadipura I does not merely convey moral teachings in a normative sense but constructs a structured system of Sufi ethics. The text articulates the concept of *ke-diri-an* (the self) through cultural symbols, poetic verses of *tembang suluk* (spiritual songs), and the moral opposition between seven virtuous traits and seven vices, all of which form part of the spiritual process known in Sufism as *sulūk* (spiritual journey). This argument is supported by the theory of *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations) in Sufism (Al-Qushayri, 2007), which maps out the stages of the soul's journey—beginning with *taubah* (repentance), *ṣabr* (patience), *murāqabah* (self-vigilance), and culminating in *riḍā* (contentment). It is also reinforced by the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) from the impulses of the *nafs al-ammārah* (the commanding self). Furthermore, the aesthetic and symbolic approach employed through the *tembang macapat* (Javanese poetic form) aligns with the pedagogical framework of Javanese-Islamic ethics (Dhofier, 1980; Woodward, 2011), in which Sufism is transmitted through local cultural media that are both communicative and reflective. Thus, *Serat Nitiprana* can be read as a distinctive representation of Javanese Islam that offers not only ethical values but also a spiritual methodology guiding individuals toward the realization of *insān kāmil* (the perfected human).

This study focuses on the unit of analysis in the form of *Serat Nitiprana* by R. Ng. Yasadipura I, a classical Javanese literary work rich in ethical and Sufi symbolism. The analysis centers on the representation of seven virtues and seven vices, which are narratively constructed in the verses of the *tembang* (Javanese poetic form), and how the text structures the concept of the self (*ke-diri-an*) within the tradition of Javanese Islamic Sufism. Thus, this research does not merely examine the normative moral content, but also explores the Sufi dynamics and pedagogical dimensions embedded in the text's poetic structure, cultural symbols, and themes of self-transformation.

This research employs a qualitative design with a textual analysis approach. This method was selected because it aligns with the nature of the object of study, which is literary, Sufi, and symbolic in character. Textual analysis provides the interpretive space to uncover hidden meanings within the language, poetic form, and cultural symbolism embedded in the text. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of spiritual meanings and ethical systems that cannot be accessed through purely literal or historical readings.

The primary data source in this study is the printed edition of *Serat Nitiprana* published by Dahara Prize in 1994. This text serves as the principal source, as it contains the original poetic verses that form the basis of analysis. In addition, this study draws on secondary sources, including classical Sufi works by Al-Qushayri and Al-Ghazali, studies on Javanese Islamic pedagogy (Dhofier, 1994; Woodward, 2011), as well as scholarly works on Sufism and Islamic literature from various Muslim cultural contexts. These sources provide theoretical grounding and enrich the interpretation of the Sufi structure within the text.

Data were collected through documentation and literature review techniques. The data collection process began with the transliteration and segmentation of the text into three thematic clusters: virtues, vices, and verses on the concept of the self. Each verse was then parallelized into three languages—Javanese, Indonesian, and English—to facilitate the identification of themes, meanings, and symbolic structures. This classification also served as the basis for data visualization in the form of synthesis tables that clarify the ethical and spiritual functions of each verse.

The final stage of this study involved thematic and interpretive analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring Sufi values in the text,

such as patience (*ṣabr*), contentment (*riḍāʾ*), repentance (*tawbah*), or satanic traits (*iblisīyah*). Meanwhile, the interpretive approach was used to uncover the symbolic meanings of the verses within the theoretical frameworks of *maqāmāt* (spiritual stages) and *tazkiyat al-naḥs* (the purification of the soul). The analysis was carried out systematically, beginning with the identification of relevant quotations, thematic grouping, linking to Sufi theories, and finally, interpreting the findings within the context of Javanese Islamic culture.

Results and Discussion

1. *Serat Nitiprana* as a Sufi Text of Javanese Islam

Serat Nitiprana is an esteemed literary work that not only conveys ethical values but also functions as a spiritual guide within the Sufi tradition of Javanese Islam. Composed by R. Ng. Yasadipura I (1729–1803), the chief court poet of the Surakarta Palace during the reigns of Pakubuwono III and IV, this text has long been known and cherished by the Javanese nobility and aristocracy from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries (Nasuhi, 2006, p. 211). The text examined in this study is the transliterated edition by Kamajaya, published by Balai Pustaka in 1979 and obtained from the Pustaka Nawaksara collection (Yasadipura I, 1979).

Rich with moral, spiritual, and cultural teachings, *Serat Nitiprana* is not merely a literary product but serves as a *kitab*—a manual of life designed to shape character (*budi pekerti*) and cultivate the self (*ke-diri-an*) holistically. True to its name, *Nitiprana* is derived from two Javanese words: *niti*, meaning ‘guidance’ or ‘regulation,’ and *prana*, meaning ‘heart,’ ‘feeling,’ or ‘inner sense’ (Mardiwarsito, 1979, p. 113; Poerwadarminta, 1939, p. 346).

The ethical and spiritual guidance contained within *Serat Nitiprana* covers various aspects of human conduct, including patience (*ṣabr*), sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*), gratitude (*shukr*), perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge, self-restraint, and the rejection of greed and egocentrism. These values are conveyed through the medium of *tembang suluk*—Javanese mystical poetry—making the text not only communicative but also contemplative. The poetic form serves as both a mnemonic and a spiritual vehicle, ensuring that the moral teachings are easily internalized and deeply felt within the hearts of its readers or listeners.

In this study, the focus of analysis is directed toward the *pupuh Dhandhanggula* section of *Serat Nitiprana*, which consists of 48 *pada* (stanzas), each containing 10 *gatra* (lines) bound by traditional rules of *guru wilangan* (syllabic count) and *guru lagu* (rhyme or melody). The *Dhandhanggula* meter is traditionally associated with a phase of life in which individuals begin to establish familial harmony, realign their way of living, and temper their egocentric tendencies (Sulaksono, 2016, p. 84; Sutardjo, 2016, p. 35). This symbolic resonance aligns with the Sufi function of *Serat Nitiprana*, which aims to guide its readers through the process of inner refinement, self-recognition, and the cultivation of mature spiritual character.

Beyond its role as a literary text, *Serat Nitiprana* positions itself as a *kitab suluk*—a spiritual manual expressed through the medium of local Javanese culture—intended to guide the younger generation in developing virtuous character (*akhlak mulia*) and living with deep spiritual awareness. The repetitive structure and rich symbolism of the *tembang* serve as pedagogical tools to facilitate the internalization of ethical values, much like the traditional teaching methods found in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). In this way, the work stands as an important cultural legacy that harmonizes Islamic Sufism, Javanese indigenous wisdom, and traditional educational methodology within a single aesthetic and spiritual framework.

2. The Seven Virtues in *Serat Nitiprana*

This section outlines the seven virtues (*sifat baik*) constructed by R. Ng. Yasadipura I in *Serat Nitiprana* as the moral foundation for Javanese Muslims. The analysis is conducted through a philological-textual approach to the *macapat* verses that explicitly convey Sufi ethical teachings. The primary text under examination is the *Serat Nitiprana* edition transcribed by Kamajaya, published by Balai Pustaka in 1979, and sourced from the *Pustaka Nawaksara* collection. In this study, the verses from the *pupuh Dhandhanggula* are analyzed to identify the spiritual values and inner ethics that shape the construction of the self (*ke-diri-an*) within the framework of Javanese Islamic Sufism.

The first of the seven virtues articulated by R. Ng. Yasadipura I in *Serat Nitiprana* emphasizes the importance of patience (*ṣabr*) and openness of heart when facing suffering. This virtue is conveyed in stanza 7 of *pupuh Dhandhanggula*, lines 6 to 9 (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 21), which teaches that

one should respond to adversity with kindness and remain open-hearted toward others. The tri-lingual translation of this key stanza is presented in table 1, highlighting how the original Javanese text conveys profound Sufi ethical values that stress emotional resilience, compassion, and spiritual generosity.

Table 1 Emphasizing Patience and Compassion as Core Virtues in Javanese Sufi Ethics

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>yen katekanan balak,</i>	<i>Bila mendapat musibah,</i>	When struck by calamity,
<i>ing sariranipun,</i>	<i>Dalam dirinya sendiri,</i>	Upon himself,
<i>winales ing kabecikan,</i>	<i>Dibalasnya dengan kebaikan,</i>	He responds with kindness,
<i>mring kabuka marang ing sasami sami</i>	<i>Dan ia bersikap terbuka kepada sesama manusia.</i>	And remains open-hearted toward others.

This stanza portrays the ideal character of a Javanese Muslim who embodies patience (*ṣabr*), openness of heart, and compassion, even when faced with hardship or adversity. Responding to misfortune or suffering with kindness reflects both self-control and spiritual strength, which, in the Sufi tradition, is regarded as an essential part of the process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul). Furthermore, such openness toward others reflects the values of *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance) and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), which serve as fundamental pillars of Sufi social ethics.

Thus, this stanza underscores the importance of ethical responses to personal suffering: not by complaining or assigning blame, but by extending compassion and kindness to others. This represents the manifestation of the *maqām* of *ṣabr* in Sufism, which is not merely about passive acceptance, but about actively responding with spiritual goodness. As Al-Ghazali (2005) emphasizes, patience is the essential foundation of all *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations), serving as the prerequisite for ascending through subsequent stages of spiritual development.

The second virtue in *Serat Nitiprana* centers on self-awareness and humility. This value is reflected in stanza 8 of *pupuh Dhandhanggula*, lines 2 through 7 (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 21), as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The Second Virtue in Serat Nitiprana: Self-Awareness and Humility (Stanza 8, Lines 2–7)

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>kaping kalih mantep idhepira,</i>	<i>Kedua, teguh dan mantap dalam kesadarannya,</i>	Second, firm and steady in his awareness,
<i>ing kang beciki awake,</i>	<i>Ia menyadari kebaikan orang lain kepadanya,</i>	He recognizes the kindness others have shown to him,
<i>lan weruh sriranipun,</i>	<i>Dan mengetahui dirinya sendiri,</i>	And knows his own position,
<i>yen wong luhur dipun andhapi,</i>	<i>Meskipun berhadapan dengan orang mulia,</i>	Even when facing a noble person,
<i>tur nora palacidra,</i>	<i>Ia tidak menyakiti atau mengkhianati</i>	He does not harm or betray
<i>marang saminipun,</i>	<i>orang-orang di sekitarnya</i>	those around him

This stanza emphasizes the importance of an individual's ability to recognize the goodness of others and to maintain a proportional awareness of their own position and standing. Such awareness forms the foundation of *tawāduʿ* (humility) and *ʿadālah* (justice toward oneself and others) within the Sufi ethical framework. A person who upholds this virtue will not boast before those of higher status and will consistently preserve harmonious relationships with others, avoiding harm or betrayal.

In the Sufi tradition, this virtue is closely related to *murāqabah*, the continuous awareness that human beings live under God's watchful gaze and must therefore be vigilant in both conduct and thought. Furthermore, the ability to know oneself (*maʿrifat al-naḥs*) is considered the initial step toward attaining *maʿrifatullāh*, or the deeper knowledge of God. Thus, this stanza teaches not only social ethics but also guides readers toward cultivating spiritual depth through self-awareness and self-control.

The third virtue in *Serat Nitiprana* relates to a strong inclination toward consistently performing good deeds and avoiding wrongful actions. This value is reflected in stanza 8 of the *pupuh Dhandhanggula*, lines 8 to 10 (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 21), as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 The Third Virtue in Serat Nitiprana: Consistent Inclination Toward Good Deeds and Avoidance of Wrongdoing

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Dene tandha kaping tiga,</i>	<i>Adapun tanda yang ketiga,</i>	The third sign,
<i>iya karem wong iku panggawe becik,</i>	<i>ialah bahwa orang itu senang melakukan perbuatan baik,</i>	is that the person enjoys doing good deeds,
<i>nyimpang panggawe ala.</i>	<i>dan menjauhkan diri dari perbuatan buruk.</i>	and avoids engaging in wrongful acts.

This verse illustrates that one of the primary characteristics of a virtuous person (*insān*) is their consistency in choosing righteousness and avoiding all forms of wrongdoing. From the perspective of Sufi ethics, this tendency does not arise spontaneously but is the result of *riyāḍah*—a continuous spiritual discipline aimed at subduing the lower self (*nafs*) and habituating oneself to righteous deeds.

The fondness for doing good (*karem panggawe becik*) and the rejection of evil actions (*nyimpang panggawe ala*) reflect the process of inner purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*), in which a heart that has been spiritually cleansed will naturally incline toward virtue. Within the framework of the *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations), this quality is closely associated with the *maqām* of *taqwā* (God-consciousness) and *iḥsān* (spiritual excellence)—that is, the continuous awareness and choice to pursue what is pleasing to God, not only on an outward level but also within the depths of one's inner being.

The fourth sign within the Sufi ethical structure constructed by R. Ng. Yasadipura I is *jatmika ing budi* (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 21), which literally means “having noble character” or “possessing inner courtesy.” This

expression appears in the first line of stanza 9 and portrays the character of an individual whose behavior is guided by courtesy, sincerity, and inner wisdom.

Table 4 The fourth ethical sign in Serat Nitiprana emphasizing noble character and inner courtesy

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Tandha ping pat j atmika ing budi</i>	Tanda keempat adalah berbudi luhur	The fourth sign is having noble character

This stanza highlights the ethical significance of *j atmika ing budi*, which reflects the Sufi emphasis on *adab* (refined manners) as both an inner disposition and an outward behavior. In Javanese-Islamic ethics, having noble character is not limited to social courtesy but is viewed as an essential manifestation of inner spiritual refinement. The cultivation of *j atmika ing budi* shapes not only how one interacts with others but also how one disciplines the self in relation to God.

From a Sufi perspective, this ethical trait aligns with the practice of constant self-monitoring (*murāqabah*) and the commitment to embody virtues in every aspect of life. Courtesy and gentleness are not superficial social graces but serve as mirrors of the heart's purity. An individual who embodies *j atmika ing budi* demonstrates a balanced character, combining humility, sincerity, and calmness—qualities that are central to the spiritual journey toward *insān kāmīl* (the perfected human being). As the Javanese poetic tradition emphasizes, this mannerly conduct reflects an ethical-spiritual unity where the outer behavior harmonizes with the inner self, thus fostering both social harmony and spiritual elevation.

The fifth of the seven virtues in *Serat Nitiprana* is articulated in stanza 9, lines 2–4 (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 21). In this section, R. Ng. Yasadipura I emphasizes the significance of excellence in speech as a hallmark of a refined and knowledgeable character. An individual who embodies this fifth sign is described as *momot ujar*—someone who is open to receiving others' words and opinions, and who exercises careful discernment when speaking. Their

speech is never impulsive or careless but is always accompanied by *ngelmu*, meaning wisdom and thoughtful reflection.

This value underscores the Sufi view within Javanese Islam that the quality of speech mirrors the depth of one's spiritual state and self-control. Speech is not merely a social act but serves as a reflection of the heart's purity and the mind's integrity. In the ethical framework of Sufism, mindful and wise communication is considered an integral part of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (soul purification) and is closely associated with the attainment of *maqām ḥilm*—the spiritual station of forbearance, patience, and gentleness. By exercising restraint and wisdom in speech, an individual demonstrates both spiritual maturity and ethical refinement essential in the journey toward *insān kāmil*, the perfected self. The key elements of this fifth virtue are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 The Fifth Virtue in Serat Nitiprana: Receptiveness and Thoughtful Speech

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Momot ujar tandha kaping lima,</i>	<i>Tanda kelima, mampu menampung ucapan atau menerima pendapat.</i>	The fifth sign is the ability to receive others' speech.
<i>Ngucap barang pangucape,</i>	<i>Dalam berbicara, ia berhati-hati dan mempertimbangkan perkataannya.</i>	He speaks carefully and with consideration.
<i>Sarta kalawan ngelmu.</i>	<i>Dan ucapannya selalu disertai ilmu atau kebijaksanaan.</i>	And his words are always accompanied by wisdom.

The sixth virtue, presented in stanza 9, lines 5–8 of *Serat Nitiprana* (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 21), underscores the importance of profound spiritual awareness of life, one's connection with God, and the inevitability of death. In this passage, R. Ng. Yasadipura I portrays an individual who delights in deep reflection (*karem amikir*), constantly engages in *istikfar* (seeking forgiveness), remains mindful of the true meaning of life, and consistently remembers mortality as an essential part of the spiritual journey.

This disposition reflects the *maqām muraqabah* in Sufi thought—a spiritual station characterized by continuous awareness of being under

divine watch. Through the habitual practice of *istikfar*, individuals cultivate moral vigilance, nurture inner humility, and maintain spiritual purity. The remembrance of death here is not fatalistic but serves as an ethical compass, reminding one to live life with propriety (*adab*), responsibility, and sincerity. Such self-awareness fosters not only individual piety but also guides ethical behavior within the community. The key elements of this sixth virtue are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 The Sixth Virtue in Serat Nitiprana: Reflective Awareness and Remembrance of Mortality

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Tandha ping nem karem amikir,</i>	Tanda keenam adalah senang merenung,	The sixth sign is fondness for reflection,
<i>Tansah maca istikfar,</i>	Selalu membaca istikfar,	Constantly reciting <i>istikfar</i> ,
<i>Eling uripipun,</i>	Sadar akan makna hidupnya,	Aware of the meaning of his life,
<i>Lamun awekasana pejah.</i>	Dan ingat bahwa pada akhirnya ia akan meninggal dunia.	And remembering that in the end he will pass away.

The seventh and final virtue articulated in *Serat Nitiprana* appears in stanza 9, lines 9–10 (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 21). This section highlights one of the highest spiritual values in the journey of a *sālik* (spiritual seeker): the attitude of *riḍāʿ*, or sincere acceptance of life's trials and tribulations. Yasadipura I depicts an individual who, when faced with hardship (*prihatin*) or adversity, embraces it as a divine blessing (*nugraha*) from God. This attitude reflects profound spiritual maturity and inner clarity, representing the culmination of the *suluk* (spiritual path).

In the Sufi tradition, *riḍāʿ* is considered one of the loftiest *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations), attained after the levels of patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and trust in God (*tawakkul*). A person who reaches this state does not merely resign to suffering but actively perceives trials as opportunities for

drawing closer to the Divine. The acceptance of adversity without complaint reflects both spiritual serenity and unwavering faith. The essence of this seventh virtue is presented in **Table 7**.

Table 7 The Seventh Virtue in Serat Nitiprana: Acceptance of Life's Trials as Divine Blessing

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Kaping pitu kalamun nandhang prihatin,</i>	<i>Ketujuh, ketika mengalami kesusahan atau penderitaan,</i>	Seventh, when experiencing hardship or sorrow,
<i>Panrimaning nugraha.</i>	<i>Ia menerimanya sebagai anugerah dari Tuhan.</i>	He accepts it as a blessing from God.

In the Sufi tradition, the *maqām* of *riḍā'* (contentment or acceptance) represents one of the highest spiritual stations, following the stages of patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and trust in God (*tawakkul*). A person who has attained *riḍā'* does not merely passively endure trials but views suffering as a means of drawing closer to the Divine. This virtue reflects a state of spiritual wholeness, guiding the individual to respond to divine destiny with serenity and unwavering faith, rather than with complaint or resistance.

The seven virtues constructed by R. Ng. Yasadipura I in *Serat Nitiprana* form the essential foundation of Sufi ethics within the Javanese Islamic context. Each virtue is conveyed through carefully crafted verses in the *pupuh Dhandhanggula*, with lines rich in meaning and spiritual symbolism. These virtues not only illustrate moral excellence in a normative sense but also serve as a spiritual roadmap guiding the reader through the process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) toward becoming the *insān kāmil* (the perfected human being). To clarify the meanings and the arrangement of these teachings, Table 8 summarizes the seven virtues as articulated in the text of *Serat Nitiprana*.

Table 8 Summary of the Seven Virtues in Serat Nitiprana

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
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<i>Yen katekanaan balak, ing sariranepun, winales ing kabecikan, mring kabuka marang ing sasami-sami.</i>	<i>Bila mendapat musibah, dibalasnya dengan kebaikan, dan bersikap terbuka kepada sesama.</i>	When struck by calamity, he responds with kindness and remains open-hearted toward others.
<i>Kaping kalih mantep idhepira, ingkang beciki awak, kan weruh sriranipun, yen wong luhur dipun-andhapi, tur nora palacidra marang saminipun.</i>	<i>Kedua, teguh dalam kesadaran, mengenal kebaikan orang lain, tahu diri di hadapan orang mulia, dan tidak mengkhianati sesama.</i>	Second, firm in awareness, acknowledges others' kindness, knows his place, and does not betray others.
<i>Dene tandha kaping tiga, iya karem wong iku panggawe becik, nyimpang panggawe ala.</i>	<i>Adapun tanda yang ketiga, orang itu gemar berbuat baik dan menjauhi keburukan.</i>	The third sign, he enjoys doing good deeds and avoids evil actions.
<i>Tandha ping pat jatmika ing budi.</i>	<i>Tanda keempat, bersikap santun dan memiliki budi pekerti.</i>	The fourth sign, behaving with courtesy and noble character.
<i>Momot ujar tandha kaping lima, ngucap barang pangucap, sarta kalawan ngelmu.</i>	<i>Tanda kelima, mampu menampung ucapan orang lain, berbicara dengan bijak dan penuh ilmu.</i>	The fifth sign, receptive to others' speech, speaks wisely with knowledge.
<i>Tandha ping nem karem amikir, tansah maca istikpar, eling uripipun, lamun awekasana pejah.</i>	<i>Tanda keenam, suka merenung, selalu beristighfar, sadar akan hidup dan kematian.</i>	The sixth sign, thoughtful, constantly recites istighfar, mindful of life and death.

<i>Kaping pitu kalamun nandhang prihatin, panrimaning nugraha.</i>	<i>Ketujuh, ketika mengalami penderitaan, menerimanya sebagai anugerah Tuhan.</i>	The seventh sign, when suffering, he accepts it as divine grace.
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In essence, the seven virtues outlined in *Serat Nitiprana* form the moral foundation of noble character that integrates social ethics and the spiritual values of Javanese Islam. The ideal individual is portrayed as someone who remains patient (*ṣabr*) when faced with adversity, responds to harm with kindness, maintains self-awareness without causing harm to others, consistently engages in good deeds, demonstrates courtesy and civility, speaks thoughtfully and with wisdom, regularly practices *istikfar* (seeking forgiveness) while reflecting on the impermanence of life, and ultimately accepts suffering as a divine blessing. These values reflect a harmonious synthesis of emotional intelligence, spiritual consciousness, and social decorum—guiding the individual toward personal perfection within both the Sufi framework and local Javanese cultural tradition.

From the analysis of these seven virtues in *Serat Nitiprana*, several distinctive and thematically consistent patterns emerge. First, there is a clear tendency toward reactive and affective ethics, characterized by the ability to respond to wrongdoing with goodness and to face suffering with equanimity. This pattern highlights the importance of self-restraint and patience (*ṣabr*) as spiritual responses to negative situations, reflecting both emotional maturity and spiritual depth. Second, the text exhibits a reflective awareness of the self and of social relationships, as seen in the emphasis on humility, non-harm toward others, and openness to differing viewpoints. This suggests that piety, as depicted in the text, encompasses not only vertical relations with God but also horizontal relations with fellow human beings. Third, a spiritual-transcendental orientation is evident through the habitual practice of *istikfar*, an acute awareness of death, and wholehearted submission to divine destiny (*riḍā*). This pattern indicates that the ideal character envisioned by *Serat Nitiprana* is one who continuously purifies the self and lives in a state of heightened consciousness of life's transience. Fourth, the delivery of these values through *tembang suluk* (Javanese spiritual songs) and local symbolism

reflects a cultural pedagogical strategy that employs aesthetics as a medium for moral transmission.

The interpretation of the seven virtues in *Serat Nitiprana* reveals that this work does not merely convey moral teachings but constructs a structured and contextual Sufi ethical system within the framework of Javanese Islam. Virtues such as patience (*ṣabr*), humility, and acceptance (*riḍāʾ*) reflect spiritual stages consistent with the *maqāmāt* of Sufism, while simultaneously serving as the foundation for ethical character formation closely tied to the religious experiences of Javanese society. This aligns with the tradition of Javanese Sufism, which since the fifteenth century has developed a form of mysticism that prioritizes spiritual practice and self-transformation through local wisdom (Birsyada, 2020). The values embedded in this *Serat*—such as compassion, self-reflection, and the refusal to retaliate against wrongdoing—exemplify a Sufi ethical orientation that emphasizes social harmony and moral excellence (Bardakçı, 2021; Suharsono, Mustansyir, & Murtiningsih, 2020).

Furthermore, *Serat Nitiprana* integrates spiritual dimensions with cultural approaches through *tembang macapat*, positioning itself as a *kitab suluk*—a spiritual manual—that not only offers ethical guidance but also engages the aesthetic and emotional sensibilities of its readers. Suharsono et al. (2020), demonstrate that values such as forgiveness, as conveyed in *Serat Nitiprana*, possess both profound spiritual significance and function as tools for fostering inner peace. Thus, the findings of this study reinforce the understanding that Javanese Sufism shapes not only individual spiritual conduct but also serves as the ethical bedrock for building an inclusive, moderate, and culturally harmonious society (Anshori, Prasojo, & Muhtifah, 2021; Susilo & Syato, 2016).

3. Identification of the Seven Vices and Their Antithetical Function

Following the discussion of the seven virtues in *Serat Nitiprana*, which constitute the ethical foundation of Javanese Islamic Sufism, this analysis proceeds to explore their opposites—the seven vices that function as the antithesis to those noble values. While the virtues depict the spiritual stages that a *sālik* (spiritual seeker) must strive to attain, the vices represent inner obstacles that must be identified, controlled, and transformed throughout the *sulūk* (spiritual journey).

Within the textual context, these vices are portrayed not merely as moral deficiencies but also as spiritual disturbances arising from the impulses of the *nafs al-ammārah* (the commanding or base self). Symbolically, these negative traits are referred to as *budi ala ginoncang eblis*—a metaphor for the satanic agitation that disrupts the human psyche. Thus, engaging with this part of the text is essential for understanding the ethical dynamics of *Serat Nitiprana* as a comprehensive value system that not only guides toward goodness but also provides a map for recognizing and avoiding destructive tendencies within the self.

The first vice in *Serat Nitiprana* is explicitly described in stanza 10, lines 8–10. In this stanza, R. Ng. Yasadipura I (1979, pp. 21–22) writes (see Table 9):

Table 9 The First Vice in Serat Nitiprana: Pleasure in Harming Others and Reckless Speech

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Dhemene anganiaya,</i>	<i>Senang menyakiti orang lain,</i>	Enjoys harming others,
<i>Yen angucap wong iku adoh lan ngelmi,</i>	<i>Bila berbicara, ia jauh dari ilmu dan pengetahuan,</i>	When speaking, he is far from knowledge and wisdom,
<i>Sembrana amrih cacad.</i>	<i>Ucapannya ceroboh dan menyebabkan kerusakan atau cela.</i>	His words are reckless and cause damage or disgrace.

This verse (Table 9) portrays an individual who not only derives pleasure from harming others (*dhemene anganiaya*) but also speaks recklessly, devoid of knowledge (*ngelmu*). Such carelessness in speech leads to harm and disgrace, reflecting the dominance of the *nafs al-ammārah*—the lower, commanding self that propels humans toward destructive actions both verbally and physically.

This vice directly contrasts with the Sufi virtues of *ḥilm* (gentleness) and *‘ilm* (knowledge), which are central to ethical conduct in Sufism. In the

context of *sulūk* (the spiritual path), this vice represents one of the initial spiritual obstacles that must be identified and overcome, as it signals a breakdown in basic ethical self-restraint and the unchecked influence of ego in social relations. By opening the discussion of vices with this example, Yasadipura underscores the fundamental importance of mindful speech and the control of harmful impulses as the first steps toward *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul).

The second vice in *Serat Nitiprana* illustrates arrogance and social exclusivity, reflecting a serious disruption in human relationships. In stanza 11, lines 1 to 3, R. Ng. Yasadipura I (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 22) depicts individuals who boast of themselves and avoid social interaction, trapped in the illusion of superiority. Such attitudes not only disrupt social harmony but also close the path to spiritual development, as a proud person finds it difficult to accept advice or correction from others. In the Sufi context, arrogance (*kibr*) is considered one of the greatest *hijab* (veils) that obstruct the attainment of *insān kāmīl* (the perfected human), as it prevents total submission to the Divine Will and blinds one to the fundamental equality of all beings before God.

The verse describing this vice is presented in Table 10:

Table 10 The Second Vice in Serat Nitiprana: Arrogance and Social Exclusivity

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Kapindhone digumunggung dhiri,</i>	<i>Kedua, ia menyombongkan diri,</i>	Second, he boasts about himself,
<i>Nora dhemen apawongsanakan,</i>	<i>Tidak suka bergaul atau berkumpul dengan saudara atau sesama,</i>	Does not enjoy associating with kin or others,
<i>Manawa asor dheweke.</i>	<i>Karena menganggap dirinya lebih tinggi daripada orang lain.</i>	Because he considers himself superior to others.

This vice, as shown in Table 10, highlights the central Sufi teaching that pride is a dangerous spiritual barrier. True ethical refinement in Sufism requires the cultivation of *tawāḍuʿ* (humility) and the recognition of every soul's equal standing before the Divine. By identifying this vice, *Serat Nitiprana* guides the seeker (*sālik*) to practice self-effacement and openness—qualities essential for the transformative journey of the soul.

The third vice identified in *Serat Nitiprana* concerns the loss of *adab* (courtesy and proper conduct) in everyday behavior. In stanza 11, lines 4–5, Yasadipura I (1979, p. 22) refers to individuals marked by the absence of social grace—those who “*tatakrama den orak-arik*,” meaning they fail to uphold decorum or actively disrupt established norms of civility. In the Javanese cultural context, where *unggah-ungguh* (etiquette) and *tatakrama* are central expressions of moral character, such behavior is seen as a profound deviation from noble values.

From a Sufi perspective, the erosion of *adab* reflects a weakened spiritual awareness. In Sufism, proper conduct is not merely a social obligation but a reflection of inner discipline that demonstrates reverence for both fellow human beings and God. The disruption of manners, therefore, signals a misalignment between outward behavior and the spiritual virtues necessary for the purification of the soul.

The corresponding verse is presented in Table 11:

Table 11 The Third Vice in Serat Nitiprana: Disruption of Social and Spiritual Decorum

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Dene kang kaping telu,</i>	<i>Adapun yang ketiga,</i>	The third one is,
<i>Tatakrama den orak-arik.</i>	<i>Ia merusak tata krama atau tidak menjaga sopan santun.</i>	He disrupts manners or disregards proper decorum.

As seen in Table 11, this teaching underscores the integral role of external comportment as a mirror of inner refinement. In the path of *suluk*

(spiritual journey), the preservation of *adab* is essential for maintaining both social harmony and spiritual dignity.

The fourth vice described in *Serat Nitiprana* appears in stanza 11, lines 6–7, which states: "*Ingkang kaping sakawan, kereng sarta lengus* (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 22). This phrase characterizes a person who is *kereng* (harsh or aggressive) and *lengus* (sullen or unfriendly in facial expression). In the realm of Sufi ethics, facial expressions and gentle demeanor reflect the clarity of heart and inner peace. Therefore, a person who is stern and unfriendly outwardly signals an imbalance within and a lack of spiritual self-restraint. Such a disposition contradicts one of the key *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations) in Sufism—*ḥilm*, which emphasizes compassion, patience, and kindness in interpersonal relations. In Javanese culture, soft speech and a warm facial expression are not merely social niceties but vital tools for maintaining communal harmony. As such, this trait is a sign of spiritual immaturity that obstructs the path of inner purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*) for the *sālik* (spiritual traveler).

The corresponding verse is detailed in Table 12 below:

Table 12 The Fourth Vice in Serat Nitiprana: Harsh Behavior and Sour Disposition

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Ingkang kaping sakawan,</i>	<i>Adapun yang keempat,</i>	The fourth one is,
<i>Kereng sarta lengus.</i>	<i>Ia bersikap keras dan berwajah masam.</i>	He behaves harshly and has a sour or unfriendly expression.

The fifth vice in *Serat Nitiprana* is found in stanza 11, line 8, which reads: "*Ping lima jail wadulan*" (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 22). This line describes a character who is *jail* (meddlesome or mischievous) and *wadulan* (fond of gossiping or spreading others' affairs, including sowing discord). In the ethical framework of Sufism, such behavior reflects spiritual immaturity and a destructive tendency that undermines social harmony.

In the Sufi tradition, guarding one's tongue is considered one of the essential aspects of *riyāḍah* (spiritual discipline), and behaviors such as *namimah* (tale-bearing) and *ghibah* (backbiting) are regarded as serious sins. These actions erode the spiritual and emotional bonds between individuals and distance the perpetrator from the *maqām ṣidq* (station of truthfulness) and *ukhūwah* (spiritual brotherhood).

Within Javanese culture, *wadulan* is equally condemned as it violates the values of *eling lan waspada* (mindfulness and vigilance) and *tepa selira* (mutual respect and empathy), which uphold personal dignity and the sanctity of others' privacy. The relevant verse is presented in Table 13 below:

Table 13 The Fifth Vice in Serat Nitiprana: Meddlesomeness and Tale-Bearing

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Ping lima jail wadulan.</i>	<i>Kelima, ia bersifat usil dan suka mengadu domba.</i>	Fifth, he is meddlesome and likes to sow discord.

The final two negative traits in *Serat Nitiprana*, the sixth and seventh, are presented in stanza 11, lines 9 and 10. These lines highlight behaviors that are spiritually and socially corrosive, effectively concluding the series of vices that stand in stark contrast to the seven previously described virtues. Together, they serve as the antithesis of sincerity (*ikhlas*) and steadfastness of heart, which are central teachings in Javanese Sufi tradition.

The ninth line in stanza 11—“*kaping neme angumpet panggawe becik*” (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 22)—delivers a sharp critique of individuals who deliberately conceal their good deeds. At first glance, this behavior may appear to reflect modesty or humility. However, within the ethical framework laid out by R. Ng. Yasadipura I, this is categorized as a vice because it represents a failure to channel goodness as a contagious social energy. In the ethical framework of Javanese-Islamic Sufism, every virtuous action carries not only personal value before God but also social responsibility—namely, to serve as an example, to inspire others toward goodness, and to expand communal benefit.

In this context, the concealment of good deeds is not driven by a genuine desire to avoid *riyā'* (showing off) but rather by an unwillingness to share or a fear of losing personal advantage. This reflects subtle egoism (*ujub*), insincerity in intention (*niyyah*), and a weak sense of social trust (*amānah*). In Sufi ethics, withholding goodness that could illuminate and guide others is viewed as a form of spiritual dishonesty, as it hides the light that is meant to shine within the community. Thus, this behavior is not merely indicative of weak character but also serves as an obstacle to social transformation grounded in Sufi values.

The seventh and final negative trait in *Serat Nitiprana* is depicted in the line "*Dene kang kaping sapa, nora sabar katekan bilai*" (Yasadipura I, 1979, p. 22), which translates as "The seventh is impatience when struck by calamity." This attitude reflects an individual's inability to face trials or suffering with calmness and sincerity. From the perspective of Sufi ethics, this trait represents a deficiency in *ṣabr* (patience), one of the essential *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations) on the Sufi path (*sulūk*). Impatience signals a failure to accept the divine will (*taqdīr*) and constitutes a major barrier to spiritual maturity. Those who lack patience tend to fall into complaint, despair, and blame—whether directed at circumstances or at others—thus distancing themselves from *riḍā* (contentment) and *tawakkul* (trust in God).

In the Sufi worldview, life's trials serve as opportunities for spiritual purification. Failing to cultivate patience means missing the deeper wisdom and spiritual refinement that can emerge from hardship. This seventh vice, therefore, represents the culmination of the seven negative traits, highlighting the profound gap between such individuals and the readiness of the soul to return to God in full awareness and acceptance.

The original lines from *Serat Nitiprana* along with their Indonesian and English translations are presented in Table 14.

Table 14 The Seventh Negative Trait in Serat Nitiprana

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Dene kang kaping sapa,</i>	<i>Adapun yang ketujuh,</i>	As for the seventh,

<i>Nora sabar katekan bilai.</i>	<i>Tidak sabar ketika tertimpa musibah.</i>	Does not show patience when afflicted by calamity.
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As the culmination of the ethical discourse on the seven negative traits in *Serat Nitiprana*, Kiai Yasadipura I offers a transformative counsel that serves as the spiritual climax of the text. This section not only warns readers about the immense dangers that arise when these vices are left unchecked, but also gently guides them toward the path of salvation through the application of *pitutur* (moral advice) that has been previously conveyed. With a tone both tender and authoritative, Yasadipura speaks as a spiritual teacher addressing his disciple, inviting the reader to internalize the deeper meaning of these teachings and to embark upon the journey back to the Divine Essence (*Dzat Mahasuci*) with full awareness and sincerity. The complete textual excerpt that encapsulates this closing spiritual counsel is presented in Table 15

Table 15 The Closing Spiritual Counsel In Serat Nitiprana

Bahasa Jawa	Bahasa Indonesia	English Translation
<i>Pan wus jangkep kang sapta prakara,</i>	<i>Setelah lengkaplah ketujuh perkara itu,</i>	Once the seven matters have been completed,
<i>Iku pancabaya gedhe,</i>	<i>Itulah sumber bahaya besar,</i>	That is a great danger,
<i>Rasakna putraningsun,</i>	<i>Rasakanlah, wahai anakku,</i>	Feel it, my child,
<i>Marang kojah kang wuri-wuri,</i>	<i>Terhadap ajaran yang memperingatkan di belakang,</i>	Toward the counsel that follows behind,
<i>Kalamun sira bisa,</i>	<i>Jika engkau mampu,</i>	If you are able,
<i>Matrapken pitutur,</i>	<i>Menerapkan nasihat ini,</i>	To apply this guidance,

<i>Kang wus kasebut ing ngarsa,</i>	<i>Yang telah disebutkan di bagian awal,</i>	That has been stated previously,
<i>Iku badan umarek mring Mahasukci,</i>	<i>Maka dirimu akan berjalan menuju Dzat Mahasuci,</i>	Then your being will proceed toward the Most Holy Essence,
<i>Sarta lawan nugraha.</i>	<i>Dan disertai dengan anugerah-Nya.</i>	And accompanied by His grace.

Stanza 12, from the second line to the end of the verse, portrays the seventh negative trait while simultaneously closing the ethical opposition that has been outlined previously. Beginning with “Nora sabar katekan bilai” (impatience when faced with calamity), Yasadipura highlights the character of an individual who fails to confront life’s trials with steadfastness of heart. This impatience is not merely an emotional reaction but reflects a deeper spiritual weakness that undermines the resilience of the soul. Within the Sufi framework, the virtue of patience (*ṣabr*) represents a foundational *maqām* (spiritual station) that every *sālik* (spiritual seeker) must traverse. The inability to reach this *maqām* signifies a fundamental failure to progress along the path of *sulūk* (spiritual journey).

However, this section does not remain as mere critique. Through the subsequent lines—“pan wus jangkep kang sapta prakara, iku pancabaya gedhe” (when the seven traits are complete, they become a great danger)—Yasadipura asserts that these negative traits, when accumulated within an individual, constitute the source of profound spiritual ruin. He refers to this as *pancabaya gedhe*, literally meaning “five great dangers” (despite the mention of seven traits), emphasizing that the accumulation of ethical corruption poses a real and serious threat to spiritual salvation.

The Sufi message is further reinforced in the following lines: “*rasakna putraningsun, marang kojah kang wuri-wuri*”, which can be interpreted as a direct call to the reader or spiritual disciple (*putraningsun*) to internalize and reflect upon this counsel. The phrase “*kojah kang wuri-wuri*” refers to the negligence of seemingly minor matters which, if left unchecked, may evolve into the root of spiritual ruin. This serves as a warning for readers to remain ever vigilant against the subtle yet perilous temptations of the inner self.

The closing lines—“*kalamun sira bisa, matrapken pitutur, kang wus kasebut ing ngarsa, iku badan umarek mring Mahasukci, sarta lawan nugraha*”—function as a spiritual resolution. If one succeeds in applying all the *pitutur* (moral advice) previously conveyed, they will return to the Most Holy Essence (*Dzat Mahasukci*) accompanied by divine grace (*nugraha*). In other words, overcoming the seven negative traits not only safeguards the individual from moral collapse but also opens the path toward the highest *maqām* in Sufism: *fanā'* and *baqā'*, the stages of annihilation of the self and subsistence in the Divine Presence.

Thus, the seventh negative trait—impatience in the face of calamity—represents the culmination of the ethical opposition, affirming that spiritual weakness not only harms the individual psychologically but also obstructs the realization of the divine potential within the human soul. Yasadipura conveys this insight with elegance through reflective verses that seamlessly weave together moral teachings, aesthetic expression, and spiritual doctrine into a unified poetic tapestry characteristic of Javanese-Islamic Sufism.

In *Serat Nitiprana*, the seven negative traits outlined by R. Ng. Yasadipura I are not merely positioned as moral flaws, but are symbolically depicted as the “temptations of the devil” (*budi ala ginoncang eblis*) that disturb the human conscience. The explicit reference to these traits as *budi ala ginoncang eblis* underscores that moral corruption is not simply an ethical deviation, but also a manifestation of the lower passions (*nafs al-ammārah*) that obstruct the process of spiritual purification.

Each of these vices—whether arrogance, hatred, meddlesomeness, quick temper, impatience, or insincerity—is portrayed as a form of spiritual infiltration that weakens the inner strength of an individual. Within the Sufi framework, the presence of such traits must be confronted through active spiritual awareness, including *muhasabah* (self-reflection), *dhikr* (remembrance of God), and ethical cultivation through the path of *suluk* (spiritual journey).

Thus, the moral message embedded in these verses emphasizes the crucial importance of inner vigilance in recognizing and combating the destructive tendencies within the human self. Through the literary medium of *suluk* poetry, Yasadipura guides readers not only to emulate virtue but also to remain alert to the insidious whispers of evil that arise from within. These

negative traits must be identified, controlled, and transformed as part of the spiritual process toward becoming the perfect human being (*insān kāmil*).

The analysis of the verses in *Serat Nitiprana* depicting the seven negative traits reveals distinct narrative patterns, both in linguistic style and in the structure of moral messaging. Three main tendencies emerge, demonstrating that Yasadipura does not merely present ethical teachings in normative terms but also crafts a rhetorical mechanism designed to correct and realign deviant behaviors.

First, the language used to depict the negative traits in *Serat Nitiprana* is marked by sharper, harsher, and more satirical diction. In contrast to the verses conveying positive traits—which employ gentle and reflective expressions—the verses describing negative traits often use active verbs and explicitly negative connotations, such as *anganiaya* (to harm), *wadulan* (to gossip or slander), and *kereng sarta lengus* (harsh and sour-faced). This stylistic choice reveals the poet's rhetorical strategy to awaken the reader's moral awareness and instill a sense of discomfort toward the criticized characters. Within the tradition of *tembang macapat*, this striking diction also serves as an ethical marker that reinforces the boundary between virtuous and blameworthy behavior.

Second, the negative traits are positioned as integral parts of the spiritual journey and the trials faced by every human being. The appearance of traits such as arrogance, anger, or impatience in the text is not merely categorized as sin or moral failure but is framed as psychological experiences that must be transcended. In the Sufi context, each negative trait represents a challenge for the spiritual traveler (*sālik*) to subdue the lower self (*nafs*) and to cultivate inner discipline through the path of *suluk*. Thus, the presence of negative traits in the narrative is not meant to be condemned in a fatalistic manner but rather recognized as part of the dynamic spiritual journey toward self-perfection.

Third, the symbolic link between negative traits and the “inner devil” (*iblis dalam diri*) is explicitly presented. Statements such as *budi ala ginoncang eblis* underscore that moral corruption does not merely stem from external forces but also from within—namely, from the inner self tempted by destructive whispers. By attributing the source of negative traits to these *iblisiah* impulses, Yasadipura frames the moral conflict as an inner struggle

requiring self-control, *muhasabah* (self-examination), and profound spiritual awareness. This symbolism aligns with classical Sufi teachings that the greatest enemy of a human being is not an external power but the self itself—known as *jihad al-nafs* (the struggle against the ego).

Overall, the narrative of the seven negative traits in *Serat Nitiprana* does not stand in isolation but is positioned as a dialectical opposition to the seven virtues previously outlined. This narrative pattern reinforces the Sufi ethical structure of the text, guiding readers to recognize the potential for moral failure within themselves and to develop spiritual mechanisms for overcoming it. In this way, the work functions not only as a medium for moral instruction but also as an inner roadmap for identifying and managing the darker aspects of the self in the lifelong process of becoming the perfect human being.

The seven negative traits revealed in *Serat Nitiprana* are not merely a catalog of undesirable behaviors; rather, they form an essential component of the moral opposition structure within the framework of Islamic Sufi thought. Each negative trait presented functions not only as a reflection of ethical deviation but also as a narrative element that strengthens the dialectic between virtue and vice, between noble character and base desire. Thus, this text constructs a moral system that assumes the existence of a dynamic duality—one that must be recognized, controlled, and transcended by the spiritual subject.

In the context of Sufism, these negative traits represent the dominance of the lower self (*nafs al-ammārah*)—the human tendency to surrender to egotistical impulses, anger, arrogance, and worldly attachments. The existence of these negative traits constitutes the primary field of spiritual testing along the path of *sulūk*, in which the individual is required to undergo the process of self-purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) through spiritual exercises, introspection, and self-discipline. In other words, negative traits are not merely moral adversaries but also ontological obstacles that hinder the meeting between the human soul and the Divine Reality.

The symbolic portrayal of vice as a "temptation of the devil" further clarifies that the human struggle is not solely ethical but also metaphysical. In this context, the devil does not refer only to an external figure but also serves as a metaphor for the inner impulses that divert the human being from the

straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*). Thus, recognizing these negative traits becomes the first essential step toward liberation from the grip of the *nafs* and entry into the higher stages (*maqāmāt*) of the Sufi path.

Furthermore, the presentation of these negative traits in the form of poetic *tembang* demonstrates a subtle yet effective pedagogical strategy. The *tembang* serves not only as a medium of instruction but also as a reflective instrument that allows readers or listeners to internalize the inner conflict conveyed through aesthetic expression. In this way, the literary structure of *Serat Nitiprana* fulfills an educational, therapeutic, and spiritual function simultaneously.

In sum, the interpretation of the seven negative traits in *Serat Nitiprana* affirms that this text presents a comprehensive Sufi ethical narrative. It not only illuminates the path of virtue but also guides readers to recognize and overcome the darker aspects within themselves. By subduing these traits, the individual is directed toward wholeness and spiritual purity, ultimately leading to a deeper recognition of the Divine. In this regard, *Serat Nitiprana* bequeaths not only a moral teaching but also a methodology of self-formation within the spiritual perspective of Javanese Islam.

Discussion

This study finds that *Serat Nitiprana* by R. Ng. Yasadipura I constructs a structured system of Sufi ethics through three central pillars. First, the text presents seven positive traits that reflect the constructive moral foundation of the Sufi tradition, such as patience (*ṣabr*), humility, compassion, courtesy, self-reflection, *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness), and contentment (*riḍā*) with divine destiny. These values are explicitly conveyed through the verses of *tembang macapat* as part of the process of soul purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the formation of inner virtue. Second, the text articulates seven negative traits as the ethical antithesis, including arrogance, anger, meddlesomeness, impatience, and disregard for proper manners. These traits are portrayed as *iblisiah* temptations that disturb the human conscience (*budī*), posing key spiritual challenges along the path (*sulūk*) toward union with God. Third, *Serat Nitiprana* constructs the concept of the self (*ke-diri-an*) within the Javanese-Islamic Sufi framework as a gradual process leading toward the realization of the *insān kāmil* (the perfected human). Through symbolic references such as *sangkan paraning dumadi* (the origin and return of

existence), *sedulur papat lima pancer* (the Javanese cosmological self), and *suluk* (the spiritual journey), the text offers a spiritual roadmap guiding individuals from existential awareness to reunification with the Divine Essence. These findings affirm that this literary work not only imparts moral advice but also offers a distinctive and contextually grounded methodology of spiritual transformation rooted in the Javanese-Islamic tradition.

The dualistic structure between the seven positive traits and the seven negative traits outlined by Yasadipura I in *Serat Nitiprana* reflects an ethical design rooted in Sufism that is not merely normative but instead serves as a directed and systematic map of spiritual *sulūk* (journey). This dualism is not a simplistic moral dichotomy; rather, it represents the inner dynamic between light (*fiṭrah ilāhiyyah*, the divine nature) and darkness (*naḥs al-ammārah*, the lower self)—a struggle that lies at the heart of the Sufi path. Al-Qushayri's (2007) theory of *maqāmāt* explains that the journey of a *sālik* (spiritual traveler) toward God must traverse successive spiritual stations, such as repentance (*tawbah*), patience (*ṣabr*), vigilance (*murāqabah*), and contentment (*riḍā*). Each *maqām* demands the purification of the soul from negative traits and the cultivation of virtuous qualities as part of spiritual maturation.

Furthermore, the framework of *tazkiyat al-naḥs*, as articulated by Al-Ghazali (2005), emphasizes that spiritual education must involve the identification, control, and transformation of destructive inner impulses. Thus, the narrative structure that presents negative traits is not intended for judgment but rather functions as a mirror and a tool for *muhāsabah* (self-reflection), activating an inner awareness essential to ethical transformation.

Within the sociocultural context of Yasadipura's time—an era marked by the transition from palace-centered *Kejawen* (Javanese syncretism) to colonial influence and Islamization—there emerged a disorientation of values and an identity crisis within Javanese Islam. This demanded a cultural response capable of integrating Islamic teachings into the local worldview in an organic and communicative manner. Through its subtle and symbolic dualistic approach, *Serat Nitiprana* serves as a relevant medium of Sufi education, offering both a practical path toward the realization of the *insān kāmil* (the perfected human) and a means of safeguarding ethical continuity within a society undergoing profound transformation.

In addition to drawing on classical Sufi frameworks such as *maqāmāt* and *tazkiyat al-nafs*, the dualistic construction of the ethical system in *Serat Nitiprana* can also be explained through the lens of Islamic Javanese *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) pedagogy, as outlined by Dhofier (1980) and Woodward (2011). According to Dhofier (1980), traditional *pesantren* are not merely religious educational institutions but also serve as spaces for character formation through the internalization of Sufi values practiced in daily life. These values are instilled through distinctive pedagogical methods: storytelling, symbolism, spiritual exercises (*laku*), and oral counsel from the *kiai* (Islamic teachers). This pedagogical structure closely aligns with the way *Serat Nitiprana* conveys its moral and spiritual teachings. Similar to the pedagogical patterns in *pesantren*, which emphasize the habituation of the soul through narrative and symbolism, Yasadipura I employs *tembang suluk* (mystical verse) as a medium for value internalization, where each stanza functions like the *kiai*'s advice—awakening moral awareness, fostering spiritual discipline, and refining ethical conduct.

The *tembang* in *Serat Nitiprana* also embodies a dialogical pattern commonly found in classical *akhlaq* (ethical) texts in the *pesantren* tradition, including the juxtaposition of virtues and vices, the identification of inner enemies (*nafsu*), and exhortations to maintain constant awareness of death and the afterlife. Thus, *Serat Nitiprana* not only presents Sufi values but also enacts the pedagogical methods of the *pesantren* in literary and symbolic form. It serves as a “kitab suluk” in literary guise, designed as an instrument of self-transformation, in the same way that the *pesantren* functions to shape *santri* (students) into individuals of refined character and deep spirituality.

Meanwhile, Woodward (2011) highlights that within the Javanese Islamic tradition, the transmission of Sufi teachings often occurs through aesthetic and symbolic strategies embedded within local cultural forms, such as *tembang macapat*, *wayang* (shadow puppetry), and mystical storytelling (*suluk*). This model allows spiritual values to enter the collective consciousness subtly and gently, without triggering resistance to religious teachings perceived as foreign to local tradition. Consequently, the dualism between virtues and vices in *Serat Nitiprana* operates not merely as a moral categorization but as a cognitive and affective structure that guides the *suluk* process in a communicative and culturally embedded way. Through the fusion of classical Sufism and Javanese wisdom, Yasadipura I constructs a

pedagogical, reflective, and transformative map of the self—a medium for character development and the reinforcement of Javanese Islamic identity amidst the value disorientation brought about by social change during the early colonial period.

The findings of this study reveal that *Serat Nitiprana* offers a distinctive approach to cultural Islamization, setting it apart from previous studies that have primarily examined the integration of Islam and Javanese culture through social practices such as *slametan* (communal feast rituals), folk arts, or community rites (Asrawijaya, 2022b; Rumbay et al., 2024; Wicaksono, 2019). While earlier expressions of Islamization tended to emphasize collective dimensions through ceremonial actions or visual performances, Yasadipura I's text adopts a symbolic approach through literary expression, particularly via *tembang suluk* (mystical Javanese verse). This strategy suggests that the transmission of Islamic values can also occur in reflective and literary forms, offering the power to shape ethical consciousness on a more personal and internalized level.

Within the context of Sufism and Sufi literature, *Serat Nitiprana* also displays patterns that distinguish it from Middle Eastern or Central Asian poetic traditions, such as those reflected in the works of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi or Yunus Emre (Bardakçı, 2021; Karimi, 2024). Whereas these classical poems often employ Arabic-Persian meters and traditional religious language, Yasadipura integrates Sufi teachings into the local *tembang macapat* poetic form, utilizing Javanese-Islamic idioms such as *sangkan paraning dumadi* (the origin and ultimate return of existence), *sedulur papat lima pancer* (the four spiritual siblings and the center), and the narrative of *suluk* as a spiritual journey. This demonstrates that Sufism in the Javanese context is not merely adopted but creatively reinterpreted within communicative and deeply rooted cultural formats.

Furthermore, *Serat Nitiprana* does not merely articulate moral values; it constructs a structured Sufi ethical system through the opposition between seven virtues and seven vices. This framework offers a form of character development that is reflective and individualized, complementing the collective approaches frequently highlighted in earlier studies (Nasir, 2019; Rubaidi et al., 2023; S. Supriyanto, 2023). By presenting the text's value structure as a map of spiritual wayfaring (*suluk*), this research contributes

new insights to the study of Nusantara Sufism, particularly by systematically mapping a localized ethical framework that has thus far remained largely unexplored.

The novelty of this study lies in its systematic mapping of the seven virtues and seven vices in *Serat Nitiprana* as the foundation of a comprehensive local Sufi ethical framework. Unlike previous research, which has typically focused on historical, philological, or general moral dimensions, this study interprets Yasadipura I's text as a *suluk* roadmap—a thematically and integrally arranged spiritual journey structured through moral opposition. The use of the *tembang macapat* poetic form serves not only as an aesthetic medium but also as a pedagogical device within the Javanese-Islamic tradition, internalizing Sufi values through the language of local culture. To the best of current literature, no prior studies have examined *Serat Nitiprana* through a comprehensive Sufi lens or treated it as a representation of a localized spiritual-ethical system. Thus, this research offers a new contribution to the field of Nusantara Sufism by proposing an alternative perspective: that classical literary texts can be read as instruments of character formation and spiritual awareness within the framework of Javanese-Islamic culture.

The interpretation of this study's findings reveals that *Serat Nitiprana* cannot be understood merely as an ethical text that conveys moral teachings in a normative sense. More than that, this work serves as a spiritual manual that guides readers in shaping the self (*ke-diri-an*) within the framework of Javanese-Islamic Sufism. Through its structured *tembang suluk* and distinctive symbolism—such as *sangkan paraning dumadi* (the metaphysical origin and return of existence), *budi ala ginoncang eblis* (the heart shaken by satanic temptation), and *sedulur papat lima pancer* (the mystical Javanese conception of the self)—the text constructs a complex yet coherent spiritual narrative that outlines the internal stages of the human journey toward becoming *insān kāmil* (the perfected human).

Serat Nitiprana simultaneously fulfills three essential functions. First, its educational function serves as a moral teaching medium embedded in *tembang macapat*—an oral-aesthetic form that facilitates the internalization of values within society. Second, its reflective function positions the text as a tool for self-interpretation, inviting readers to recognize both the noble and

darker potentials within themselves and to engage in *muhasabah* (self-examination) as a form of *jihad al-nafs* (the inner struggle against the ego). Third, its ideological function emerges as a cultural response to the disintegration of values caused by colonialism and the encroachment of modernity that began to permeate Javanese society during Yasadipura I's time. In this context, *Serat Nitiprana* operates as a symbolic defense mechanism, not only safeguarding the community's spiritual integrity but also offering an alternative path for constructing a holistic, contextual, and locally rooted Javanese-Islamic identity grounded in spiritual tradition.

Reflections on the findings of this study indicate that *Serat Nitiprana* holds several strategic functions within the context of contemporary Javanese society. First, this work serves to reinforce Sufi ethical values amidst the growing tide of pragmatism and moral disorientation. Teachings on patience (*ṣabr*), humility (*tawāḍu'*), and acceptance (*riḍā'*) presented in poetic *tembang* form not only revive spiritual values but also remain relevant for shaping ethical consciousness in modern society. Second, the text offers an alternative model of moral development rooted in local tradition, particularly through an educational approach based on *tembang suluk*, which is capable of reaching the emotional and reflective dimensions of its audience—something rarely achieved in formal moral education models that tend to be purely instructive and cognitive.

Nevertheless, there are potential dysfunctions that warrant careful attention. One such potential limitation of *Serat Nitiprana* as a Sufi ethical text in today's context lies in the challenges of language and accessibility for younger generations. Several studies have shown that classical Javanese literature is often perceived as difficult to comprehend by novice readers due to its archaic language and complex narrative structures (Rosa et al., 2023). This complexity is further exacerbated by the preferences of today's urban youth, who are more drawn to popular media such as films, digital music, and fast-paced internet-based communication, causing them to distance themselves from traditional literary forms (Gjelstad, 2015). The influence of modernization and globalization has also transformed how Javanese literature is produced and consumed, even as cultural values persist within literary conventions (Khairina & Lestari, 2020). This condition creates the risk that the Sufi teachings of *Serat Nitiprana* may no longer be read, transmitted, or internalized effectively unless they are adapted through

innovative educational approaches. Initiatives such as the integration of multimodal literacy (Insani & Triyono, 2024) and the use of culturally grounded learning media, including traditional games (Supeni & Hakim, 2019), demonstrate potential pathways to bridge this gap and introduce classical ethical values in formats that are accessible, relevant, and communicative for contemporary audiences.

The second potential dysfunction in utilizing *Serat Nitiprana* as a Sufi ethical text lies in the risk of textual interpretation carried out without adequate spiritual guidance. In the Sufi tradition, the reading of mystical texts such as *Serat Nitiprana* is part of the *suluk*—a spiritual journey that ideally requires the guidance of a *mursyid* or spiritual mentor. Wirianto et al. (2023) emphasize that in the context of *tarekat* (Sufi orders), the authority of a spiritual teacher is essential, as it ensures that disciples are guided intensively toward becoming *insān kāmil* (the perfected human) without transgressing the boundaries of *sharīʿah*. When Sufi texts are read individually and literally, without the framework of *adab* (ethical conduct) or *talqin* (spiritual instruction), there is a significant risk that their symbolic meanings and inner dimensions will be misunderstood or reduced to mere moralistic advice. Shayakhmetova (2022) argues that the interpretation of poetry and music in Sufism cannot be separated from collective spiritual experiences, such as the practices of *samāʿ* and *dhikr*, which enable deep embodiment of the ethical and divine values embedded in the text. Without these lived experiences, the reading of texts like *Serat Nitiprana* may lose the affective and spiritual context that forms the heart of their Sufi message. Therefore, it is necessary to revitalize contextual Sufi hermeneutics—either through community-based spiritual education or by integrating guided spiritual mentorship into the teaching of classical Islamic-Javanese texts.

The implications of this study affirm that *Serat Nitiprana* is not merely a literary heritage text, but a source of Sufi values that remains highly relevant for strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations of contemporary Javanese Muslim society. In the educational context, this work deserves to be integrated into Islamic curricula grounded in local culture, whether in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), *madrasah*, or general schools that promote character education. The values embedded in the *tembang suluk*—such as patience (*ṣabr*), humility (*tawāḍuʿ*), and awareness of life's impermanence—offer an alternative model for moral formation that is both

contextual and reflective. Moreover, the challenge of accessibility to this classical text demands the development of innovative and communicative learning media, such as interpretive animations, audiovisual renditions of *tembang*, or digital modules based on poetic verses. In the long term, further research is needed to explore the pedagogical function of *tembang macapat* in transmitting Sufi teachings, particularly within *pesantren* settings or indigenous educational institutions. Through these efforts, *Serat Nitiprana* holds the potential to be revitalized as both an educational and spiritual instrument—serving not only to preserve cultural memory but also to shape the *insān kāmil* (the perfected human) in the present day.

Conclusion

This study concludes that *Serat Nitiprana*, authored by Kiai Raden Ngabehi Yasadipura I, is not merely a classical Javanese literary work but constitutes a structured, reflective, and transformative system of Sufi ethics within the cultural context of Islam-Jawa (Javanese Islam). The text presents three central pillars that form the key findings of this research. First, the text formulates seven positive traits (*tujuh sifat baik*) as the constructive moral foundation leading toward the purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*)—a central concept in Sufism that refers to the spiritual cleansing and refinement of the self. These traits include patience (*ṣabr*), humility (*tawāḍuʿ*), compassion (*rahmah*), courteousness (*adab*), self-reflection, consistent recitation of forgiveness (*istikfar*), and acceptance (*riḍāʾ*) of divine destiny. Second, the text presents seven negative traits (*tujuh sifat buruk*) as ethical opposites and spiritual obstacles that embody the struggle against the lower self or base desires (*nafs al-ammārah*). These traits—such as arrogance, anger, meddlesomeness, impatience, and rejection of social decorum—are framed as manifestations of the “whisperings of the devil” (*budi ala ginoncang eblis*), symbolizing inner temptations that threaten the integrity of the soul. This ethical opposition reflects the central Sufi concept of *jihad al-nafs*, the internal spiritual struggle to overcome one’s ego and impulses. Third, the text constructs the concept of the self (*ke-diri-an*) as a progressive spiritual journey toward *insān kāmil*—the perfected human being—conveyed through the use of local Javanese cultural symbols such as *sangkan paraning dumadi* (the metaphysical origin and ultimate return of all beings), *sedulur papat lima pancer* (a traditional Javanese cosmological concept involving four spiritual siblings and a central self), and the poetic form of

tembang suluk (traditional Javanese mystical songs). Through these elements, *Serat Nitiprana* offers a spiritual roadmap that not only resonated within its historical setting but remains relevant as a source of ethical guidance in contemporary society grappling with moral and spiritual disorientation.

The principal contribution of this study lies in its systematic mapping of the seven virtues and seven vices within *Serat Nitiprana* as a coherent ethical framework rooted in local Sufism. This research demonstrates that Javanese classical literature can be read not only as cultural heritage but also as pedagogical and spiritual texts that convey methods of self-transformation through accessible, culturally embedded forms. By framing *tembang suluk*—a genre of spiritual poetry sung in macapat meter—as an educational medium, this study enriches the discourse on cultural Islamization (*Islamisasi kultural*) and ethical pedagogy within Javanese Islam. Furthermore, the methodological approach opens new possibilities for interpreting traditional literary texts as meaningful sources for character education and the cultivation of spiritual consciousness within a local cultural framework.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges certain limitations. Its primary focus on thematic and symbolic analysis leaves unexplored the historical redaction of the text, the manuscript's production context, and potential textual variants of *Serat Nitiprana* from other versions. Additionally, the study does not address how the text is currently received or practiced within *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) or other reading communities. Future research may thus benefit from ethnographic studies of *tembang suluk* recitation traditions, explorations of how the text's teachings influence spiritual practices today, or comparative analysis with other local Sufi texts to deepen the understanding of Indonesia's ethical systems as rooted, holistic, and culturally meaningful expressions of Islam.

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