A Javanese Folk Theology of Sexual Violence

By

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Abstract

Pagan religious rites that include sexual violence should be addressed with a Christian theology of sexual violence that considers spiritual reality and a Christian narrative of sexuality. This thesis proposes a theology of sexual violence based on Christian encounters with Javanese folk religion that assume experiences with the spirit world. It systematises the theological thoughts on human being of two Javanese Christian leaders: Paulus Tosari and Daud Tony; extrapolates the systematised thoughts into the field of sexual violence; and compares it with a theology of sexuality from the Western Church, *Theology of the Body*. The thesis argues that sexual violence begins with the perversion of the sexual narrative in the human lower soul by the spirit world and consequently affects the body: sexuality is then perceived as a means to salvation rather than an analogy to salvation. Its remedy is the divine will revealed in the Word – the true narrative – in the human heart.
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INTRODUCTION

The Sexual Rites in Javanese Folk Religion

Sexual practices that link violence and religious rites outside the Western world perplex and challenge Christianity to address the issue in a manner that is theologically and pastorally comprehensive. For instance, in 2014, a shaman in West Java, Indonesia, sodomised 31 young boys as a prerequisite to obtaining magical power from the spirits.¹ Similarly, in 1983, virgin rapes were perpetrated in Kediri, East Java, as a prerequisite to gaining magical power.² These violent rites are parts of Javanese folk religion (JFR, hereafter) beliefs that narrate sexuality in relation to the spirits’ blessings. Other JFR sexual rites may not include any physically violent act, but are considered as “unnatural” according to a Christian standard. Among them are marriage with a spirit³ and sexual abstinence in order to transmute the sperm into spiritual energy.⁴ Sexual violence and distortion in the context of religious narratives demand that Christianity address the issue with a sound theology of sexuality that is distinct from that of other belief systems. Furthermore, theology should be sensitive to the spirit world in folk religion and thus should assume a non-dualistic worldview.

A Need for a Robust Theology of Sexual Violence based on a Theology of Sexuality

In order to address the problem above, we need to construct a theology of sexual violence that is based on the Christian narrative of sexuality and its relation to a person’s well-being. Modern theologians already recognise the complex and intertwined elements in the consequences of sexual violence, including negative self-identities, disappointment and mistrust towards Christianity and God, and lack of love and trust towards others. Sexual violence shatters previous life perspectives and brings either growth or destruction at the end of the crisis.

Pastoral reflections suggest multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary approaches that include forgiveness and reconciliation, Christian community support, moral accountability for the perpetrators, and even comprehensive medical and clinical assistance. These proposals, comprehensive though they may be, seldom mention a sound theology of sexuality as a foundation to respond to sexual violence.

Most theologians approach sexual violence with doctrines that engage matters other than sexuality. Andrew Schmutzer opts to theologise sexual violence from a creational approach, expounding sexual violence as a wounding of God’s image in relationship and a fracturing of the unity of personhood. But he says little about God’s image in human sexuality. Jennifer Beste uses Karl Rahner’s theology of grace to suggest a model of socially-mediated divine grace for sexual abuse survivors. Marie Fortune discusses sexual violence from social-justice and

9 Beste, 2005, 92.
moral angles, promoting the accountability of the perpetrators of violence.\textsuperscript{10} Beth Crisp promotes multiple approaches to mending the spirituality of sexual abuse survivors: identification with Christ’s cross and resurrection, silence, forgiveness, and the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{11} These proposals are pastorally helpful, but they lack a discussion of the nature of human sexuality as the core of the issue and thus they fail to recognise the impact of sexual violence on the totality of the person. The proposals in questions could be applied to any other form of human violence, such as war, ethnic group conflicts, or gender discrimination, without any distinctive theological claim related to sexuality.

A theology of sexual violence that derives its source from the social sciences and humanities may face challenges in maintaining its compatibility with the Christian narrative. For example, feminist theologians apply feminist ideology to challenge male-dominant theologies that ignore women’s issues such as sexual violence. Phyllis Trible in her \textit{Texts of Terror} criticises modern male chauvinism for ignoring the suffering of women in ancient Israel and subordinating their stories to the narrative of resurrection.\textsuperscript{12} Renita Wheems argues that the Old Testament prophets devised metaphors – including marriage as a metaphor for God’s jealousy toward His infidel people – from popular norms and attitudes, which can be used to justify violence and punishment against women.\textsuperscript{13} The main question about this approach is whether we can impose modern ideology on ancient narrative without considering the authorial intention of the biblical text.

\textsuperscript{11} Crisp, 2007, 303-311.
\textsuperscript{13} Renita Wheems, \textit{Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets} (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1995), 19.
Another perspective from which to construct a theology of sexual violence is to see sexuality and marriage as a metaphor. Scripture explains sexuality in the context of marriage, and marriage serves as a metaphor for God’s covenantal love to His people (Hosea 1:2, Ephesians 5:22-23). Wheems further suggests that the marriage metaphor serves as a controlling metaphor which brings the language and activity of its audience to a conscious level in order to grasp a coherent idea of a biblical God. The controlling metaphor functions as a compass to navigate life’s journey, and as a bridge from truth to ethics. The collapse of the controlling metaphor means a disconnection of divine promise and human experience. In his discussion of the metaphor of “Father” for God, Schmutzer proposes that a healing journey for a sexual abuse survivor should begin with finding a new supply of metaphors to reconnect his or her experience with God. However, the metaphorical approach alone is inadequate for theologising sexual violence because it relies overmuch on the cognitive domain and diminishes discussion of the emotional and spiritual dimensions of sexual violence. Furthermore, the controlling metaphor theory fails to account for the equally devastating impacts of sexual violence on non-Christian survivors or survivors of a very young age, who may not have a pre-understanding of marriage as a controlling metaphor.

Rita Nakashima Brock accuses Western Christianity of having patriarchal characteristics that have emerged from a dualism of the corporeal and spiritual. She points to modern dualism as the assumption that underlies patriarchy and condones violence to the sexual body. She then proposes eros theology to counter dualism by asserting that erotic power is the primal interrelatedness that connects our hearts with our whole being. Brock’s eros theology is similar to Sigmund Freud’s theory of eros and thanatos, which assumes that our whole being is driven

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14 Wheems, 26.
15 Schmutzer, 2008, 804-5.
by this primal instinct. However, Freud’s speculative theory of personhood is not framed within the narrative of creation-consummation and hence lacks of the sense of telos (final goal) in eros. In my opinion, we have to consider first the nature and purpose of sexuality within God’s redemptive history as revealed in Scripture if we are to construct a non-dualistic theology of sexual violence.

The fact that sexual violence continues to be an unresolved issue in the Church indicates an ignorance of sexuality’s strategic role in enacting the loving relationship of Christ and His Church, and in fulfilling God’s promise, blessings, and command. There must be other explanations concerning the universality of sexuality and sexual behaviours beyond the metaphorical function of marriage and sexuality. When the sexual body is marred, this experience has a devastating impact on one’s life multi-dimensionally, regardless of religion and faith. I presume that it has to do with sexuality’s role as general revelation given in creation, unfolded in redemption, and fulfilled in the consummation of creation. This role, affirmed in God’s eternal word, is to bear God’s image of communion with His Church and to fulfil God’s promise, blessing, and command. Earthly sexuality corresponds dynamically with spiritual reality, and thus its perversion may be an attempt to erase the Word embodied in human lives – something the world calls “unnatural.”

Potential Answer 1: John Paul II’s Theology of the Body

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18 Cessario, 2004, 49.
In his *Theology of the Body* (TB, hereafter), John Paul II asserts the unity of the sexual body and human personhood in the context of God’s salvation story. Delving into biblical accounts of marriage, he proposes that the sexual body manifests an identity and a masculine/feminine personhood.\(^{21}\) Furthermore, the human sexual body functions as a sign, a sacrament of divine mystery (cf. Ephesians 5:22-33) and spirituality beyond the physicality of the body itself. This mystery of life could be experienced and lived out when a man and a woman reciprocally give themselves out of reverence to Christ during the sexual consummation. A true nuptiality that fulfills our lives is the basis for human civilisation and culture.\(^{22}\) Sexual violence is thus a two-fold violence: a violence against God’s story inscribed in the human body and against the person which the body signifies. TB offers a theology of sexuality based on Christian narrative of sexuality. However, to address JFR effectively, we need to consider a theology of the human person that is sensitive to the spirit world.

**Potential Answer 2: Folk Christianity from the Global South**

Pentecostalism and indigenous theologies from outside the Western world that engage with the spirit world may address the spiritual dimension of JFR’s sexual violence and distortion issues. Their worldview is similar to a biblical worldview that acknowledges spiritual power in the life of the Church.\(^{23}\) These theologies share a simple faith in the literal reading of and practical obedience to the Bible. Specifically, insights regarding non-dualistic personhood and the spirit world offered by Asian churches may complement theologies of sexuality in the Western world and thus foster a more comprehensive theology of sexuality and violence.

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\(^{22}\) West, 25.

Harold Turner suggests that the interaction of Christianity and Western culture with indigenous—mostly animistic—cultures has given birth to new religious movements within the tradition of parent religions, including indigenous Christianity and even some forms of the Charismatic tradition.\(^2\) However, Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe argue that local expressions of Christianity that have emerged from folk religions should be differentiated from the mainstream Charismatic tradition. The new folk religions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries began by fragmenting old belief systems, reclaiming the exotic element of myths, and merging them with the traditions of major religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. On the other hand, charismatic Christianity is a global phenomenon deriving from one authoritative Pentecost story.\(^2\) I tend to agree with the latter theory, which distinguishes the two movements based on orthodoxy regardless of local expressions.

Advancing the study of local expressions of Christianity, Simon Chan coins the term *folk theology* to refer to indigenous Christian theologies that developed from encounters between primal religions and various Christian traditions brought by missionaries.\(^2\) Folk theology remains faithful to Christian orthodoxy and yet it acknowledges the spirit world in its theological reflections. In other words, when we consider the specific context and culture in which the theology of the global south develops, folk theology is a contextual theology with Pentecostal features, such as an emphasis on the divine healing movement and on spiritual battle against the spirit world.


\(^2\) Simon Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014), 31. This study will further use the term *folk theology* when referring to any indigenous Christian theology that arises from an encounter with the spirit world, and *folk religion* for any new pagan religious movement.
The process of folk theologising is often similar to the development of folk religions. Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw and Tite Tienou define folk religion as a stage between science and formal religion in the evolutionary scheme of religious development. A folk religion’s belief system is constructed and centered upon an anthropological perspective wherein human experiences with the spiritual realm spur theological reflections. Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou place folk religion in the middle of religious evolution: between pure philosophical religions that deal with mind and soul, and science that deals with material things. Hiebert underlines the position of folk religion as the excluded middle, as it embraces both physical and spiritual worldviews at the same time. Human embodiment is thus understood in relation to the spirit world in which the physical realm becomes a sign of the corresponding spiritual realm.

We could say that the theological method of both folk theology and Pentecostalism is based on the interplay between the Word, the Spirit, and ecclesial experience. Both perceive historical events as spirit-driven circumstances. Folk theology and Pentecostalism may perceive sexual violence as a spirit-driven event that manifests itself in carnal reality. Within this framework, addressing the spiritual reality should precede social-justice solutions for sexual violence.

**Javanese Folk Theology: a Prospect**

Indigenous Christian responses to JFR, apart from its sexual rites, have the potential to address the problem of sexual violence in a way that is sensitive to the spirit world. Their pastoral

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28 Hiebert et. al, 80.
exhortations to the Javanese Christians contain a tacit theology that needs to be systematised, expanded, and synthesised with Christian theologies from wider traditions, such as John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*, in order to answer the problem of sexual violence and spiritism in JFR rites.

The current Javanese folk theology (JFT, hereafter) responds to the spirit world in general and has touched on the issue of sexuality and violence in particular. For example, Paulus Tosari (1813-1884), a Javanese preacher with a background in Javanese mysticism and Dutch Reformed pietism, composed a theological poem entitled *Rasa sejati* (The True Feeling) to address the syncretic tendencies of his congregation, which participated in JFR sexual rites and sought a way to be in communion with God. In his poem, Tosari explicates a Christian perspective of anthropology and salvation as an antithesis to the JFR understanding of the human being. But Tosari’s response does not specifically address the issue of sexuality. Another example is Daud Tony, a Javanese-Chinese lay preacher from a Pentecostal background who, prior to his conversion to Christianity, was an active shaman and mystic in the twentieth century and mastered Javanese spiritual knowledge and power. His teachings expose the outworking of the spirit world in JFR narratives, including sexual practices and narratives, but he does not make any connection with a Christian theology of sexuality. These theologies, if synthesised in a systematic fashion, could present a theological anthropology that explains the dynamic of the spirit world in a person. Furthermore, if the synthesised theology is enriched with a sound theology of sexuality, it has the potential to address the issue of sexual violence in JFR sexual rites.

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Thesis Statement

The thesis statement in this study follows the theological claims of JFT and of John Paul II. First, JFT acknowledges that spiritual reality takes precedence over physical reality and hence human behaviours, including sexual violence, derive from spiritual causes. Second, as explicated in TB, human sexuality has a unique function as a general revelation that attests to and enacts God’s salvation and grace in human history. Therefore, I will argue that any violence against human sexuality’s integrity is an attempt to wound this attestation and enactment of God’s salvation—particularly concerning the covenantal love of Christ and His Bride—in such a way that it directly affects our personal faith, first at the spiritual level, and then in the physical realm. Specifically, sexual violence is the thwarting of the true function of sexuality, known in Christianity as an analogy of salvation, into a means of salvation in animistic beliefs. I further propose that, based on its engagement with the spirit world, JFT understands sexual violence as the strategy of God’s enemy to disrupt God’s image in human sexual identity, and to destroy God’s creational blessings through human sexuality.

Since JFT discusses the spirit world in sexual rites and its impact on a person, I also propose that we should expand the definition of sexual violence beyond the physical boundary. In the JFT perspective, sexual violence begins with a lie perpetrated by JFR. A person who has not received the Word of God is vulnerable to the spirit world’s intervention through the JFR narrative in the soul. The lie affects her/his sexual behaviours and practices. The embodied Word, then, is the key to harmonising and re-ordering our wounded heart, soul, and body.
Methodology and Procedure

This study is a construction of a JFT of sexual violence as a response to JFR rites, though it could be generalised to other contexts as well. I will construct it based on a JFT of the human person and of the spirit world by Tosari and Tony. The newly constructed JFT of sexual violence will be then compared with John Paul II’s TB to discover the usefulness and the integrity of a JFT of sexual violence in theological discussions of human sexuality.

This research is divided into three steps. First, in chapter one I will survey elements of JFR that inform the theologising process of Javanese Christians. In particular, I will use a spiritual lens to explicate Javanese religion’s history, myths, and ritual practices that serve as backgrounds to our discussion of JFT in chapter two. This chapter will also demonstrate that JFR promotes violence because of the omission of love in its sexual narratives and practices.

The second step of my research is to distill and to systematise a theological anthropology from the folk theologians mentioned above: Paulus Tosari and Daud Tony. The folk theologians in our discussion experienced a spiritual conversion from mystical practices and later undertook teaching offices in the body of Christ. Their theological texts—as commonly found in Asian theologies—emerge from the practical life of the church and mission, and they take non-academic forms: poetry, preaching, songs, and prayers. In this chapter I demonstrate that JFT offers a Word-centered anthropology, a reflection of the Word as the true sense/feeling that governs the human senses, and a map of the spiritual influences within a person’s heart, soul, and body.

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The third step is to construct a folk theology of sexuality and violence based on the theological claims about human personhood and the spiritual realm. The construction will follow the structure of the human person in JFT in order to explain different forms of sexual violence in each element of a person. I will then pose critical evaluations of sexual violence that relate to pastoral issues. I will conclude my construction with a theological description of sexual violence that includes the spiritual realm. Following that, I will then compare the JFT of sexual violence with John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*. I will demonstrate that the discussion of the spirit world in JFT could contribute to modern theology by clarifying the role of God’s Word as the true *rasa* / sense in human sexuality and by further explicating forms of sexual violence in the inner person.

**Implications**

Theologically, this work will broaden current discussion of sexuality and of violence into the spiritual sphere. It will redefine the scope and definition of sexual violence and give direction to pastoral and ethical decisions in the Church: to see sexual violence as a threat to the faith of the Church, and to address sexual violence with an appropriate theological foundation based in divinely created sexuality. In addition, my work will promote a spiritual approach as a primary means of dealing pastorally and constructively with sexuality and violence.

My work will contribute to the development of the study in folk theology in general and Javanese Christianity in particular. Previously Philip Van Akkeren has studied the struggle of the early Javanese Christian community to resist the old sensual cultural practices. He uses approaches from cultural anthropology and history, yet he does not engage with the spirit
world.\textsuperscript{34} My work will be one of the earliest theological explorations of sexuality and violence using a folk theology perspective.

\textsuperscript{34} Van Akkeren, 11-25.
Chapter 1

Javanese Folk Religion

1.1. Introduction

In the Javanese context, sexual violence is often perpetrated as a rite. The purpose of the rite is to possess spiritual knowledge, black magical power or wealth from the spirit world. More than being simply an issue of justice and liberation, sexual violence in the Javanese context is a theological and religious matter that relates to religious myths, the spirit world, and the Javanese understanding of the human being as a person. Moreover, considering the spiritual realm as it is intertwined with the physical body, sexual violence can be considered a spiritual issue beyond the corporeal. Violence, then, is understood in broad terms: it is a destructive force that leads to death in physical, psychological, and spiritual respects. An attempt to provide an appropriate Christian response demands that we first look at the religious myths and sexual rites in the Javanese local religion, namely, Javanese folk religion (JFR).

This chapter is a survey of narratives and rites relating to sexuality in JFR. It begins with a description of the development of JFR to demonstrate that the unmediated spirit intervention has been JFR’s sole criterion in adopting and adapting myths from major religions. Next, I will describe the adapted religious myths, followed by a survey of JFR sexual rites. I will demonstrate that JFR narratives and rites contain the seed of sexual violence, which includes a

35 See “Introduction,” 1.
distorted view of sexuality’s purposes and the omission of the vocabulary of love from the sexual rites.\footnote{Throughout this study, I use small caps when referring to any pagan “god” in order to differentiate it from the Christian “God.”}

\section*{1.2. Javanese Folk Religion}

JFR is a syncretic belief system combining indigenous animism with Buddhism, Tantric Shivaite Hinduism, and Sufism (mystical Islam) among the indigenous Javanese people in the island of Java, Indonesia. Foreign religious workers and traders have visited the island since the fourth century and have introduced their various religious beliefs.\footnote{Sutarman Partonadi, \textit{Sadrach’s Community and Its Contextual Roots: A Nineteenth Century Javanese Expression of Christianity} (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990), 19.} Currently, JFR appears as an \textit{aliran kepercayaan} (a belief system) beside world religions acknowledged by the Indonesian authorities, or as an implicit religious belief within an official major religion, such as folk Islam or folk Hinduism. Due to its hidden nature, there is no exact number representing the followers of JFR among the 100 million Javanese people.

Past studies in various fields prove that JFR has influenced the culture, society and anthropology of the Javanese people. In the field of cultural anthropology, JFR is viewed as a symbolisation of social dynamics,\footnote{Clifford Greetz, \textit{The Religion of Java} (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1960), 29.} as a resistance strategy to preserve cultural identity against changing time and modernity,\footnote{Niels Mulder, \textit{Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java: Cultural Persistence and Change} (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983), 12.} as an evidence of syncretic beliefs,\footnote{Andrew Beatty, \textit{Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).} and as the main thrust of Javanese culture.\footnote{Koentjaraningrat, \textit{Javanese Culture} (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985).} The correlation between the myths of JFR and modern science has been the subject of
studies in literature, linguistics, tourism, media, and geography. JFR is a key element in understanding Javanese music and art, as shown by research in ethnomusicology, traditional dance, and traditional puppet performance. These studies reveal the role of Javanese folk religious myths in shaping the behaviours of the individuals and society, and thus they underscore the importance of providing a Christian response to JFR insofar as it will address cultural and social issues as well.

Christian researchers engage JFR in keeping with the agenda of Christian missions. Scholars’ research interests include the following mapping theological anthropology within Javanese mysticism (a strain of JFR); the parallelism between Javanese ethical behaviours and Christian traditions; the history of indigenous Javanese churches in East Java; JFR practices related to the cultivation of the land as Christianity’s main challenge; the study of Islam and Christianity in the cultural context of North Central Java (actually a comparison between JFR within folk Islam and Christianity); and spiritual power and the Church’s growth in Java. These studies

44 Suwardi, “Kramanisasi seks dalam bahasa Jawa melalui ungkapan tradisional” [“The Euphemism of Sex Speech in the Javanese Language through Traditional Idioms”], *Humaniora* 21, 3 (October 2009), 274-284.
delineate the narratives and beliefs of the JFR in relation to Christianity. However, the study of indigenous Christian theological texts in answering JFR’s pervasive sexual narratives and rites has not been executed and thus it deserves further exploration.

This study explicates the interconnectivity of religious narratives of sexuality and the spirit world. Thus, it uses a spiritual reading of the text that assumes a spiritual worldview behind the myths. In the context of new religious movements, a worldview is defined as a consistent and logical system of thought, while myths are characterised by little coherence and yet produce few cognitive dissonances in our consciousness.\textsuperscript{56} Considering that the experience of the spirit world is a major component of spirituality in JFR, I propose that a spiritual worldview is the criterion for understanding JFR’s selection process of myths and sexual rites.

Marguerite Kraft categorises worldviews based on the way each interprets history. The spiritual lens provides belief in spiritual causes behind any events, such as spiritual intervention in war and natural disasters. An alternative worldview is the physical lens or naturalism, which perceives physical entities such as human beings or natural circumstances behind the historical events.\textsuperscript{57} These worldviews precede and enlighten the cultural-linguistic system by which human religious experience is shaped and constituted.\textsuperscript{58} The worldview of JFR is animistic and assumes that the primal experiences of human beings are bound up with spiritual beings. The prevalence of primal experience with the spirit world, explained as the unmediated intervention of a spirit in material reality without necessarily explaining the “how,” is known as \textit{sacramental}

\textsuperscript{56} Hexam and Proewe, 81.
We will examine the selection process of religious myths in the historical development of JFR in the next section.

1.3. The Historical Development of Javanese Folk Religion

The development of JFR can be called a process of Javanisation, insofar as narratives of foreign religions are assimilated into Javanese animism. Pre-Hindu local animism among the Javanese people dates to earlier than the fourth century. Some of its features today are local ancestor worship, belief in spirits, worship of sacred objects such as the traditional dagger, and a practice of magic that assumes the presence of spiritual power in human body parts such as the head, hair, and genitalia.

The first articulation of interdependence between human beings and the spirit world was adapted from Hinduism, and was brought by traders from South India and Ceylon in the fourth century. The Brahmans from India taught that the universe was circular, with a mountain of gods at the centre, and that it was surrounded by water, with four sacred guardians at four cardinal points. The human world, which was represented by the kingdom and the king as a reincarnated god, should reflect this cosmic order by reduplicating the structure of the universe in the kingdom.

The cosmology and deities of JFR began to develop along with the rise of religious kingdoms in the eighth to eleventh centuries during the reign of the Majapahit kingdom in the East Java.

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59 Sacramental reality should be differentiated from the definition of “sacramentalism” in the traditional Church. The Church sacraments are the efficacious realisation of God’s salvation plan. The definition of “sacramental reality” is taken from Simon Chan, “The Use of Prosper’s Rule in the Development of Pentecostal Ecclesiology,” International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church 11, 4 (November 2011), 305.
60 Yoder, 1.
61 Partonadi, 18-19.
62 Koentjaraningrat, 35-38.
kingdom adopted syncretic worship practices combining Shiwaite Hinduism and Tantric Buddhism. The human being as the microcosm is at the centre of the universe as the macrocosm. The dual cosmology teaches that human beings are the embodiment and masters of the universe. Both religions believe that creatures emanated from an impersonal god and thus have the same nature as the divine. According to the Shiwaite tradition, the human being is formed out of four elements: earth, water, heat, and wind (Mahayana Buddhism added ether as the fifth element.). At the core of the human being is the divine, enthroned in the heart of man.

Starting in the thirteenth century, foreign traders from West Asia introduced mystical strains of Islam, including Sufism. They gained popularity because of their similarities with mystical elements in local animism, which predated Hinduism and Buddhism. Mystical Islam reiterated the mystical longing for communion with god and introduced the concept of the perfect man as a mediator. The mediator makes communion between the impersonal god and creation possible by his ascending and descending movement from and to the divine, in a manner similar to divine emanation in Hinduism and Buddhism. In the person of the perfect man, god and human become one. In the fourteenth century, Malay traders from Malacca introduced Sunni Islam to the Javanese people in the port-town and coastal areas, and eventually they penetrated to the village and inland areas. Sunni Islam holds fast to the rules in the holy Quran and is considered a non-mystic version of Islam. The royal court of the Mataram kingdom syncretised the Sunni

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63 Koentjaraningrat, 42.
64 Hadiwiyono, 34.
65 Ibid., 35-43.
66 Koentjaraningrat, 47-48.
67 Hadiwiyono, 81, 83, 93.
school of Islam with local mysticism and formed another strain of JFR in order to resist Sunni Islam, which seemed to threaten Javanese culture.68

In the nineteenth century, Javanese mysticism took shape. Its literature placed a strong anthropological emphasis on the liberated human being, perhaps as a reaction to oppressive colonialism. Literature with the theme of human sexuality flourished. Chentini, for instance, describes a spiritual quest to discover the Islamic god through paths similar to Hindu spirituality, with one of those spiritual paths involving sexuality.69 In the twentieth century, several schools of mysticism known as kebatinan emerged. Mysticism is seen as a means of building a noble Indonesian self-identity, where self-transcendence becomes the desired answer for worldly struggles.70 Self-discipline in mysticism often includes practices relating to the reality of the spirit world in animism and folk mysticism.71

Currently, JFR is classified as an Islamic sect that syncretises Islam with animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other mystical elements.72 In view of the fact that Islam is the major religion, we could agree with Koentjaraningrat’s argument that Islam is a frame of reference for JFR, now filled with mystical elements from Hinduism and Buddhism.73 Partonadi asserts that Javanese folk Islam is an “amalgamation of a variety of beliefs, incorporating several indigenous Javanese beliefs, mainly those concerned with the spirit world, including ancestral spirits.”74 The acknowledgement of the reality of the spiritual world lies behind any strain of JFR. Folk

68 Koentjaraningrat, 322-323.
70 Hadiwiyono, 3-4.
72 Greetz, 5.
73 Koentjaraningrat, 318.
74 Partonadi, 23.
Islam adopts the Hindu and Buddhist characterisation of deities with varying roles, and it also adopts their incarnation concept. Together with Javanese mysticism, folk Islam has developed into various religious movements with different doctrinal emphases: morality and ethics, the return of a saviour, the renaissance of Javanese culture, and occultism. 

Within the context of an Islamic sect, varieties of JFR are categorised based on further criteria. For instance, Clifford Geertz classifies varieties of Islamic JFR by the correlation between religious type and their social structures. First, the folk religion that syncretises Islam and Hinduism with local animism occurs in the villages (known as abangan). Second, a more orthodox Islam, which preserves the pure version of Islamic teaching and observes the basic rituals, occurs within the market society (santri). Third, a mystical Islam syncretised with Buddhism and Hindu philosophy and practice occurs among hereditary aristocrats (priyayi). Koentjaraningrat categorises JFR based on the syncretic processes of local animism with either Hinduism or Islam. The former have resulted in a Javanese mystic religion that keeps Islam as a frame of reference and inclines to mystical Hinduism and Buddhism. The latter has given birth to santri (purer) Islam and is imbued with mystical and animist elements too. In reality, Islamic JFR strains are difficult to categorise because the Javanese caste system allows the exchange of myths and ideas between different castes. As Greetz himself asserts, the royal lifestyle is a model for peasants and commoners. For the peasants, imitating the court’s lifestyle may include imitating and embracing their expressions of religious belief, too. The social caste-system operating among the hereditary-aristocrats and the peasants has become increasingly relaxed after the Javanese kingdoms joined the republic of Indonesia.

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75 Partonadi, 23.
76 Koenjaraningrat, 560-561.
77 Geertz, 5.
78 Koentjaraningrat, 316.
79 Greetz, 6.
Other strains of JFR have developed into various mystical belief movements (*aliran kepercayaan*) outside Islam and are recognised as a series of indigenous religions. Among them are the Sumarah school, the Sapta Dharma school, Bratakawwa, Pangestu, and Paryana.80 These movements generally believe in a monotheistic impersonal divine being as the highest deity, but they differ in cosmology and views of personhood.

1.4. Javanese Folk Religious Myths

As a local religious movement, JFR does not present a single orthodox form for its religious narratives. The myths vary from one place to another due to different influences on each community. JFR followers may read at least one of the following texts or groups of texts as their religious reference: Al-Quran (Islam’s holy book), Javanese literature on morality, Javanese mystical literature, Javanese magical literature, Greek philosophy, European enlightenment philosophy, and modern European philosophy.81 The reading preference is subject to the individual’s spiritual quest. In the patchy JFR myths, the monotheistic god and the spirit world in Islam exist side by side with deities known in Hinduism; and any kind of spiritual being has the capacity to bless humanity.

*The highest deity.* At the outset, Javanese religious narratives regarding the deity are similar to the teaching of Islam. The narratives acknowledge one almighty god as the creator and ultimate cause of life, the world, creation, and nature, with some variations regarding god’s characterisation. JFR address god based on his attributes. Besides using *Allah* (pronounced as *Alloh*) as the proper name for the Islamic god, they use terms like *Hyang Murbeing Dumadi* (the

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80 Hadiwijono, 152ff.
81 Koentjaraningrat, 325.
first one who exists), *Hyang Widhi* (supreme ruler, orderer of universe or creator), *Bhatara Gung* (the lord most high), *Hyang Manin* (most knowledgeable), *Hyang Wisesa* (the almighty who is distinguished from others by its special qualities), *Gusti Kang Akarya Jagad Saisine* (the lord, creator of the universe and all in it), *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* (the origin of the destination of being). The word *Allah* occurs in Islamic JFR, the word *Hyang* in Hindu-Buddhist JFR, and the use of *Gusti* or *Sangkan* for god occurs in Javanese mysticism.

**Lower deities.** Besides the supreme, absolute, impersonal god, JFR recognises Hindu gods and lower deities. Their stories serve as moral examples for daily problems. Three deities have significant roles in Javanese rituals: Kala, Sadono and Sri (the latter pair being the god-goddess of fertility). Kala is “god of time, decay, destruction, and death,” and needs to be appeased by ngruwat rituals in order to spare the people from death and misfortune. Sri, the goddess of fertility, and her consort Sadono, god of prosperity, are venerated and invoked during wedding rites and at the beginning and end of the rice-cultivating season to ensure an abundant harvest and prosperous marriage. Sri was born of an egg in the ocean and was adopted by the Javanese god Batara Guru. When her adoptive father imposed on her sexually, she died and her body was buried in the field. Forty days after the burial, out of her body grew rice plants and coconut trees. Thus she became the goddess of rice.

**Cosmogony.** The Hindu-inclined strain of JFR believes in creation by emanation, in which god’s presence permeates and imbues every creature and the universe, including the human being and the spirit world. In one myth about seeing the universe in a god’s ear, god is depicted as so tiny

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82 Yumarma, 119.  
83 Koentjaraningrat, 336.  
84 Van Akkeren, 18-20.  
that he is able to enter a human’s heart, and yet so wide that he contains the whole universe.\textsuperscript{86}

Consequently, evil and good come from the same source. Islamic JFR, although emerging from a good-evil dualism, was influenced by the older JFR strains and thus it asserts a certain moral relativism.

\textit{Cosmology.} The universe is considered an organic whole in which nature and human beings are interrelated in a concentric manner. The human being as the microcosm is at the centre of the universe (macrocosm). The cultivated spiritual element of the human being, which is from god, can oversee the material elements of the human being, which are from the earth. Consequently, s/he is able to control the universe, because s/he shares similar formative elements with the earth.\textsuperscript{87}

\textit{Creation.} JFR combines Islamic belief in Adam with the Hindu creation myth. Human beings are portrayed as created by intermediary figures (angels), or as second-trial creational products of an imperfect god. In Hindu-Buddhist-inclined JFR myths, after the god Brahma created the world, he intended to create human beings but he failed several times. He then asked the god Vishnu to descend from heaven and create the humans. Vishnu created Adam from the clay and filled the clay with energy to form the soul and the spirit. But in the first trial he forgot to put breath into the creature, and the ensouled-spirited clay became a malevolent spirit. Vishnu attempted a second time and was successful. Realising the need for a human population, he created Eve out of a flower.\textsuperscript{88} In the Islamic-inclined JFR narrative, god first created the elements of the earth—the light, water, waves, froth that became seven worlds, and vapour that turned into seven skies—and above them emerged divine elements. Out of the fire in the skies he created the angels and the cherubs. He then created the \textit{jins} (genies) and other beings that

\textsuperscript{86} Koentjaraningrat, 327-328.
\textsuperscript{87} Yumarma, 54.
\textsuperscript{88} Koentjaraningrat, 377.
later turned into malevolent spirits. Because of this failure, god then created human beings by commanding several cherubs to collect the ingredients of men from the earth. A cherub named Ijajil succeeded, and it blew the soul, spirit, mind, and sexual impulse into the human person.

A magico-mystical version of creation is found in Suluk Gatolotjo and Suluk Darmogandul, which narrate god’s creative activity as god descends from abstract into concrete existence, including flesh and bones. The process of god’s descent is symbolised by the descent of the true spirit into god’s sanctuaries, which god created in the human being, symbolised by the head, the heart, and the genitals of the human body. The divine substance travels from the genital to the womb and creates a new life. Mystical communion with god goes the same route in the reverse order. 89

Messiah. JFR acknowledges messianic figures. One of them is adopted from the Hallaj mystic movement in Islam founded by Abdul Al Karim Al Jili. Al Jili taught that Adam is the Perfect Man who was able to live in communion with god. His body belonged to earth, but his spirit was a mirror image of God, and a manifestation of God emanated from Him. Imitating Adam, human beings have to reach the stage of the perfect man in order to be in union with God. 90 Another messianic figure related to Javanese eschatology is Ratu adil (the Just King) from the East, whose coming at the end of ages will bring prosperity and abundance to the island of Java. 91 The prophecy of the Just King is part of the King Jayabaya prophetic series in Prelambang Jayabaya, which was circulated around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The text narrates stages of the universe’s development in Buddhist fashion with the addition of Islam’s Imam Mahdi, a messianic figure that will appear in the last day. 92 For many Javanese

89 Koentjaraningrat, 332-335.
90 Van Akkeren, 176.
91 Koentjaraningrat, 335.
92 Ibid.
people who have encountered Christ personally, the prophecy of the Just King is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.  

Anthropology. The human person consists of body, soul and the core of the human being, formed in a concentric manner. The impersonal, pantheistic god is the connector of the person’s elements with the macrocosm. The soul is the locus of awareness, insight, and the human person’s unity with the macrocosm. The core of the human being contains will and faith, and it is the meeting point with the divine. At the core of the spiritual element of the human being is the deep self, which has the potential to encompass the universe when it is well-cultivated through the refinement of the outer senses (rasa) through meditation, contemplation, and art. One may perceive the outer world correctly by withdrawing into one’s inner world through self-discipline, which will increase one’s sensitivity to the inner voice. One may then enter the mystery of inner feeling wherein god resides, and hence reach a deeper communion with god and human transformation.

Rasa (sense or feeling) connects a person’s elements with the outer world. The concept is adopted from the Tantric Shivaites, Mahayana Buddhism, and mystical Islam (Sufism). Rasa refers to the physical senses, emotional feelings, the awareness that affects bodily movements in Javanese concentric anthropology, and discernment in interpreting allusive communication in

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93 Daud Tony, our folk theologian, recalls an episode in which his pagan grandfather (who was also a spiritual teacher) heard a magical whisper. The whisper told him that some day one of his descendants would be a follower of the Just King and would lead the whole family into the path of light. Tony interpreted this prophecy as his conversion to Christianity, following Christ the Just King. Daud Tony, “Diselamatkan dari maut: pertobatan mantan dukun sakti” [“Saved from Death: The Conversion of a Former Powerful Shaman”], Jovan Net, published May 27, 2015. Accessed December 11, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdkF9Uml8DQ.
94 Yumarma, 137-140.
95 Ibid., 54-55.
96 Ibid., 91.
97 Walton, 32.
Javanese culture. Aesthetic performance is the main way to learn ethics and values in Javanese culture, insofar as the performers absorb the rasa or tone of the characters and musical piece by emptying themselves on one hand, and enacting the rasa on the other hand. Sarah Weiss uses the term *embodiment* to designate the process of channeling the aesthetic experience into the inner rasa in Javanese performance. It assumes a fusion in which body and spirit are interdependent, and in which anything done in the body would affect the spirit through the means of *rasa*. *Rasa* is the main path for spiritual development and enlightenment. These external and internal senses are overseen by the true *rasa* at the core of the human being.

The true *rasa* is a refined spiritual sense that connects a person with the divine. It could be acquired by channeling the mind into the person’s core of existence. The mystics equate the true *rasa* with the human soul as it emanates from God and will come back to God after death. Considering its function as the meta-*rasa* that oversees the other senses in the soul and body, as well as the universe, the true *rasa* is often linked with power and high social status. The possessor of the true *rasa* is able to understand ultimate reality and behave graciously. Moreover, he/she is able to be in communion with the divine, the universe, the spirits, and himself/herself.

*Spirit world.* The spirit world in JFR should be distinguished from the deities. While deities come from the upper world above the reality of human beings, the spirit world comes from the underworld, which is usually symbolised by water or the ocean. Geertz categorises the

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100 Ibid.
102 Van Akkeren, 175.
103 Ibid.
104 Walton, 34.
inhabitants of the spirit world into frightening spirits, possessing spirits, familiar spirits, place or territorial spirits, and guardian spirits. The first two categories do harm to human beings. Familiar spirits, place spirits and guardian spirits may help human beings to gain wealth, power, and even authority over a territory, with a price to pay such as the deaths of children or friends, unruly behaviour after getting rich, and slow, painful dying processes. In addition, Koentjaraningrat lists the supernatural energy of mentally and spiritually strong people, which is present in certain parts of the human body such as the head, hair, genitalia, and semen.

The complex narratives of JFR can be summarised as follow. Within a concentric cosmology that consists of man at the centre of the universe, there sits the highest deity, Allah or Hyang, who permeates all creation. Hindu gods and goddesses exist above human beings; the Islamic angels and cherubs dwell in the skies; the malevolent spirits and other spiritual beings dwell below the earth. Everyone, except the malevolent spirits, can dispense blessings. The human being is actually the result of the intermediary figures’ second attempt at creation, and the creational process was not smooth. Salvation on earth is understood in two terms: the human communion with the impersonal god, and the fertility of the land and of the womb by the blessing of the lower deities. The first type of salvation requires the cultivation of the spiritual sense (true rasa) to sharpen the emotional and physical senses. Both types of salvation could be mediated by messianic figures or could be conflated in sexual rites where the cosmic communion would ensure the spirit’s blessings in harvest and human marriage.

1.5. Sexual rites in Javanese Folk Religion

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105 Geertz, 20-29.
106 Koentjaraningrat, 341-345.
Sexual rites are a means of communion with the divine and a means of fertility blessing in JFR. The underlying assumption is that power resides in human sexuality. For instance, sexual abstinence is required of art performers because consecrating the sperm enables it to be transmuted into spiritual energy. The history of medieval Javanese kingdoms starts with a queen who is described as having shiny pudenda, as a sign of ability to give birth to future kings. The queen was abducted by a man who married her in order to gain political power as the ruler of the region.

There are key sexual practices in Javanese religion in both the courtly and peasant sub-cultures. Two major practices are evident in each community. The first is the conjugal union of a human couple that represents the deities, and the second is the sexual consummation of the human being with the spirit world.

*Sexual rites in Javanese court folk religion.* Helen Creese discovered that marriage life in the Indic royal court in Java during the pre-Islamic period (between the seventh to the fifteenth centuries) was imbued with Tantric spirituality. Sexual intercourse in Tantric spirituality is a yogic practice through which the couple achieves unity with the divine during the orgasm, and the human couple manifests the divine primal couple—deities such as the god and goddess of love, namely Kama Ratih and Kama Jaya or Vishnu and Sri, or Wairocana and Locana. During the conjugal union, the woman’s body becomes a *yantra*, an object of concentration for a man in meditating unity with the divine and a temple of worship. The inter-human sexual union affects the unity of opposing and complementary forces in the cosmos. The unity of the cosmos ensures the abundant harvest of the land. Creese notes that violence could be applied

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107 Wilson, 1999.
during the consummation, where the process of conquering the woman was equated with a battle. The male or sexual imposer is depicted as wise, physically strong, and controlling, while the woman, despite her sacred role as god’s shrine, is portrayed as shy, obedient, and submissive, and her display of physical beauty is to be enjoyed and meditated upon by the male.\textsuperscript{110}

The belief of sacramental sexuality in conjugal unions was evident in the Islamic Javanese kingdom as well. Panembahan Senopati, the first king of the Mataram II kingdom, was praying to the Islamic god when he encountered Nyai Roro Kidul, the goddess of the Southern Ocean (part of the Indian Ocean) who promised him and his descendants to be kings of Java.\textsuperscript{111} They were attracted to each other and the king-to-be had sexual intercourse with the spirit. The union finalised his claim of power over a territory, secured protection for the people, and ensured a bountiful harvest for the land. The goddess of the Southern Ocean was actually an exiled Sundanese (West Java area) princess who was transformed into a spiritual being, and who could take form as a beautiful woman, old woman, snake, or dragon.

The legend of a female spirit who resides in the water and takes form as a snake or dragon can be found in other ethnic groups in Asia. The legend of the rice goddess is found in China, and stories of a snake appearing as a woman in India. Cambodia has a myth to the effect that its first ruler married a dragon princess in the ocean. The story of a snake spirit in Southeast Asia is often associated with land, fertility, or crops.\textsuperscript{112} The king was viewed as the incarnation of god, and was at the centre of the universe and was responsible for the fertility of the cosmos. The king’s sperm symbolised power, and he was responsible for establishing his rule by fertilising

\textsuperscript{110} Creese, 182.


\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
the land, which was personified in and protected by the goddess of the Southern Ocean.113 The agreement with Nyai Roro Kidul remains up to the present day, and she is said to be present during the coronation of the king’s descendants in the divided Javanese kingdoms.

*Sexual rites in Javanese peasant folk religion.* Phillip Van Akkeren identified three main rites in JFR among peasants in the rural areas of East Java: *Singabarong, Nini Towong,* and *Sri-Sedono.*114 *Singabarong* is a performance of a lion-like mask dance held in a trance situation during the bridal procession, and it depicts the historical account of the last king of Majapahit who lost his kingship by the influence of his consort.115 *Singabarong* dance enacts the cosmic struggles of deities that create disorder in the universe and in the rice harvest. The symbolic act aims to bring back the order of the universe and ensure the blessing of the spirit world on the marriage.116 The antagonism between the bride’s family and the bridegroom symbolises the cosmic conflict of tribal ancestors in the past.

The *Nini Towong* rite invokes a local nymph to possess a doll made of agricultural tools. *Nini Towong* and her consort *Ki Towong* are personifications of the mythical mother and father of the Javanese people and bless the rice cultivation process. *Sri-Sedono* is adapted from the story of a mythical divine couple—adapted from Lakshmi-Vishnu, the Indian gods—who are in charge of the fertility of human beings and rice alike. The dolls of Sri-Sedono are usually placed in front of the ceremonial bed during the marriage ceremony. Devotion to the goddess *Sri* is shown in the *bersih desa* (village-cleaning rite) during the planting and ripening of rice, which includes an offering for her during harvest time. Javanese peasants obtain the blessings of *Sri-Sedono* if they follow closely the instruction of the village cleaning rite. The recital and performance of the *Sri*
myth are intended to reconstruct and re-order the situation of the macrocosm—both spiritually and socially—in order to restore all things to unity. The union of the mythical couple Sri-Sedono is also enacted during the human wedding ceremony. Van Akkeren writes.

A marriage will only be blessed if the hieros gamos, the mating of the two primeval sociological and cosmological principles, is repeated here, as is hoped and prayed for. The bridal couple will therefore have to cultivate … detachment from the things of the earth and receptiveness for the mythical event of receiving Sri and Sadono into their own being. Even though contemporary couples are but little aware of this mythical background, they will behave with traditional formality and extreme resignation on this day. The blessing of both the marriage and the rice-harvest are at stake. … Coition becomes the experience of the union with the mystic, the “perfect man” with god.¹¹⁷

Van Akkeren’s description implies that any Javanese wedding rite could be an event in which a sacramental union with god is experienced.

Daud Tony, a Christian lay preacher and a former JFR shaman whose reflections will be discussed in the next chapter, describes the reality behind the coitus-like experience of a woman with a genderuwo, a guardian spirit, and a man’s marriage-like life with a fairy.¹¹⁸ These occasions are not normal. But when they happen, the spirit appears as the woman’s husband in consummation and makes her experience bodily symptoms as in real human-to-human sexual intercourse. Yet the fake partner smells like sulfur—or, in the man-fairy case, it dispenses the fragrance of Kananga or magnolia flowers.

In sum, sexuality and sexual rites in Javanese court life and peasant life stem from the same root of animism and assume the sacramentality of nature, even though they differ in their use of spiritual figures. Court JFR obtains the blessing of the spirits from the underworld, represented by the ocean or water, and emphasises the king as the single ruler. On the other hand, the

¹¹⁷ Van Akkeren, 18.
peasant JFR portrays the spirit as a deity from above who bestows her blessing on her obedient subjects.\footnote{Wessing, 1997, 374.}

At a glance, the sexual rites in JFR portray human sexuality as a key to salvation. Salvation is understood in the language of union, power, and fertility, which in one way or another possess the same characteristics as human sexuality. Yet JFR views sexuality as containing no life and love in itself. Rather, it is a medium of exchange for blessings of another kind. The distorted function of sexuality is a seed of violence, because it fails to acknowledge the potential of human sexuality to generate life and to express love. The violence is manifested in at least two occurrences: the omission of love language and the omission of communion between human persons. The human and divine, in JFR, are in communion for achieving the sense of perfection, and yet no affection is included. Furthermore, the woman’s sexual body is treated as a means of achieving self-transcendence and as a source of help at the same time, without necessarily considering the woman’s personality. In other words, women (and men) become objects rather than subjects in the instrumental game of what is seemingly love.

### 1.6. Summary

This chapter presents JFR as a seemingly self-contradictory religion that is human-centered but at the same time denigrates the person of the human being. S/he is at the centre of the universe but depends on and is subject to the spirit world’s influences. As is shown in the creation narrative, the human being could be the product of an imperfect angel who twice attempted to create humans, and whose failed version of the creational process became spirits. Sexuality, among other rites, becomes a human currency to gain blessing from the spirit world. From a
Christian perspective, JFR narratives and sexual rites portray what appears to be a subversion of God’s plan in creation. We will address this issue further in chapter three after I explicate JFT as our main ingredient for theological construction in the next chapter.
Chapter 2

A Javanese Folk Theological Anthropology

2.1. Introduction

This chapter systematises the theological anthropology of Paulus Tosari and Daud Tony in order to construct a folk theology of sexual violence in the next chapter. By “folk theology” I mean any indigenous Christian theology that develops from encounters between a primal religion and a Christian tradition brought by missionaries. These encounters assume spiritual experiences. In this context, a Javanese folk theology is a Christian engagement with JFR. Tosari and Tony encountered JFR at both personal and pastoral levels. First, both Tony and Tosari embraced the beliefs and practices of JFR prior to their conversion to Christianity, and thus in their theologies they are able to translate and to clearly explain the dynamics of human personhood and its relationship with the spirit world. Second, after their conversions, Tosari and Tony became teachers in Christian communities and dealt pastorally with sex-related Javanese cultural practices influenced by JFR, particularly the rice-cultivation rites associated with fertility and hierogamy, which were performed by Tosari’s congregation, and the sexuality-perverting spirit world exorcised by Tony.

Tosari came from a Pietist background in the nineteenth century, while Tony came from a Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition a century later. Thus they have no direct connection besides a similar participation in JFR. Tosari’s reflection will help us to comprehend the relationship between the Word, the senses, and human personhood. Tony’s proclamation will expose the

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120 Chan, 31.
reality behind JFR sexual rites in relation to the Word and the human senses. I will demonstrate that Javanese folk theological anthropology explains the interconnectivity of the Word of God, human senses, the JFR narratives and the spirit world with *rasa* (senses/feeling) as a connecting vocabulary. I propose that the Word of God received in the human heart will be the true sense that governs the human senses and dispels the lie of the spirit world in the JFR narratives and sexual rites.

This study is among the first to reflect upon the link between the Word and the human senses. Previous theological reflections deal with the feelings and the senses without necessarily connecting them with the Word. The spiritual senses have been the subject of theological reflection since at least the time of Augustine, for whom the spiritual senses allow the inner man to perceive God;\(^{121}\) or Gregory of Nyssa, who proposed that ordinary sensation could be transformed into spiritual sense.\(^{122}\) In the field of the theology of feeling, we have Frederic Schleiermacher’s *gefühl*, which connotes moral discernment and apprehension of the infinite;\(^ {123}\) and Marcia Shoop, who describes feeling as a meaningful physical mode of experiences.\(^ {124}\) Yet none of these theologians relate senses/feeling directly with the Word.

JFT’s Word-senses theology may contribute to the discussion of a Word-centered anthropology, especially the theologies of Pseudo-Macarius of Egypt and John Calvin. In *Fifty Spiritual Homilies* and *The Great Letter*, Ps-Macarius asserts that the human heart is a meeting point with God through the Word.\(^ {125}\) For its possessors, the Word is “knowledge and experience and

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122 Sarah Coakley, “Gregory of Nyssa,” in *The Spiritual Senses*, 42.
125 The text is attributed to Macarius, a monk of Mount Athos in Egypt, but most likely was penned by Symeon of Mesopotamia, a Syrian monk from the Messalian tradition in the middle of the fourth century. See Pseudo-
inheritance and teaching.” 126 Ps.-Macarius’ theology of Word-centered spirituality inspired the Pietists, such as John Arndt, John Gerhard, Gottfried Arnold, and Pierre Poiret, and probably has indirectly influenced folk theologians. 127 JFT’s theology of the Word is similar to John Calvin’s logos theology, which regarded the Word as the overarching principle that brings order to the creation. 128 The contribution of JFT is the explication of divine will—one element of the Word—in terms of divine sensing and its relationship with the human senses, sexuality, and spiritual reality.

2.2. Method

This chapter analyses Tosary’s and Tony’s theological texts in light of the cultural and religious contexts set up in the previous chapter. By “theological texts” of these practical theologians, I mean the non-academic forms of witness that are commonly found in non-Western Christianity and often articulated in oral tradition, such as art performance, songs, prayers, and preaching. 129 Tosari’s theology is conveyed in a long poem that later was sung in mid-week congregational gatherings. The abridged version of the poem was published several times by Taman pustaka Kristen (Christian Book Garden) from 1925 to 1953. 130 Presently, it is accessible online as an anonymous text and has gained more popularity among the Javanese mysticism practitioners than in Christian communities, presumably because of its extensive mystical vocabulary. I

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126 SH 12.7 in Pseudo-Macarius, 99.
128 For John Calvin, the Word-centered order is sustained by the Spirit. The order of creation reaches out to the order of human marriage. Michael Parsons, Reformation Marriage: The Husband and Wife Relationship in the Theology of Luther and Calvin (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 220.
130 Van Akkeren, 175.
verify the authorship of the poem by comparing two online versions with quotations of the poem attributed to Tosari in theological books currently in circulation: Philip Van Akkeren’s *Sri and Christ* and Emmanuel Gerrit Singgih’s *Mengantisipasi masa depan* (Anticipating the Future).\(^{131}\) Van Akkeren observes that Tosari’s writing exhibits a good-evil dualism as an antithesis to Javanese folk religious beliefs that good and evil come from the same source.\(^{132}\) The anonymous online sources match Van Akkeren’s quotations of Tosari’s poem and its dualistic features, and thus we can safely assume that the online sources are the same poem as the one written by Tosari. Our second group of theological texts are Daud Tony’s preaching and testimonies. Due to limited access to print materials, I will distill Daud Tony’s theology from his teaching videos in various churches and seminars, which have more or less the same content as his printed witnessing. I will analyse the theologians’ several theological texts on theological anthropology, followed by my synthesis and evaluation of their theological thoughts.

### 2.3. Life and theology of Paulus Tosari

#### 2.3.1 Life of Paulus Tosari

Tosari was born in 1813 in Surabaya, a major city in Northeast Java, to parents from Madura, an island on the north of Surabaya.\(^{133}\) He was educated in an Islamic setting, probably of the Sunni school.\(^{134}\) He started gambling, went bankrupt, and then converted to Javanese mysticism. He


\(^{132}\) Van Akkeren, 178.

\(^{133}\) Ibid., 172.

converted to Christianity after hearing the Gospel from Conrad Laurans Coolen (1773-1873), a leader of a new agricultural settlement in East Java. Since Coolen did not administer baptism, Tosari and several other of Coolen’s disciples were baptised by Johannes Emde, another lay missionary who introduced Christianity to Coolen, in 1844. Tosari and his contemporaries then founded a new Christian village and established an indigenous church in 1846. Tosari became its first preacher from 1848 to 1881. The church has grown into a body of Presbyterian churches currently known as Greja Kristen Jawi Wetan (The Christian Church of East Java).

2.3.2. Religious influences before and after Tosari’s conversion

Paulus Tosari was exposed to two different traditions in Islam: Sunni Islam in his early life and Al-Hallaj mystical Islam later on. As a Sunni Muslim, Tosari developed a sense of strict legalism and was very zealous to obey religious commands in order to get heavenly rewards. As a follower of the Al-Hallaj movement, he was taught that Adam is the Perfect Man whose oneness with God is the means of bringing human beings into communion with God.

Tosari’s encounters with Christian teaching were mainly with syncretic Christianity and evangelical Pietism. The first encounter was with Coolen, a man of Russian-Javanese descent who was brought up as an Eastern Orthodox Christian and yet was conversant with JFR, using its myths and culture to introduce the Gospel to the indigenous people in his new settlement.

For example, Coolen interpreted the Bible through the lens of the Mahabharata narrative and

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135 The reason behind Coolen’s decision to eliminate the sacraments from congregational life was to prevent indigenous Christians from gaining exemption from forced labour and forced cultivation. Baptism then was associated with Dutch citizenship and privilege rather than commitment to Christ (Van Akkeren, 72).
136 Van Akkeren, 172-3. For a more complete discussion of the Perfect Man, see chapter 1 p. 25.
performed his version of the Bible stories in the traditional leather puppet performance, a contextualisation practice that attempted to convey the Christian message by means of Hindu cosmology. Coolen also preserved the practice of tembang (meditative singing), a habit derived from pagan mystical traditions, as a pedagogical strategy in his congregation. The underlying philosophy in those practices is the refinement of mental and spiritual senses/rasa for the acquisition of knowledge and spiritual transformation. Following Coolen, Tosari contextualised Christian teaching into folk songs, too. Yet he strongly discouraged his congregation from JFR rites that invoked the spirit world and that promoted sensuality. He also drew a clear line between the false deities and the right one, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second influence came from Johannes Emde and Rev. Jelle Eeltjes Jellesma, who were associated with the Dutch Missionary Society (het Nederland zendeling genootschap, NZG hereafter) and provided pastoral support to Tosari’s congregation. As the offspring of Pietism, the NZG preached the Word of God, heavily depended on the Holy Spirit, and emphasised authentic Christianity characterised by the transforming experience of God in the human heart. For Tosari too, to understand the Word means to let our hearts be examined and be transformed by the Word. He taught that

Certainly there are people who think they are Christians because they can say the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostle’s Creed and the Ten Commandments. We must not criticise these people, but be long-suffering and continue to teach, trying to teach their hearts. I was the same myself at first, but gradually, by reading the Bible, my heart became purer, and now I feel that the Gospel must command our whole being if it is to go well with us.

138 Susan Pratt Walton, 35.
139 Van Akkeren, 179.
140 Paulus Tosari, Rasa sejati (RS, hereafter), stanza 13.
141 Roger Olson and Christian Winn, Reclaiming Pietism (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 89.
142 Van Akkeren, 101.
Tosari’s assertion is similar to Pietist writings, such as Philip Jacob Spener’s teaching in *Pia Desideria*.

> It is not enough that we hear the Word with our outward ear, but we must let it penetrate our heart, so that we may hear the Holy Spirit speak there, that is, with vibrant emotion and comfort feel the sealing of the Spirit and the power of the Word.\(^{143}\)

In sum, Tosari’s religious influences formed him to be conversant with JFR mystics in his theological dialogue, creative in his theological method of appealing to his Javanese congregation (for instance, his use of *tembang*), and on the other hand, faithful to scriptural teaching and spirituality like that of the Pietists. His background informs the direction we should take when analysing his theological text as an instance of evangelical contextual theology.

2.3.3. Tosari’s theological anthropology in *Rasa sejati* (The True Rasa)

2.3.3.1. Background of the poem

Tosari’s main theological text, *Rasa sejati* (The True Rasa), is a long poem aimed at exhorting his congregation in the Christian life. Newcomers to Tosari’s Christian settlement were most interested in obtaining material gain, free land, and spiritual knowledge (*ilmu*, as it is known in Javanese mysticism). They might have been attracted to the power of Christianity in overcoming evil spirits during the jungle clearing. The consumption of opium, along with an increasing amount of theft, adultery, and polygamy were evident.\(^{144}\) The majority of this congregation had a JFR background and were closely tied to agricultural rites such as obtaining the blessing of the goddess of fertility, Sri. The title of the poem, which adapts the JFR concept of the mystical

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\(^{143}\) Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1964), 117. However, the scarcity of our information concerning the teachings of the NZG, especially in relation with Tosari, prevents us from further exploring the Pietist connection with JFT.

\(^{144}\) Van Akkeren, 101.
communion with the divine, indicates that Tosari addressed the longing of his congregation for spiritual and supernatural communion.

2.3.3.2. The True Rasa as a contextual theology

The key to appreciating Tosari’s poem is to comprehend the meaning of the true *rasa*, a concept borrowed from JFR. The form of the text as contextual theology restricts our theological quest. First, the terms “*rasa*” and “the true *rasa*” in the Javanese sense have a wide range of meanings. *Rasa* can refer to physical sense or sensory perceptions, emotional feelings, cognitive discernment, or implicit tone in speech, music, and art performance. The true *rasa* refers to spiritual disposition or spiritual intelligence. Tosari’s choice to employ the term *rasa* in his writing leads us to assume that he was trying to translate the Gospel into a concept intelligible to Javanese culture by finding its dynamic equivalent in the local narrative. Tosari’s true *rasa* could be associated with the mystical true *rasa*, and yet it deserves further clarification.

Tosari’s decision in using a dynamic-equivalence approach in Gospel contextualisation leads us to a second challenge: Tosari might have had JFR’s structure and its concept of personhood at the back of his mind. The possibility is further underscored by the religious background of Tosari’s congregation, to whom his writing is addressed. The structure and elements of Javanese personhood consist of the body, the soul, and the heart/core. The core contains will and faith, and it is a place for the acquired true *rasa*. The soul contains awareness, insights, and the aesthetic *rasa*. The body is the locus for physical sense/*rasa*, which connects the human heart with the outer world. Javanese anthropology knows no clear demarcation between aesthetic, ethic, and cognitive domains. Those aspects are conveyed in the dynamic *rasa*, whether in body

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145 See chapter 1, 27.
or soul, and could be held together by the appropriate true *rasa*. Third, the poem follows the metrical pattern of *tembang* (folk song), which regulates certain vowels at the end of each line. The rule of *tembang* composition restricts Tosari’s theologising process, and his attribution of characteristics to God does not always correlate with his description of the true *rasa*.

The challenges above reiterate the limitations of translation method in contextualising the Gospel. Robert Schreiter questions whether it is possible to find a parallel theme to the Gospel that squares with Christianity. In line with that, Stephen Bevans asserts that the message of life in Christianity cannot be compared to any dynamic equivalent in pagan cultures because it stands above all. Our discussion above further proves that applying the dynamic-equivalence method requires a theologian to keep the elements of pagan narratives in order to make sense of the translated concept. As a result, the new Christian concept may be falsely accused as syncretic, or as “too different” from its mystic original meaning and therefore less appealing for the audience. This happened with instances of Tosari’s writings that have failed to survive the test of time. Nevertheless, Tosari’s concept of *rasa* can advance our discussion of sexual violence because it clarifies the dynamics of spiritual sense, emotional sense, sensuality, and sexuality. Considering the limitations of Tosari’s method above, we will only focus our theological analysis on the accurate meaning of Tosari’s *true rasa* as the key to understanding Tosari’s anthropology.

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149 Schreiter, 67.
2.3.3.3. The meaning of the true rasa in Rasa sejati

The plot of the hymn goes from a description of outer behaviours to the dynamics of the inner being, where the mental rasa and the true rasa reside. It begins with Tosari’s assertion that the true rasa comes from God. The hymn proceeds to discuss the impact of the true rasa on its possessors (stanzas 1-3). It also describes the tangible characteristics of the true rasa in a person’s life (stanzas 4 and 7); the spiritual death in this life without the true rasa (stanzas 5 and 10); the good life of the genuine person before God (stanzas 6, 8, and 12); the true rasa and personal relationship with God illustrated with biblical examples (stanza 9); the fruit of the artificial person (stanzas 11 and 13); the role of rasa in relation with Christ and with God (stanzas 14 and 15); and a prayer for repentance and deliverance (stanza 16).150 Obviously, the hymn might have served as an evangelistic tool for the nominal Christians in Tosari’s congregation who yearned for the mystical true rasa and wanted to imitate Adam as the Perfect Man. In addition, Tosari’s description of right or wrong behaviour based on inner motives might have been influenced by his Sunni Islam background.

I will analyse the concept of the true rasa based on several lines of the poem below. Each verse could be treated as an individual proverb.151

1.0 Rasa sejati pinangkapanipun saking Gusti Allah. Tanpa rasa sejati manungsa boten leres wonten ngarsaning pengeran. The true rasa is from God. Without the true rasa human beings are not righteous before the Lord.

1.4 Pitulunging sukma suci, marang sejatinya rasa, ngrowangi karya sîrnane, rasa kang ala puniku, ingkang sengsem mring dosa, The Holy Spirit helps the rasa to be true by resisting the works of evil, which is the wicked rasa that loves sin, so that our lives

151 I have added stanza numbers to the poem for reference purposes. The first number refers to the stanza, and the second number refers to verses in the respective stanza. Number zero refers to the short introduction at the beginning of each stanza.
Supaya uripnya iku, anut sejatining rasa.

1.5 Wong anut rasa sejati, kelangkung suka pirena, mring pakarya becik kabez, nyegah mring pakarya ala, siyang latri tan pegat madhep mring tindak kang tuhu, ing ngabyantara Pangeran.

Profess the true rasa.

Whoever professes the true rasa will greatly rejoice, everything he/she does is all good, he/she is able to prevent the work of evil, and he/she continuously stands in the presence of the Lord all day and night with a sincere heart.

2.0 Manungsa ingkang nampeni dhawuh in Gusti Allah punika ingkang kanggenan rasa sejati, gadhah kamukten sang nabetipun sangsara, tindaking gesangipun, boten miturut raosing hawa napsu.

The human being who receives God’s command is the one in whom the true rasa dwells, s/he will persevere despite sufferings, her/his behaviours lead to life, and he/she does not follow his/her lustful rasa.

2.4 Rasa karsa tuhu, junjung sejatining sukma, aneng donya tinulung mring sukma suci, kang badan kula pasrah.

The rasa wills what is good; it supports the soul to be true in this world by the help of the Holy Spirit; and the body surrenders.

A person who has the true rasa will think carefully and be wise in living his or her life.

4.0 Tiyang ingkang kanggenen rasa sejati punika mikir lan ngatos-atos menggah ing tindakaing gesangipun.

This is the rasa of the mind: a person who has the true rasa will endure suffering and be able to extinguish the malice within him.

4.11 Mangkono rasanya kalbu, wong darbe rasa sejati, mrih kewat sabaring driya, murih bangkit anglampahi, sirnaning durta angkara, tumanem angga pribadi.

To do God’s will, to walk in the will of the Lord, and to be aligned with the Lord God is to be one rasa with the Lord, so that (we) can praise God with a sincere heart and with the real rasa.

4.12 Nglampahi karsa hyang agung, tumindak karsaning gusti, saras mring gusti Allah, anunggal rasa mring gusti, amrih tulusing pamuja, kalawan rasa sayekti.

Life without the true rasa is a useless life, thus said the Lord Jesus. You are the salt of the world. If the salt loses its saltiness, what can we use to restore its saltiness? It is no longer useful.

5.0 Gesang tanpa rasa sejati punika gesang tanpa guna kados dene dhawuhipun Gusti Jesus; kowe iku minangka uyah ing jaman mangka Manawa uyahipun ilang asine, kang kagawe mulihake asine apa, wus ora ana paedah.

The Lord God is in heaven, and yet the human being is on the earth. But when the human’s true rasa is united with the rasa of God, God will help him/her through his/her spirit, and that is (the help of) the
sukma suci.

9.0 Tiyang ingkang timen dhumateng pangeran dipunwales temen. Whoever is wholehearted, God grants him genuineness.

9.1. sap a anut rasa kang sayekti, rukun mring hyang manon sap a anut mring rasa goroh, iku grojoni setan myang iblis witing goroh iblis... Whoever professes the real *rasa* is at peace with God. Whoever professes the false *rasa* is giving consent to Satan and to the devil, ascribing to the lies of the devil...

9.3. Akeh janma ngawula mring iblis pan datan rumaos lamun janma arsa mring goroh, anut mring sedyaning tyas kang sisip salaminya urip ngwulung iblis iku. Many people are unaware that they are enslaved to the devil because their will is wicked; they follow their moods; they forever live with the devil.

9.4. Suprandenya samya ngaku wasis tan wruh yen kajlomprong, marga suwung ing rasa batine, datan darbe rasa kang sejati, pan samya ngapusi, marang sukmanipun. Even if everyone claims to have wisdom, if he does not know that he stumbles (because the *rasa* of his heart is empty), he is without the true *rasa*, and all is a lie to the soul.

11.1 tyang tan temen ing kalbu, pracayanya mring Allah tan tuhu, myang piyandel mring gusti pan durung meshi, trisnanya mring maha luHur, uga durung trusing batos. A person whose conscience is not genuine does not really believe in God, he does not always depend on Him, his love is not pure because the love has not touched the heart.

11.2 Tobatnya durung terus pangucapnya maksih sring gemblung, dadya pratanda ing batin durung yekti, kawistara ing pamuwus jroning tyas pan maksih goroh. He has not repented and his utterance is foolish. These are signs that the heart is not yet real, clearly demonstrated by his utterance; within, his heart is still wicked.

11.3 Durung jrih mring tyang agung, durung trisna mring gusti susunu, He who does not fear God, he has not loved the Son.

14.2 Najan janma sabuwana, sawiji datan nandhingi, lawan janma kang sampurna, ingkang asma malbeng tulis nyang tinembung yahudi, emanuwel asmanipun pan artinya puniku, gusti allah nunggil janmi, myang gusti allah tunggil lawan kawula. Throughout the universe, no one can compare to the Perfect Man whose name in Hebrew is Emmanuel, which means “the Lord God becomes one with the human being,” and “the Lord God becomes one with us.”

14.3 Allah nunggil mring manungsa, janma nunggil hyang masuci, sang janma ingkang punika, dahat sampurna myang suci, amung margi pra janmi, pinurih samya ateung, mring gusti maha kwasa, janma sabuwana neki, tepungnya lumantar janma. God becomes one with the human being, this person [the Perfect Man] is united with God the Holy One, the creature, being perfect and holy, yet dwells among human beings, so that all will meet God Almighty. The human creatures throughout the world
meet God through the Perfect Man.

The one called as the Perfect Man is the Son of God, having the rasa united with the Holy One, the only begotten Son; he adheres to God; the Son becomes one with the Father.

A person who is attached to the Son is attached to the Holy Father, becomes one with the Father. From the core of the heart s/he becomes one: the Son and God…

2.3.3.4. The Meaning of the True Rasa

Unlike the mystic writings that ascribe all kinds of rasa as coming from or to the principal divine being, Tosari distinguishes the wicked rasa and the good rasa (stanza 9). The wicked rasa is associated with the deception of the evil one (9.1). The good rasa springs from the true rasa, which comes from God (1.0). The true rasa is the prerequisite to the genuineness of a person. In contrast, the absence of the true rasa is the cause of the wicked soul in an artificial person (9.4). Just as the mystical rasa has multiple meanings, it seems to spring from the true rasa in the core of the human heart.

Van Akkeren delineates several possibilities regarding the relationship of the true rasa and Jesus Christ. It could be the inner feeling as a divine existence that is coming from and returning to God; the delight of the soul in union with God through Christ the Perfect Man; or the right spiritual disposition, right knowledge, and right feeling. By the term “right,” which is translated from the word temen, Akkeren means “just” or “right” with legal connotations, and

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152 Chapter 1, 27.
153 “Artificial” here means “empty,” and thus the person does not fully function as a human being as God intended.
154 Van Akkeren, 175.
155 Ibid, 177.
156 Ibid.
also “honest.” In my opinion, a more precise translation would render the word *temen* as “true, real, and genuine,” most likely referring to the quality of the fullness in the human being that conveys the sense of a human being’s best and truest state of existence as planned by God. *Temen* also means “honest” or “sincere and righteous” (*leres*, see 1.0), but it goes beyond the legal connotations. It is more plausible to understand *temen* as the quality of a genuine person.

Could it be that Van Akkeren’s “spiritual disposition” or “divine existence” refers to the divine nature of the human being in 2 Peter 1:4? Evidence to support this possibility can be found in stanza 14: The key to communion with God the Father while we are in this world is our union with Christ the Perfect Man, who shares His *rasa* with the Father. Since Christ shares his divine nature with the Father, our true *rasa* in Christ is His shared divine nature, such that we can participate in the life of the Trinity and have access to Christ’s benefits. This option matches the description in 9.1, where professing God would result in the indwelling of the Spirit in us and would provide no room in our heart for the devil. The true *rasa* as divine nature may be equivalent to the mystical true *rasa* as self-transcendence. However, we have yet to correlate this possibility with the delineation of the tangible signs of the true *rasa* in the earlier stanzas (1-3). Would the divine nature in us correspond to practical holiness in daily life? It seems that practical holiness is a matter of Christian will rather than nature. Moreover, is the divine nature something that we can profess (1.5 and 2.0) and contain in our hearts (9.4)? Hence, “the divine nature” as the substitute for “the true *rasa*” does make sense in terms of connecting the human being with God, but it leaves us to explain further how the heart could profess and contain the divine nature.

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157 “He who is just and honest (*temen*) before God, will be rewarded with justice,” Van Akkeren, 177.
159 See chapter 1, 27.
Another possibility is to consider the true *rasa* as something that is identified with the indwelling Word. Lines 1.4 and 1.5 mention that the true *rasa* is something we profess and acknowledge. When the heart receives the true *rasa*, the soul and consequently the body follow the direction of the heart. Thus, the embodiment of the Word is a step to becoming the genuine person described in stanza 6. Further clarification is needed to define which aspect of the Word is equivalent with the true *rasa*. Traditionally, the Word in the sense of the second Trinitarian person is the identity of the Son, and not the Father; and thus, considering Tosari’s claim of the oneness of the Father and Christ in *rasa* (stanza 14), we could conclude that the true *rasa* could not mean the Word as the Son of God. We can elucidate this by looking at the *locus* of the true *rasa* in the core/heart of the human being, together with faith and will. As is shown in 4.12, the true *rasa* equals the heart’s agreement with the divine volition or the Father’s will, which Christ obeys and to which he aligns himself.

Let us examine further the options above regarding 5.0, where Tosari equates the true *rasa* with the saltiness of the salt in Matthew 5:13. Without it, life would be useless. The true *rasa* is then associated with pious conduct (see Matthew 5:16), which would differentiate Christ’s disciples from the wicked world. It seems more plausible to infer that the true *rasa* is a sense of obedience and alignment of heart to God’s will, as he asserts that “the Gospel must command our whole being if it is to go well with us.”

The heart alignment impacts emotions, attitudes, endurance, and Christian conduct. The impact is the product of the Holy Spirit, who internalises the true *rasa* in one’s heart (1.4). Therefore, it is more appropriate to associate the true *rasa* with the heart aligned to the Word.

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161 Chapter 1, 27.
163 Van Akkeren, 101.
164 RS 1.5, 2.0, 2.4, 4.0 and 4.11.
Thus, internalising the Word in the human heart until it becomes the true rasa will eventually bring refinement to the other senses, mainly the senses of the soul. The internalisation process requires an open heart and faith in Christ (9.0, 11.1-3) on one hand, and the work of the Spirit on the other hand (1.4).

The second option requires us to assume that Tosari took a counter-cultural direction in his theology by distinguishing the spiritual nature of a person and the true rasa. In mystical terms, the true rasa is interchangeable with spiritual power and also spiritual existence. But for Tosari, human participation in the divine nature—that is, communion with God—is made possible only if the person receives Jesus Christ and loves him (11.3 and 14.5). Hence Tosari’s true rasa has no capability of uniting men with God ontologically. The main function of the true rasa is to manufacture a genuine person, and hence Christ-like characters, with the help of the Spirit (6.9). Tosari’s assertion about the genuine person alludes to the perfect image of God mirrored in humanity and displayed in Christ (14.5). In fact, we could conclude further that the true rasa enables its possessor to mirror God as it aligns the human being with the divine will. But the human-divine communion is made possible by Jesus Christ, the Perfect Man whose obedience and will are in perfect unity with God.

2.3.3.5. The human personhood in Tosari’s theology

As the meaning of the true rasa becomes clear, the text is able to speak for itself. A true believer in Christ would accept the divine will through God’s Word in his heart, and thus this acceptance would be demonstrated in a positive mental attitude and observable behaviours. In other words, the true rasa enables us to become genuine persons, thus actualising the divine nature in us.

165 Koentjaraningrat, 335.
Tosari echoes the unity of the divine will in the Johannine Gospel: the unity of will between the Father and the Son (John 6:38-39) and between the Son and Christians (John 15:7). The journey of a believer begins with a sincere heart that earnestly seeks God and is ready to receive God’s rasa (9.0). His love for Christ and the Father will determine his acceptance of the Word, which will eventually affect her/his whole being.

Tosari asserts the centrality of the divine will in the human heart. He claims that it harmonises and refines the mental and emotional senses, and consequently produces pious behaviours. The perverted and wicked mental senses signify the absence of the internalised Word, and thus the mind, body, and mental-emotional senses can be subjected to the devil (9.1, 9.3-4).

2.4. Life and Theology of Daud Tony

2.4.1. Life of Daud Tony

Daud Tony is a lay-preacher from the late twentieth-century Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition. He has a Javanese folk shamanistic background. Tony converted to Christianity after being defeated in spiritual battles with Christian clergy when he was 18 years old. After a theological training in a Pentecostal seminary, he founded Dunia roh (Spiritual World) ministry to train Christian workers to deal with occultism and mysticism.

2.4.2. Daud Tony’s religious influences

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Daud Tony was a follower of *Sang Hyang Murbeng Dumadi* (The One that is from the Beginning of the Age), a mystical sect of JFR known to be independent from Islam, though it regards all religions as worshipping the same deity.\textsuperscript{168} Tony was trained to be a shaman by his maternal great-grandparents, among the most powerful shamans in Indonesia during the 1940’s to 1970’s. After his dramatic conversion, Tony studied theology in an evangelical-Pentecostal seminary, Intheos, in Central Java. He was under the spiritual guidance of Rev. Gilbert Lumoindong, one of the clergy involved in the spiritual battle.\textsuperscript{169}

By comparing his shamanistic practices in the past with the narratives in scripture, Daud Tony seems to have been influenced by a Pentecostal hermeneutic of “this and that,” which regards our narrative as a continuation of scriptural narrative in which the power of the Spirit enables us to take part.\textsuperscript{170} Pentecostal hermeneutics involves the interplay between the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the experiences of the Christian community.\textsuperscript{171} Practically, it suggests that the spiritual experiences of God’s people in scripture are applicable to the Church today. As a former high-ranking shaman, Tony is able to explicate the dynamics of human personhood and human sexuality in relation to the spirit world. His explication of what is not from God and its Christian response will be synthesised with Tosari’s reflections in order to construct a theological anthropology within JFT.

2.4.3. Theological anthropology of Daud Tony

\textsuperscript{168} Chapter 1, 23.
\textsuperscript{169} Tony, “Diselamatkan dari maut, pertobatan mantan dukun sakti,” 2015.
\textsuperscript{170} Amos Yong, “Reading Scripture and Nature: Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Their Implications for the Contemporary Evangelical Theology and Science Conversation,” *Perspective on Science and Christian Faith* 63, 1 (March 2011), 5.
Tony’s theological anthropology will be distilled from his seminar videos available online. His seminars expose various occult practices in JFR in light of Christian truth and are similar to his published books.\textsuperscript{172} The pattern of his teachings goes as follows: after a short introduction he provides a biblical basis for the spirit world’s activity, followed by his specific experiences as a shaman, and he concludes with a biblical cure and practical steps to overcome the devil’s attack in curses and charms. Based on overlapping practices in the same Javanese context and religious milieu, Tosari and Tony might refer to the same issues with different terms. Tony’s experience as a shaman enables him to provide detailed explication regarding the human person relative to the spirit world, and thus Tony’s theology clarifies and complements Tosari’s.

2.4.3.1. Human personhood and the spirit world

The spirit world disrupts the human person through meditations that are consented to and willed by the human heart. Tony comments,

In kebatinan [a JFR strain], the human being consists of the physical body, soul, and spirit. The sub-consciousness is the basic level, logic is the intermediate level, and spirit is the highest level. Someone has to achieve harmony within the elements by meditation, which requires emptying her/his mind and uniting her/his senses. … After we reach the climax of harmonising self with nature … the senses will be numb. …

When someone empties his mind in meditation, his soul is bound, and the devil – appearing as the energy of the universe – enters the heart of the person.\textsuperscript{173}

The meditation process to obtain spiritual power by harmonising the self with the universe is similar to acquiring the true \textit{rasa}.\textsuperscript{174} In reality, it causes dysfunction in the sensory perceptions and conscious mind. Acquiring the spiritual sense at the expense of physical senses is a denigration of the goodness of creation.

Not everybody is prone to spiritual attacks. Daud Tony describes the characteristics of a prospective victim,

A person easily becomes a victim of charm, if there is an element of darkness within her/him: bitter root, disappointment, and revenge. … First, a bitter root, (for example) if there is a broken-hearted woman, and there is a man who attempts to charm her, he will be successful. Second, if a person comes from a broken home, s/he can get charmed because the inner bond with his/her parents is weak. Third, if a person believes in a connection between the living and the dead. If someone often dreams about meeting dead persons, s/he is easy to get charmed.\textsuperscript{175}

On the contrary, a genuine Christian who has the indwelling Spirit and receives the Word is immune from charms. He asserts,

When someone has received Jesus as the Lord and Saviour, he is free from all curses of the dark power. But if s/he is unsure about God’s Word and does not believe in God’s power, the curses could not be broken, because the Word of God gives liberation. … It is the Word that liberates and saves. If you believe, the Word will bring relief. … If you already believe in Jesus, you are already baptised, and you receive the Word, you can do your own deliverance prayer.\textsuperscript{176}


\textsuperscript{174} See chapter 1, 27.


\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
Here, Tony locates the healing power not in the atonement of Christ, as commonly believed by the Pentecostals, but in the Word of God, as Reformed Christians like Tosari also located it.  

Tony includes the importance of proclaiming the Word verbally and having a clean heart in order to break the spiritual bondage. He interprets Joshua 1:7 by asserting,

> Your words can bless you or curse you: …what you said will return back to you. … If you desire a blessed life and your prayers answered, you have to make sure that your heart is clean and sincere, no hidden motives.

He also says, “In order to be free from the curse we should pray in Jesus’ name; open your heart to receive Jesus; let the Word take root in your heart, because the Word will set you free; and proclaim the Word verbally.” In addition, family love has the power to break the charm of a charmed spouse, children, parents, or siblings. Tony comments, “Any ilmu / spiritual power would lose its grip if it is faced with a sincere love.” In conclusion, God, God’s Word, and love are considered as higher powers than those of the spirit world. The Word and love belong to the heart, the core of the human being, and thus to a higher order than the devil’s deception, which targets the human mind and awareness in the soul, and which later affects the physical body.

2.4.3.2. The Reversal of God’s Creational Blessing

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179 Ibid.

The spirit world consists of the fallen angels who reverse God’s blessing on creation into a curse. The spirit world began when the first man and woman fell into sin. Tony teaches that

When Adam and Eve sinned, … the fallen angels fused themselves with the earth’s atmosphere. They became the energy of the earth and formed the spirit world. … The dynamics of the spiritual reality are faster than the velocity of light and sound, and thus the spirits are able to penetrate the physical dimension.\(^\text{181}\)

Tony asserts that the spirit world took shape following the rebellion of the first humans, and it continues to curse God’s creation, mainly in the areas of sexuality, posterity, and land, which bear the potential of life, fertility, and growth. Within this paradigm the verse “Cursed is the land because of you” (Genesis 3:17) could mean that the spirit world has permeated the earth and fused itself with nature to form a dark energy.

He delineates the dynamic relationship between physical beings and the spirit world further:

The spirit world is affected by the reality on the earth, because the spirit world is fused with the universe. It is like the human being with his shadow, they are united but not conflated.\(^\text{182}\)

Tony’s assertions about metaphysics that, and how spiritual realities can fuse into the physical reality, seemingly omit the individual responsibility of sinful behaviours. However, his assertion concerning a person’s bitterness or unforgiving heart may allude to a person’s free will in seeking God.

Tony explains the reversal of blessing into cursing in the shamanistic rites:

Satan is not the Creator, hence the blessing of Satan is taken from the descendants [of a client]. The parents could be rich, but the children and grandchildren could not enjoy their wealth and always failed in their endeavours. … You could be rich [with Satan’s help] but you have to pay the price: sickness, mental illness of your children... there should be sacrifices when you appeal to Satan. The peak of the mystical rite throughout the world is the night before Friday... The sixth day, Friday, is the number of man…. On


\(^{182}\) Ibid.
the sixth day, God blessed, but Satan cursed…. The animal’s blood is poured onto the
ground in the mystical rite…. because the human being is made of the ground.\textsuperscript{183}

The reversal of the blessing aims to destroy the elements of human life by dedicating them to
the devil: these include the time of human creation, posterity, blood, and the ground as the main
ingredients of a human being. In particular, the devil reverses God’s creational blessing in
human sexuality.

2.4.3.3. The spirit world attacks human sexuality

The spirit world reverses the blessings of human sexuality by confusing sexual identity,
disturbing the reality of sexual intercourse, binding the human genitalia of those who consented
to the fertility blessing, and promoting sexual impotence for religious reasons. With regards to
LGBT and the spirit world, Tony teaches,

In the case of a transgender person, when the spirit of a shaman is outside his body, it
will take the sexual identity of a victim located in her/his mind, and exchange it with the
sexual identity of the other sex. The new sexual identity will influence his/her neuron
system in the brain to behave accordingly…. LGBT cases occur because someone is
playing spiritually with the sexual identity of the victim, or because of generational
curses…. If somebody possesses this spiritual knowledge (to exchange the sexual
identity of another person) then his/her descendants would have sexual perversions as a
curse: becoming transgender, homosexual, etc…. his/her mind is transferred (into the
sexual identity of another sex) and bound, so s/he lives as if dreaming.\textsuperscript{184}

The perversion of sexual identity is, according to Tony, a result of others’ sin—someone is
playing with a person’s sexual identity, or it is a sin of his/her ancestors—rather than a direct
consequence of personal idolatry (cf. Romans 1:23-26). The solution is to break the bond

\textsuperscript{183} Daud Tony, “Mantra, Kutuk Pelet” [Mantra, Curse, and Charm], LGF Church, published May 1, 2015.

\textsuperscript{184} Daud Tony, “Ilmu Pencabut Roh,” [The Knowledge to Disjoin the Spirit from the Body]. Jovan Net, published
between the victim and the shaman who switches the victim’s sexual identity. This is done in Jesus’ name, and the victim is offered psychological counselling afterwards.

The spirit world also disturbs the reality of sexual intercourse and human marriage. Tony witnesses,

Can Satan impregnate a woman? … The real nature of Satan is an angelic being, but it disguises itself.... When a *genderuwo* [a form of disturbing spirit] disturbs a woman, … it would appear like the woman’s husband, but with a strong sulfur or cananga odour. The woman’s mind would be subdued and overpowered by the disturbing spirit, so that she feels as if she is sexually consummating, with a strong sulfur odour throughout the mating…. During the fake intercourse, the disturbing spirit will take the sperm of a masturbating man nearby, and with the spiritual power, it will insert the sperm into the woman’s womb to make a conception. The disturbing spirit can also insert DNA from a monkey’s cell. The child will be born as a human, but the spirit world will be incarnate in him/her. The voice of the baby will be like monkey, but also like a human being. There is an inner connection between the child and the disturbing spirit. When the child cries, the spirit will come.¹⁸⁵

Even though it is not real intercourse, a spiritual agreement is established through the mating experience with the spirit. He further testifies,

When a person undergoes fake intercourse with a spirit, s/he establishes an agreement with it. For example, if someone desires to be a ruler, he has to mate with Nyi Roro Kidul. That is not real sexual intercourse, but a spiritual agreement.¹⁸⁶

There are two plausible explanations of sexual intercourse as a means to making a spiritual agreement regarding a certain territory and human posterity. First, the egg and the sperm, just as blood, function as vessels of prospective life. Hence to inappropriately dispense the egg and the sperm outside the procreative purpose could be an act of reversing the elements of life into a curse, just as pouring out blood onto the ground in the rite. This agrees with a figural interpretation of Leviticus 15, insofar as the inappropriate discharging of semen is “a sign of

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¹⁸⁶ See chapter 1, 30-31.
frustrated life-formation” in the fallen world.\textsuperscript{187} Second, the act of sexual intercourse connotes the sharing of one’s life with another and the inter-human covenant that creates life. The devil perverts it into a covenant with a spirit that would bring death.

Another consequence of mastering spiritual knowledge/power in JFR is to put oneself at risk of sexual abstinence and impotence. Tony witnesses his own experience,

> If you have spiritual knowledge, there are certain requirements: you cannot marry and you have to eliminate any desire and wish until you receive the highest level (of meditation), \textit{moksha}, and you become impotent. … Of course, this is the devil’s deception to make his work look good and virtuous.\textsuperscript{188}

The purpose of channeling one’s mind in JFR meditation is to acquire the true \textit{rasa}, the overseer of other feelings and physical senses that would enable the practitioner to control the universe.

The practice seems to be derived from the idea in Mahayana Tantrayana Buddhism that the sperm and its transmission constitute a concentration of power, and they would become a superior form of energy when accumulated (i.e. not dispensed).\textsuperscript{189} In reality, such abstinence dulls the physical senses, desires, and even sexual potential. In sum, the attack against human sexuality is to pervert the function of human sexuality from procreating normally, and to establish an agreement with the spirit world that binds him/her and his/her descendants as well.

2.4.3.4. The spirit world and the JFR narrative

The spirit world works behind and through the local myths and narratives. Tony testifies that

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{187} Ephraim Radner, \textit{Leviticus} (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos 2008), 15.  \\
\textsuperscript{188} Daud Tony, “Ilmu pencebut roh,” 2015.  \\
\textsuperscript{189} See chapter 1, 29.
\end{flushleft}
In Indonesia, the highest leader of Satan is Nyi Roro Kidul, the centre is in Central Java…. Every conflict begins in Central Java: Yogyakarta and Solo [names of cities in the central part of Java, whose kings perform *hierogamy* with Nyi Roro Kidul]…. The powers and principalities in the air take local myths. The spirit of darkness disguises itself as historical figures such as Nyi Roro Kidul and Prince Jayakarta.  

The spirit world’s use of local narratives to deceive human beings is a common theme in spiritual warfare. The pantheistic god, the lower deities, and the spiritual beings in the underworld in JFR are of the same reality as the spirit world, which becomes the territorial spirit of the region.

The pattern of the reversal of creational blessings is prevalent in JFR myths: the human being is created by intermediary figures, despite being willed by the impersonal highest deity, and the intermediaries exert their power over men and women. In reality, the spirit world, which is made up of the fallen intermediary figures, influences fallen humanity. The human vocation to have dominion over the earth and to multiply (cf. Genesis 1:28) is perverted into a desire to master the universe by denying the senses and sexuality. In addition, Tony mentions that the lamentations and other expressions of suffering by people who are killed unnaturally can bring curses to the land. Thus, Tony locates the binding power of the spirit world in the words of myths or human speech.

2.4.3.5. Human personhood and sexuality in Tony’s theology

Tony delineates the human person as a trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit, based on his shamanistic experience. The soul and the body are the subjects of the spirit world’s intervention,

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192 See chapter 1, 24-5.
and the human spirit is weak, unless the human spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and the heart believes in the Word of God. The spirit world reverses God’s creational blessing into a curse on human sexuality and posterity by using JFR myths to deceive and to disrupt God’s original plan for human beings. Hence, Tony distinguishes between the false narrative (and the spirit world behind it), which deceives the mind and soul of the human being, and the Word as the genuine narrative (through which the Holy Spirit works in us), which resides in the human heart. Tony’s approach seems to assume a cosmic spiritual conflict between God and the evil spirits as personal beings (fallen angels), in which the evil spirits are able to disturb the physical and psychological situations of mankind.

Tony’s first-hand account as a former shaman validates several theological claims about the existence of spiritual warfare, the validity of which or even the terminology of which is often questioned. However, his testimonies may contradict each other. His explanation of sexual abstinence in obtaining mystical true rasa does not agree with the fact that his grandparents, who taught him magic, were married. Moreover, how can we validate the objectivity of his past experiences as a shaman and not be suspicious that they were partly deceptions of the reality-disturbing spirits? Biblical foundationalism and a thorough exegesis should accompany his reflections to ensure the validity of his witness.

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194 Gregory Boyd, God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 89.
195 See, for example, a question about the validity of spiritual warfare in John Smulo, “Spiritual Warfare Profiles of Satanism; Are They Misleading?” Lutheran Theological Journal 36, 3 (2002), 126-137. See also a question of terminology: whether “spiritual warfare” would connote violence. As witnessed by Tony, the term is normally used among battling shamans during a spiritual fight. See E. Janet Warren, “Spiritual Warfare: A Dead Metaphor?” Journal of Pentecostal Theology 21 (2012), 278-297.
2.5. Javanese Christian folk anthropology

2.5.1. Tosari’s and Tony’s theological methods

Tosari’s and Tony’s theological methods engage a combination of cognitive, affective, and experiential dimensions that employ senses. They employ what I would call a sense-based reading that consists of the spiritual discernment of right from wrong based on the past engagement with the spirit world, the apprehension of truth through the senses, and the priority of the heart. Their sense-based reading may take at least two forms: literal and figurative. A literal reading of the spiritual world in scripture makes sense of Tony’s and Tosari’s experiences with the spirit world. Conversely, their experiences explicate vividly the narrative of the spirit world in scripture, which is a minor theme in the Bible. To a certain extent, Tosari also applies figurative reading by discerning a particular sense/feeling in the figure or metaphor. For example, in 5.0 he associates the true rasa with the salt of the earth. However, JFT can employ more figurative readings in dealing with various issues, such as sexual violence, as we will discuss in the next chapter.

Retaining their Javanese pedagogical strategy, Javanese folk theologians utilise the senses to apprehend spiritual reality. Tosari links the apprehension of the spiritual sense (true rasa) to the physical senses by suggesting meditative singing and breath techniques in meditating on scripture. Tony describes the apprehension of spiritual reality through the physical senses in a way that presumes the openness of the heart. He asserts,

All creatures can sense the presence of the spirit world. Toddlers would cry if Satan is inside the house. ... But not all can sense God’s presence. Only the believers can sense

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197 Van Akkeren, 175.
God’s presence, with a heart that longs for God and by believing God’s Word. S/he will receive the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{198}

The priority of the heart is understood within a concentric personhood with the heart at its center, as will be discussed further below.

2.5.2. Personhood

Since JFT adapts JFR’s concept of personhood in theologising, we need to ensure that JFT’s structure of personhood agrees with that of Christian tradition. Tosari’s theology of personhood claims that the person consists of the human physical body, wherein the physical senses are found; the soul as the vessel of the mind, awareness, affections; and the heart, which is distinguished from the soul. Tony’s delineation of personhood as body-soul-spirit is tripartite, and elsewhere he mentions an experience of having his spirit outside the body while his soul was bound.\textsuperscript{199} By and large, the Christian tradition recognises the visible body and the invisible soul of the human person, with the soul having two functions: to relate with God, and to relate with creation in thought, imagination, and emotion.

The closest parallel between JFT personhood and traditional Christian personhood is with Irenaeus. By reflecting on Jesus Christ, Irenaeus contended that, ontologically, a human being consists of body and soul, but is actualised in the body, soul, and spirit, because of the Holy Spirit who is at work in the human being.\textsuperscript{200} In keeping with traditional Christianity, my argument in the next chapter will take Irenaeus’ position; and I will support JFT claims about

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{199} Daud Tony, “Ilmu pencabut roh,” 2015.
\textsuperscript{200} M.C. Steenberg, Of God and Man (New York: T &T Clark, 2009), 38-41.
\end{flushleft}
the Holy Spirit, who works through the Word at the core of the human being (the upper soul or “heart” or, for Tony, the human “spirit”).

JFT assumes a concentric model in which the highest level of influence is that of the heart on the soul, and then on the physical body. The core of the human being (the heart) can be filled with the Word and divine will, or left empty. The spirit world can only confuse the lower soul with the false narratives affecting the mental *rasa*: awareness, reason, and affection. Subsequently, the mental *rasa* will influence the decision-making process and physical senses. Unless the heart is filled and aligned with the Word, the person has no good mental and physical senses. Tosari describes a person without true *rasa* as artificial and dead while physically alive (stanza 6). Tony equates the weak human spirit (the core of the human being) with someone sleeping or hypnotised (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7). The empty heart easily yields to the direction of the soul that is influenced by the spirit world through the false narrative. Therefore, a genuine person is one who believes in Christ and receives the divine will in the Word of God.

2.5.3. Narratives of God and myths of the world

The Holy Spirit and the spirit world work on different levels in a person through the Word of God and through the JFR myths respectively. God’s narrative resides at the core of the human being, while the pagan myths can only affect the lower soul. One’s state of faith will affect either the spiritual interventions of the Holy Spirit to a person’s heart or the spirit world’s influence on her/his soul. As the Holy Spirit internalises the Word at the core of the human being, the person with the open heart would align her/his heart to the divine will, and this would make her/him able to govern the soul and the physical body. S/he would no longer be subject to

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the spirit world’s confusion in her/his soul. Tosari associates the Word mainly with the divine will to which our hearts align, and hence to the true *rasa*. Tony describes the Word in the sense of scripture as liberating and saving a person from the spirit’s bondage. The Word and divine will are stronger because they are of a higher order than the spirit world or the false narrative that can only attack the human soul. In the contest between narratives and spirits, we understand that our position in Christ is thus “higher than powers and principalities of the world” (Ephesians 1:21); and that the Word in us has conquered the world (1 John 2:14, 15, 17).

2.5.4. On the senses (*rasa*) and sexuality

Both Tosari and Tony agree that the bodily senses correspond to the mental emotional senses and the spiritual senses. Senses are the connectors between the body and the soul. They are overseen by the spiritual sense, which is our heart’s alignment to the divine will. When the Word does not reside in our hearts, the soul is misled; it is subjected to the spirit world, and it misleads the bodily senses. The senses may perceive false narratives if not countered by the Word. When the divine will is absent, what is detestable seems to be pleasurable, and what brings death seemingly brings life.

The devil’s main agenda is to reverse the creational blessing by disturbing the reality of human sexuality, destroying posterity, and nullifying the senses that connect the person to creation. JFR presents sexuality as a key element of salvation, with human actions standing as prerequisites for blessings; but it can actually constitute a perversion that brings death and destruction to the human being. It does so by confusing the mind and soul of an empty-hearted person through a false narrative. The reversal includes an objectification of the woman’s body, sexual intercourse to establish a spiritual agreement, and sexual abstinence to achieve *moksha*/mystical true *rasa*.
The correlation between sexual reality and confusion by the spirit world illuminates our reading of Colossians 2:20-23, where Paul warns the Christians of the elemental spiritual forces that deceive human beings by harsh regulations and bodily control, on one hand, and sexual indulgence on the other hand.

2.5.5. Critical assessment of JFT

JFT’s engagement with the spirit world helps us appreciate the spiritual dimension of the Word, its relation with the human senses, and sexuality. However, JFT needs to guard itself from divorcing Christ from the Word. On one hand, JFT’s Word-centered anthropology clarifies that following Christ means obeying His Word. On the other hand, labeling Christ as the Perfect Man whom we are to imitate (rather than identifying ourselves with Him) could lead one to degrade the living Word into a set of regulations. We must not forget that Christ is the embodied Word, and that Christ’s Spirit is in us. Thus, to reconcile the gap is to assert that our sanctification journey begins with receiving Christ; and therefore we have access to Christ’s spiritual blessings whenever we take heed to Christ’s Word.

The second challenge for JFT’s theological anthropology is a stark anthropological-centered theology that is seemingly inconsistent with Reformed theology as its parent tradition. Reformed theology emphasises the total depravity of men in their inability to take the first step to God. Tosari too, contrasts the Christian true rasa as God’s grace that is given freely by the help of the Spirit (1.0 and 1.4) with the mystical true rasa that requires sexual abstinence. However, both Tosari and Tony emphasise that, despite being under the influence of the spirit world, men and women are responsible to free themselves by opening their hearts to the Word
of life and embracing the divine will. The gap demands further reflection on Javanese folk soteriology.

2.6. **Summary**

Javanese folk theological anthropology explicates the interconnectivity between spiritual reality, narratives, senses (*rasa*), and embodiment, with *rasa* as the connecting vocabulary among those elements. Human sexuality is the battlefield of JFR myths and rites that aim to destroy humanity. While Tosari’s and Tony’s reflections touch on this, they leave a good deal unexamined. The close connection between sensuality and the human sense that correlates with the true sense (*true* *rasa*) deserves further exploration in the next chapter.
Chapter 3

A Javanese Folk Theology of Sexual Violence

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is a construction of a Javanese folk theology (JFT) of sexual violence, based on the Javanese folk theological anthropology developed in the previous chapter. This study began with the need to theologically address sexual violence specifically in the rites of Javanese folk religion (JFR), and it explores the possibility to apply the solution to JFR rites to other instances of sexual violence. As demonstrated in chapter two, the spirits harm human sexuality by deceiving people regarding the function of sexuality, especially if a person’s heart lacks the divine will. Furthermore, the spirit world’s violation of human sexuality also occurs outside the context of rape, routine physical abuse, and sodomy. According to JFT, sexual violence could simply mean a fake orgasm during fake intercourse with a spirit, or unnatural sexual abstinence to obtain spiritual energy. At a glance, JFT regards any sexual behaviour against God’s divine will as sexual violence, because such behavior presumes the intervention of the spirit world through false narratives.

The reality of the spirit world in JFR sexual rites challenges the traditional understanding of sexual violence. The traditional understanding defines the violation of the sexual body, particularly in rape and sodomy, in terms of one’s (lack of) consent. This understanding does not consider the divine will or the inner sexual identity of the person. The JFR rites require a theological response based on a theology of sexuality and sensitivity to the spirit world.
Furthermore, we need a theology of sexual violence that arises from a non-dualistic background, in which the discourse of sexual violence comprises both spiritual and physical issues.

A theology that may fulfill our quest is John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body* (TB). It prescribes a non-dualistic view of sexuality, as a response to the sexual revolution that denigrates the body. Yet TB does not discuss the spirit world’s involvement in sexuality. Meanwhile, JFT offers an insight on the outworking of the spirit world in sexual violence. However, its theology of human sexuality is underdeveloped, despite the prevalent sexual rites in JFR. A JFT of sexual violence will be constructed based on a JFT framework that discusses the interaction between human sexuality, the false and true narratives of God and creation, and the spirit world.

I propose that sexual violence is caused by the lies of the spirit world against God’s truth, insofar as they distort sexuality’s function from being an analogy for salvation into being a means of salvation. They do this by establishing a framework in which the Word is absent from the human heart as the *rasa* of love and life. Therefore, beyond the marred body and personal indignity, sexual violence ruins God’s image at the sexual level—namely, the image of God’s covenantal love—through the violation of the senses. This distortion of the image through sexual violence further obscures the faith and knowledge of God. The violence begins with the myths that pervert the role of sexuality, through which God’s enemy destroys God’s creational blessing. Since the main issue is spiritual in nature, the solution too should prioritise the spiritual reality. As the spirits work through the false narrative, the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God in the human heart to banish the myths. Hence, a spiritual approach should take precedence in dealing with sexual violence pastorally. In addition, given that every instance of sexual violence is always embedded in a narrative, the JFT framework for addressing sexual violence can be applied to other cases of sexual violence beyond the context of JFR. Hence, I
contend that any sexual behaviour that is not in line with the divine will is sexually violent because it implies the rebellious spirit behind the false narrative.

My theological extrapolation of JFT will be further compared with John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*, in order to position JFT’s contribution to theological discourse on human sexuality and to maintain its Christian integrity. Both TB and JFT address the harmonisation of the senses in the redeemed person, and they are both anti-dualist. TB understands sexual violence as a disregarding of the person through the objectification of the body, and thus such violence works against the Word of God concerning the mystery of salvation inscribed in the body. However, TB lacks a clear theology of the Word in the human person. I propose that a JFT of sexual violence adds the dimension of divine or demonic narratives and the spirit-reality to the discussion of sexual violence, and that it clarifies TB’s notion of the “anti-Word” and the objectification of the body.

### 3.2. Prolegomena

#### 3.2.1. Method of construction

My theology of sexual violence will be built on a Javanese folk theological anthropology of spiritual reality. This reality works behind the narratives and myths, and it influences the elements of personhood through the correlation of senses/raasa. A JFT of sexual violence will be developed based on the explication of the Word and senses, with Christ as the sole example of a man who is perfectly united to God’s will and who thus has the perfect true *raasa*, which He is

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then able to share with other human beings through His divine power. The construction will follow JFT’s concentric pattern, beginning with the divine will at the centre of the human being, followed by the contesting narratives in the human mind, then the dynamics of sexual violence in the sexual body (using the rasa discourse), and ending with the impact of sexual violence on the life of the Church.

3.2.2. Theology of the Word and Christology in JFT

Like Pseudo-Macarius and Calvin, JFT aligns the life of the inner self and centers the order of the universe on the Word of God. The Word is treated as the divine principle of the logos that governs the creation and brings order. In particular, JFT acknowledges the transformative power of the Word to restore the inner person and the senses. JFT’s perspective on the eternal logos involves the view that scriptural claims are timeless and applicable to our present lives. Hence, the Word at the core of the human being (the true rasa) is seen as an eternal decree that reveals which senses are from God. Thus JFT’s claim about the Word, in line with Calvin, further clarifies the Augustinian notion that the grace of Christ has overcome human concupiscence and harmonises the senses.

In Rasa sejati, the true rasa is received—or potentially actualised—as a person believes in Christ. However, I want to extend the Christology further, so as to emphasise that Christ as the Perfect Man is the perfect image of God (cf. Col 1:15). To align our senses to God’s will is to receive and obey God’s Word, through which the Spirit transforms and sanctifies our inner

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203 RS 14.4, see chapter 2, 47.
204 Pseudo-Macarius, 99.
205 Parsons, 220.
207 RS 14.5. See chapter 2, 47.
being. The Spirit grows the right senses, feelings, and will in us, that we may become like Christ who is united with the Father.© Hence to possess the true rasa is to be like Christ in one will with God, and to actualise God’s image in fullness. Christ, then, is the parameter and safeguard in our theology of sexuality and violence.

3.2.3. An expanded definition of sexual violence

The interconnectivity between senses, narratives, sexuality, and the spirit world in the theological themes of JFT encourages us to broaden our scope in discussing and defining sexual violence. Traditionally, sexual violence is defined as violence against bodily integrity when someone trespasses the personal boundaries of others and thus treats them as nonpersons.© The traditional understanding of sexual violence only involves physical and emotional levels and focuses on rape and sexual assault, which objectify the sexual body for the sake of pleasure. However, since JFT locates sexual identity in the soul, and since the soul is the target of the spirit world’s intervention, sexual violence is then defined as arising from natural and spiritual forces that destroy the sexual elements of a human person, leading to death and opposing life. This chapter describes the extent of sexual violence with respect to a person’s elemental life: that is, as touching will, mind, and body.

3.3. A Javanese Folk Theology of Sexual Violence

© When Tosari asserts that Christ as the Perfect Man cannot be surpassed by other human beings, he might be conflating Christ’s divine nature, which is one with the Father, with Christ’s perfect human will. Here I bring together more closely the Word as Scripture and the Word as Christ by saying that our self-alignment to the Word will shape us into Christ-likeness, as confessional Christianity affirms.

Paulus Tosari mentions the characteristics of the possessor of the true *rasa*. He sincerely loves God and loves others;\(^{210}\) and the true *rasa* leads him to life in fullness.\(^ {211}\) Since our capacity to love is preceded by God’s love for us (cf. 1 John 4:19), Tosari’s reflection implies that the true *rasa* conveys the love of God. A person who has experienced God’s love would be able to love and to bear fruit. Tosari further asserts that the strongest *rasa* of God’s love and life is manifested in God’s forgiveness to humanity through Jesus Christ.\(^ {212}\) His assertion also implies that the Word is the harbinger of God’s love. But this divine love could only be felt when someone reads the Word primarily with an affectionate heart.\(^ {213}\) Therefore, receiving Christ is just the first step of opening our heart to God’s *rasa*. God’s *rasa* is described most clearly in the Word of God, and thus to live in the fullness of the true *rasa* is to continually open our heart to embrace the Word after receiving Christ. God’s love and life as the true *rasa* governs the mental senses and consequently bodily senses; and it gives meaning to sexual identity, attitude, and behaviours in the mind and body. Yet Tosari’s assertion is open for further clarification. What does he mean by life and love in the divine will?

I will use a concept from John Calvin (from Tosari’s theological tradition) and from John Paul II to explicate the divine will of love and to infer a concept of the divine will of life from Tosari’s and Tony’s reflections on the practical form of life. God’s will of love is revealed to us in His covenant. God’s covenant implies God’s way of relating with the creation: neither aloof nor

\(^{210}\) RS 6.2: *Trisna nyatan nganggang-anggang, nadyan mring tyang Widi myang putra Gusti, tuwin sanak sedulur...pan mangkono wateknya rasa satuhu* (True love to God, God’s Son, and neighbours … that is the characteristic of the true *rasa*).

\(^{211}\) See chapter 1, 29.

\(^{212}\) RS 16.4-5. *Sihnya tyang maha agung, marma paring juru basuki, paring gusti jeng Putra, akarya panebus sarehning sukmanya jamna ... patrap pancering tresna sejati, apratela lumantar kang putra, supaya mangerthi dheve, sib paduka hyang agung* (The love of God, through the saviour, through the Son, redeemed the soul of the human being … the outer behaviour that outshines the true *rasa* is described through the Son, that you may understand the love of the great God).

\(^{213}\) See chapter 2, 38.
fused with creation, but in a loving relationship initiated and kept by himself. 214 Human beings are called to be in a covenantal relationship with God, which assumes faithful devotion and love. God’s covenant with the creation was broken, renewed, and finally fulfilled in Christ. The divine will of life springs from God’s covenant. God renewed his covenant with Noah’s family and ordered them to be fruitful and multiply (cf. Genesis 9:7-10). 215 God created the world because he elected the creation before the creational event took place (cf. Ephesians 1:4). 216 The dimensions of life, as tacitly implied by Tosari and Tony, are the Word as the generator of life, and procreation as the multiplier of life. 217 God carried out His covenantal plan by creating life, which has two dimensions: the Word that creates life (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29), and procreation that multiplies life (Gen 1:28). Hence, to remain in life is to remain in God’s Word. In contrast, twisting God’s Word is the beginning of death (Gen 3:4-5). Death takes place when life is sought apart from the Word. The basic fault of Adam and Eve is that they wanted to gain life by gaining knowledge apart from the Word of God as true knowledge (Genesis 3:6). The blessing of procreation after original sin is restricted by pain during childbirth (Genesis 3:16) and the limitation of man’s life span (Genesis 3:19).

God’s divine will of love and life are reflected and actualised in human marriage (Gen 2:23-25). God’s covenantal love towards His people is further analogised with human marriage (cf. Isaiah 54:4, 62:5, Hosea 1:2; Ezekiel 23:1-49, Revelation 19:7). John Paul II asserts that spousal communion is a self-giving of two persons to each other, wherein each person knows

217 Tosari and Tony never mention the dimensions of life explicitly. Yet we can infer this conclusion based on their theological reflections. Tosari mentions the true *rasa* (divine will), which will cause life, as opposed to the wicked *rasa* that brings death (RS 2.0). Tony theologises the work of the devil, who sabotages God’s plan and brings death by destroying posterity and thus procreation. Procreation, as God’s original design, multiplies life. See chapter 2, 43 and 54-55.
her/himself, the other person, and God better.\textsuperscript{218} Furthermore, by creating humans as male and female, God invites them to participate in generating life and exercising dominion over the earth. Reflecting God’s \textit{rasa} of covenant and communion is thus God’s original plan in creating man and woman.

God restores humanity and the capacity to possess the true \textit{rasa} through Christ, the Perfect Man and the perfect image of God.\textsuperscript{219} Marriage and sexuality are redeemed as the promise of salvation and the Messiah is fulfilled by Christ, Eve’s offspring (Gen 3:15). In Christ, a restored marriage reflects and accomplishes God’s divine will of love and life, although death remains a restriction to life. The ideal marriage that reflects the divine will is, according to Paul, like Christ’s sacrificial love for the Church and the Church’s respect for Christ (cf. Ephesians 5:22-33). Thus marriage has the potential to be an analogy of redemption through which we are formed into God’s covenantal love. This potential can only be actualised within the context of those redeemed persons who partake in Christ’s spiritual blessings (cf. Ephesians 1:3).

\textit{JFT} recognises that the received Word in the heart, the divine will or the true \textit{rasa}, is the criterion for life in fullness. The harmony of personhood and the senses is distorted by original sin, which brings disharmony to a person until s/he receives grace in Christ. Without the grace of Christ, the Word will not take root in the human heart, and thus the sexual identity in the soul and the sexual organs of the body can no longer convey love and life soundly, although sexual identity and the sexual body remain as channels of new life. In this way, even the absence of God’s Word from the core of the human being does not invalidate the marriage of unbelievers. In short, only by dwelling in Christ through continuous engagement with the Word of God can a

\textsuperscript{218} John Paul II, 257.
\textsuperscript{219} RS 14.5, see chapter 2, 47.
person in an actual marriage know and internalise the true love and life that will transform her/his virtues, senses, feelings, and sexual behaviours.

3.3.2. Sexual myths in JFR as violence to human sexuality: a JFT perspective

This section discusses the extent of JFR’s false narratives in confusing the reality of human sexuality. Since JFT claims that only the divine will makes a person live in fullness, the omission of the divine will means the distortion of sexuality and sexual behaviour. Without the Word in the human heart, the function of sexuality is perverted from being an analogy of salvation into being a means of salvation, taking the place of Christ. Opposing the pantheistic JFR, the Word received in the heart thus creates a distinction between God and human beings by revealing the inequality between Creator and creation. At the same time the Word received in the heart brings humans closer to God by performing God’s divine will in human sexuality and thus actualising God’s image in humanity.

The offense against the Word in JFR’s myths is demonstrated by its denigration of the themes of covenantal love and personal communion. The expression of love in human sexuality is perverted into an avenue for gaining spiritual power. The distorted discourse of power, dominion, fertility, communion with God, and spiritual knowledge in the perverted sexuality of JFR’s rites creates confusion and fractures human personhood. JFR perverts sexuality from life into death by transforming human sexuality into a means for achieving life. JFR’s thwarting of God’s eternal will occurs through three lies: by hijacking sexuality as a means of salvation that actually leads to death; by exchanging the roles of the redeemed and the redeemer and thus confusing the rasa of God’s covenant; and by misconstruing the sacramentality of the sexual body and of sexual intercourse itself. In contrast with Christianity, JFR teaches that procreative
life has to endure death for the sake of power and dominion, two assets that are actually already included with sexuality and posterity in God’s original plan.

First, JFR rites wrongly associate sexuality with being a means of salvation rather than an analogy of salvation. This perversion of sexuality into a means of salvation causes further violence when the dimension of personal communion is neglected and abused for the sake of achieving communion with the deity, or obtaining blessing, as in the case of yogic practice and hierogamy. The JFR myth is in contrast with JFT, where communion with God through Christ precedes fellowship with human neighbours (cf. Ephesians 2:11). JFR thus elevates the function of the human body and yet degrades the person who is embodied.

The second error in JFR’s narrative is the perverted depiction of the role of women and men in spousal relationships. In at least four major cases – hierogamy with the goddess of the ocean, the narrative of the death of the fertility goddess, the shiny genitalia that gave birth to the rulers, and sexual yoga – we see how the woman is depicted as a dispenser of power, a holy shrine and redeemer, even while she is also seen as an object rather than as a person.220 As for the man, he is a protagonist who has a responsibility to subdue the woman. By contrast, in Christianity the woman is indeed a suitable helper for the man (cf. Genesis 2:20), but also the object of the man’s love and redemption (cf. Ephesians 5:22-33). JFR thus confuses the role of helper with redeemer and places the burden of redemption on women. In view of the analogy of Christ and the Church in Ephesians 5:22-33, the JFR narrative then swaps the role of the Church with Christ’s. JFR’s narrative, that is, marks a reversal of Ephesians 5.

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220 See chapter 1, 15.
The third error of the JFR myths lies in the misplaced attribution of *sacramentality* (in a metaphysical sense) and *sacrament* (in a Roman Catholic sense) to its sexual rites.\[^{221}\]

*Sacramentality* is defined as the unmediated intervention of the spirit world into and among physical entities.\[^{222}\] JFR locates sacramentality in the sperm (which can be transmuted into spiritual energy), the woman’s pudenda, or intercourse with the spirit world to signal an agreement of blessing and protection. By contrast, JFT attributes sacramentality to the Word and to the Word’s narratives and speech.\[^{223}\] Thus, from JFT’s perspective, the spoken mantras are the key to the spirit world’s intervention.

JFR thwarts the original meaning of the conjugal relationship as *sacrament* (in a Roman Catholic sense) from being a symbol of an already-past spiritual event into a prerequisite for a spiritual event. JFR marriage represents the cosmic marriage, and claims that it causes the blessing of the harvest if performed appropriately. Earthly marriage seems to directly correspond to the activities of the deities in the spiritual realm. The sacramental character of JFR marriage determines the marriage of the spiritual realities, and thus the physical seemingly takes precedence over the spiritual; it omits the element of divine love from humanity and replaces it with the sexual loves of deities and human spirits. Thus, JFR marriage becomes the actualisation of a covenant with deities rather than a symbol of God’s covenant with humanity. In short, in JFR, marriage becomes a prerequisite of love (understood in terms of power and dominion) rather than the actualisation of love.

\[^{221}\] Apart from the definition of sacramentality, there are at least three understandings of sacraments. Protestantism defines a sacrament as a sign that contains the mystery of the Gospel and thus has a redemptive character (Parsons, 147). For the Roman Catholics, a sacrament is a sign of the divine mystery and is the outer expression of the inner life of a person (John Paul II, 489-490, n88). The third definition refers to the coherence of inner life and action, which, based on JFT, can only be achieved when a person receives Christ and His word. James Reed, *A Study Resource on Human Sexuality* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1986), 49.

\[^{222}\] See chapter 1, 18.

\[^{223}\] See chapter 2, 66.
JFT refutes JFR’s error regarding the metaphorical function of marriage, basing itself on JFT’s logic of physical reality as something that symbolises spiritual reality.224 Thus, a marriage life that follows the pattern of God’s covenantal love in scripture is a mark of the true rasa inside. In contrast, adulterous behaviours signify the prevalence of the wicked rasa that leads to spiritual adultery and spiritual death.

In sum, JFR demands that human sexuality be a means of salvation. It twists the role of men and women in contrast with the analogical function of Christian marriage in Ephesians 5:22-33. In JFR, the woman bears the burden of the redeemer whose sacrificial action can restore the creational blessings, including fertility, abundant harvest, dominion and power. JFR elevates the function of human sexuality from an analogy of God’s covenantal love to His people, which will be consummated at the end of time, into the fulfillment of the hope for communion with God in the present. The function of the human sperm as the bearer of life’s potential is distorted into that of a repository of spiritual power. Inheriting Hindu pantheism, JFR sexual rites thus apply no distinction between the natural and the spiritual, between the Creator and creation, and between the redeemer and the redeemed.

Therefore, the second level of JFT’s description of sexual violence is given in its false narrative, which would see inscribed in the soul a perversion of the function of sexuality as an image of salvation and expression of self-giving. When sexual violence is perpetrated, it has a deeper impact on the victims who possess no true rasa to govern their sexual identity in the soul and their sexual organs. The victims thus have no divine will to re-order their personal being and identity by means of love and life.225

224 See Reed, 49.
225 See chapter 2, 64-5.
3.3.3. Sexual violence through the manufacturing of the wicked *rasa* in the body

This section explicates the interrelation of sexual violence in the physical body and in the soul through the concept of *rasa* as known in JFT. The internalisation of *rasa*, which is given in an embodied way, takes two forms: emptying the self so as to be filled with the shaping power of the divine narrative, and embodying *rasa* in action.\(^{226}\) According to JFR, our meaning and identity are appropriated through feeling or *rasa*.\(^{227}\) *Rasa*, although referring to the faculty of sensing, comprises physical sensing, emotions, awareness, discernment, intuition, ethics, and spiritual knowledge.\(^{228}\) JFR believes that the cultivation of physical sexual *rasa* will develop the true *rasa* in the heart, so as to connect the self with the divine, others, and the universe. *Rasa* is the main pedagogical strategy in Javanese culture, where wisdom and ethics are attained through aesthetic practices such as art performances that inscribe the truth through bodily refinement. Consequently, sexual violence inscribes a wicked or negative *rasa* through meditation and action in JFR’s sexual rites that would affect the inner person’s emotions and discernment.

Yet JFR’s philosophy of *rasa* contradicts itself. JFR has no distinction between good and evil, due to its pantheistic myths that claim that the prime deity resides in everything, and thus any sexual perversion and confusion are permissible because they do not violate any distinct ontological boundaries. The second difficulty with JFR’s philosophy of *rasa* lies in its cultural expectation that the person must remain calm and steady amid hardship, by mastering the situation and harmonising the self with the course of events.\(^{229}\) In practice, despite the sense of death that the sexual rites can impress on the body, the practitioners of these rites do not see their false inscription as wicked. The repetition of the rites means that the internalisation of the

\(^{226}\) Weiss, 2015, 23-4.

\(^{227}\) Yumarma, 55.

\(^{228}\) See chapter 1, 27.

\(^{229}\) Yumarma, 123.
false narrative within the soul, and the seemingly refined rasa at the centre of the human heart, are actually a camouflage of the evil rasa in the lower soul, which shapes the perverted sexual image into something that in turn reinforces more bodily violence.

JFT agrees with the rasa pedagogy and spirituality insofar as they are attentive to the sensory faculty, yet it dissents from the definition of the true rasa. For Tosari, the heart can only be filled with the Word of God; otherwise, it remains empty, weak, in a “sleeping” state (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7), and prone to follow wicked ways introduced by the evil one through the lower soul.\textsuperscript{230} The Word is revealed and given from outside the human being, but its appropriation in the human heart requires the apprehension of rasa. Tosari employs the process of emptying the self through breath meditation as the apprehension of the rasa of the Word.\textsuperscript{231} Tony employs speech in deliverance as embodying the Word in action.\textsuperscript{232} A successful deliverance cannot happen without the divine will in the human heart, which prevails against and overpowers the inscribed false narrative in the lower soul. Thus, for Tosari and Tony, the two ways of embodying rasa in Javanese pedagogy (passive and active) are unequal. In accordance with the function of the heart in overseeing the mental, emotional, and physical senses, the filling of the Word in the human heart should precede the active embodiment. Thus, for JFT, the primary means for banishing the wicked rasa in JFR narratives and rites is by receiving God’s truth in the heart and then performing the truth as it becomes the true rasa.

3.3.4. Generalising a JFT of sexual violence beyond the context of JFR sexual rites

\textsuperscript{230} See chapter 2, 65.
\textsuperscript{231} Van Akkeren, 175.
\textsuperscript{232} Tony, “Pedang roh,” 2014.
I propose that we can apply JFT’s framework of sexual violence to any cases of sexual violence because, in accord with cultural-linguistic theory, all kind of behaviours, including violent acts and sexual practices, are constituted by a cultural linguistic system.\textsuperscript{233} In other words, a specific cultural narrative defines the meaning of and shapes the form of sexual behaviours and violent acts. For example, in her study concerning the subjugation of women in modern Javanese society, Laine Berman argues that the “speaking processes in Java are a type of interaction in which contextual and relationally salient information is built up through repetition and active participation.”\textsuperscript{234} Javanese rape victims are expected to bear the responsibility to love and to forgive, despite the male’s weakness in controlling lust, as a part of the image of ideal femininity imposed by the public narrative and speech.\textsuperscript{235} Thus, as Berman concludes, a narrative performs what it says in the human being: it can shape, build up, or destroy lives.

JFT explains that the performative effect of the narrative is the result of the lie of the spirit world, combined with the receptivity of a person whose heart does not possess the divine will. JFT also demonstrates that the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit is a superior narrative to the other narratives in a human person insofar as the heart is receptive. Therefore, on the basis of the performative dimensions of the narrative, we can safely draw the general conclusion that any sexual behaviours, regardless of their relationship with JFR, could be violent insofar as the narrative behind the behaviour disagrees with the divine will in the Word of God.

3.3.5. The Spiritual Reality of covenantal love and the life of the Church in the JFT perspective

\begin{footnotes}
\item[233] Lindbeck, 34.
\item[235] Ibid., 44.
\end{footnotes}
Working from the JFT point of view, we can see how sexual violence, then, goes beyond an assault on the sexual body. False myths and cultural narratives concerning sexuality cause sexual violence, because they pervert the original function of sexuality, which is to display God’s love in Christ. Within this understanding, cultural narratives about sexuality that infiltrate the life of the Church, such as patriarchy, should be considered a form of violence that threatens the image of God’s covenantal love. They mark an attempt to attack the bride (cf. Revelation 12:17). The perversion of the corporeal sexual life—that is, of the “senses” in their ordering to sexual existence—distances us from the spiritual reality of the consummation of our life with God. While truthful sexual relationships proclaim the Gospel of communion, sexual violence counters that message. In sum, any false story of sexuality would bring loss to the faith and forfeit our witness. To take a challenging example, soap operas that sell romantic secular love could, on one hand, display God’s love in general, but on the other hand, torture the soul because of the subconscious clash between God’s tacit image of love and the secular version of non-committal love, which is depicted in the soap opera’s own narrative myth. This clash could only be solved by the ordering process of the Word, which conveys divine love.

3.3.6. The true *rasa* as a solution to sexual violence: JFT’s suggestion and challenges

From JFT’s perspective, the only way to break the chain of sexual violence in JFR rites is to receive the divine will in the Word, which is only possible insofar as Christ is received. The Word informs the story of love in the spheres of communion, life, power and dominion, and thus through it the Holy Spirit re-aligns and re-harmonises the senses in the soul. It reorders sexual identity, thereby diminishing fear, guilt, and shame. The true Word should bespeak love in a manner that touches the heart. Consequently, when God’s story informs the soul, bodily
traumas are resolved or healed. This dynamic from JFT can then be applied to sexual violence more broadly understood, within the larger society both religious and secular.

A JFT of the divine will and its relevance in sexual violence may clarify Augustine’s seemingly harsh suggestion in the *City of God*. Augustine asserts that sexual violence—such as rape itself—would not affect a person if his or her will is steadfast and unshaken. The victim’s shame is engendered by sexual acts that involve the victim’s lust. JFT’s vision is congruent with this: as long as the Word resides in one’s heart, any violence against the sexual body through the imposition of false narratives will not accomplish the devil’s ultimate purpose to destroy God’s image in the sexual body. Since the Word in the human heart works to bring harmony to the senses, soul, and body, we can infer that our body works best when it submits to the Word. Without the Word, the potentiality to enact God’s story of love, life, and communion cannot be fully actualised, and thus God’s image is not fully displayed. However, despite the absence of God’s Word in the human heart, our sexual identity and sexual body still convey partial meanings of God’s story. The remaining right *rasa* in the fallen soul is demonstrated by the inclination to seek life, blessing, and power.

JFT’s claim regarding the primacy of the Word in mitigating sexual violence demands further explanations regarding the state of the victim’s heart, misogynist biblical texts, and the place for praxis within JFT’s spiritual approach. First, JFT places the moral responsibility for sexual violence on both the perpetrator and the victim. As Tony asserts, those who keep resentment and bitterness in their hearts with no alignment to scripture are more attractive to the darkness around them, making them prone to the entrapment of love charms. Tony’s claim should be distinguished from forms of blaming the victim, where the victims’ behaviours and attire are the

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236 Augustine, 27.
237 See chapter 2, 55.
main causes behind men getting aroused and raping women.\textsuperscript{238} What Tony is pointing to is the fact that the absence of divine love nurtures bitterness in the heart, and this is in fact unrelated to the present perpetrator. The darkness in the heart of a person attracts not the perpetrators directly, but rather beckons the spirit world to influence the perpetrator. Unless potential victims are under the protection of the Word, they are prone instead to falling under the spirit world’s influence.

Tony’s claim is difficult to prove in the case of war rape and child rape, where the victims are presented as innocent. However, in view of JFT’s claim that the senses are interconnected with the Word, narratives, and the spirit world, there is a perspective from which the assumption of the victims’ absolute innocence should be reconsidered. First, due to the fall of Adam, there is no one who is completely “innocent.” Everyone, regardless of their age, lacks the divine will in their hearts. Second, sexual violence is driven by multiple factors, so that attributing the motive of sexual violence to a single source seems implausible. We cannot measure the degree of the true \textit{rasa} in Christian victims because various beliefs and systems of thought intersect as people interact in social groups and relationships. Hence the analysis of a cultural narrative should be distinguished from the analysis of socio-cultural groups, because interpersonal relationships impact individuals’ attitudes and behaviours more than does a single cultural worldview or narrative.\textsuperscript{239} Third, JFT’s perspective offers a theological analysis of sexual violence that is centered on God’s love in order to restore and not to condemn.

From the JFT perspective, a victory over sexual violence does not necessarily mean immunity from assault. Rather, it is a peaceful state of the inner person because of her/his union with God through the Word (RS 4.11). Moreover, a perfect alignment with God’s \textit{rasa} will surely lead us

\textsuperscript{238} Berman, 40.
to allegiance with Christ and opposition against the world (cf. John 15:18-19, 16:33; Acts 5:41).

Persecution and suffering, which may include sexual violence, are the risks of being Christ’s disciples. In this case of violence, healing and vindication will be found beyond the cross. Union with Christ in death results in resurrection (cf. Philippians 1:29; 3:10). Christ took up the rasa of death into Himself, nailed it to the cross, and triumphed over it as He rose from death.

Nonetheless, we cannot simply dismiss the issue of mass rape in wars or in terrorist attacks, and I am not aware that JFT has attempted to address such horrendous situations comprehensively. Folk theology could, therefore, further expand its theological reflections in theodicy so as to analyse different settings and narratives.

Second, a Word-centered spiritual perspective on sexual violence does in fact face a key question: do biblical texts themselves condone and promote sexual violence? Put another way: do certain biblical texts constitute destructive narratives of sexuality? Feminist perspectives on this matter have interpreted sexual violence against women in scripture as depicting the silence of God in the face of women’s oppressed situations, in a way that is similar to the experience of sexual violence in the present era. These feminist readings mark a kind of resistance against the patriarchal system that affects the Church’s biased interpretation of the scripture and the theological tradition. The Taskforce Report to General Synod 1986 of the Anglican Church of Canada recounted the flaws of the Church in communicating violence and the subjugation of women in its teaching and interpretation of scripture. As a result, the Report argued, abused women felt that “God had abandoned them … God is the source of authority behind the male authority who beats them … God (is) violent.”

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240 Trible, 2.
242 Ibid., 38.
243 Ibid., 39.
of sexual violence in this context is the myth of patriarchy that influences a misogynistic form of biblical interpretation.

JFT would respond to this feminist critique of the Bible by pointing out that one cannot counter a worldly ideology with another worldly ideology, for both ideologies are equally works of the human lower mind and are themselves prone to the influence of the spirit world. In order to resist the false image of masculinity and femininity in a patriarchal construal of reality, our only constructive response is to further the reception, within a person, of the right image of Christ as revealed in the Word. This image is a more powerful narrative, when received in the heart, than is the myth of patriarchy or of its purported scriptural origins.

The effectiveness of discipleship in resisting the ideology of misogyny is affirmed in a study on “folk Catholicism,” a hybrid spirituality of Roman Catholicism within the Charismatic tradition, in Latin America. Some studies suggest that women’s empowerment through bible study and worship has played an important role in resistance against machismo, a “complex of male behaviours such as excessive drinking, violence against women, chronic infidelity, abdication of household duties, and a general identification with street culture than with the home.”244 One Latin American woman has recalled that God spared several marriages from conflict and preserved other women through the prayers of her prayer group.245 In these kinds of catholic-charismatic settings, women who have been victims of violence learn how not to feel victimised, and instead how to bring their problems to higher levels of prayer. Their involuntary pain and suffering do not prevent them from voluntarily interceding and reaching out to their perpetrators because of God’s love, which has been poured out and understood in the Word. Contrary to some feminist critiques of the Bible on this score, the Word thus is not the source of sexual

245 Ibid., 179.
violence but is rather the antithesis of sexual violence, insofar as it is prayerfully read with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Another possible challenge to a JFT of sexual violence is the accusation that it is over-spiritualised and disconnected from reality. The dual process of *rasa* embodiment answers that accusation. While the active embodiment is one way to witness and proclaim the Word, the passive embodiment, the process of accepting the divine will or the Word, internalises the Word first at the core of the human heart. The Word-centered approach is, in this perspective, a proper priority because (1) the right heart with the true *rasa* will attune the mind and the body to function rightly and in harmony; (2) the received Word dispels the influence of non-divine myths and thus loosens spiritual bondage; and (3) without the passive embodiment of *rasa*, the heart remains empty and all social-justice efforts are “artificial” (in Tosari’s sense) and less effective at dealing with the spirit world behind the myths.

My construction of a JFT of sexual violence demonstrates that sexual violence performed and experienced in the context of JFR’s mythic structures constitutes an attempt of the spirit world to distort God’s narrative of salvation. That narrative is inscribed in a person’s sexual identity and is supposed to be expressed in the sexual body. The JFR narrative obscures one’s instinct to know the triune God and His covenantal love. Thus it leads to the destruction of the sexual body as well as the spiritual personhood, unless the divine will—love and life, as known through the Word—is felt and thus reordered the dying soul to life. The JFT response presupposes as true the argument that culture is not neutral but is rather “a corrupted order that is inextricably linked to the unbelievers who participate in and perpetuate it.”246 To transform the culture in Christ, then, is to preach the Word until it penetrates and pierces the hearts of unbelievers, the doers or

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246 Lingenfelter, 204.
performers of a culture. Finally, from the perspective of lived experience, JFT’s view here seems to have practical traction.

3.4. Javanese Folk Theology and the Theology of the Body: A Comparison

This section compares JFT with John Paul II’s TB in order to explore JFT’s contribution to the theological conversation about sexuality and sexual violence. JFT’s coherence with one of the major theological discussions of sexuality in the modern Western church can underscore the Christian integrity and usefulness of a JFT perspective, even while some of its differences indicate areas that may require further reflection. *Theology of the Body* is a collection of John Paul II’s catecheses on human love and marriage, delivered from 1979 to 1984 in the pope’s Wednesday General Audience. He saw these teachings in part as a response to the almost Manichean body-spirit opposition manifested in the 1960’s sexual revolution, and as a defence of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.\(^{247}\) TB is “a key to reconcile flesh-spirit separation based on God’s original plan in the creation.”\(^{248}\) The main ideas of TB are that the human body bears the image of God given in terms of the communion of persons; this communion is given ultimate human form when, with uncorrupted hearts, man and woman are joined in conjugal union. But original sin has darkened the heart and leads to concupiscence and the objectification of the body without revering the person whom the body signifies; and Christ is the key for restoring the communion of two persons in conjugal union. (John Paul II’s discussion of celibacy marks another important theme in TB, but is not here central to our argument.)

\(^{247}\) John Paul II, xxiv-xxv.
\(^{248}\) Ibid., 6.
As Christopher West reformulates the main idea of TB, “the Word of God is inscribed in the nuptial mystery.”\footnote{Christopher West, \textit{Theology of the Body Explained: Human Love in the Divine Plan}, 19.} He highlights John Paul II’s claim that the devil’s plan has been to bring fractures, separation, and divorce in modern Western culture in a way that is opposed to God’s plan of communion and life.\footnote{Ibid., 21.} West’s claim about the anti-Word in the spousal body implies sexual violence.\footnote{The “spousal meaning of the body” in John Paul II’s \textit{Theology of the Body} refers to “man’s and woman’s conscious experience of their bodies as a gift and sign of God’s love and … [of] their sharing this love with one another in and through their bodies, their masculinity and femininity.” West, \textit{Theology of the Body Explained: A Commentary of John Paul’s II} Man and Woman He Created Them, 130-1.} However, this implication needs further elaboration, and in this regard, TB can be potentially complemented by JFT’s explication of the role of the Word of God in communicating God’s love and overcoming the actual power of false (cultural or religious) myths. My comparison is structured by JFT’s description of sexual violence according to the elements of personhood discussed above.

3.4.1. The divine will in the heart in JFT and the inscribed Word in the body in TB

Unlike JFT, which locates the Word as the divine will in the core of the human heart, John Paul II focuses on the work of the Spirit in the human heart and draws a contrast between living by the Spirit and by the flesh.\footnote{John Paul II, 333-340.} Sexual identity, including femininity and masculinity, is embedded in the core of the human being, which is the heart. However, original sin has caused the heart to be darkened and has put the body in rebellion against the soul. The fracturing of the personhood limits the heart in its expression of femininity and masculinity through the body. Thus the spousal relationship loses its character of personal communion and becomes a mere
objectification of the body, which is the main motive of adulterous or sexually distorted behaviours.  

The restoration of the human heart is accomplished in Christ, who has assumed the human body and soul. Christ is the new measure of holiness and he has “inscribed a new dignity in the human body.” His redemption has made possible the purity of the human heart (cf. Matthew 5:28) by which a person is free from sin, guilt, and concupiscence. This, in turn, harmonises the senses. Hence Christ enables the spousal body to actualise the inscribed Word by renewing a person’s heart.

There is a difference between JFT and TB regarding the location of the Word in a person. This difference results in distinct descriptions of sexual violence. At the outset, both understand violence as the omission of the Word with respect to the human person. Yet JFT claims that sexual violence begins more specifically with the omission of the divine will—love and life at the core of human beings. TB concludes, somewhat differently, that sexual violence results from the darkened heart due to original sin, which leads to concupiscence, the objectification of the sexual body, and disregard for the femininity or masculinity of a person. Consequently, the two theologies offer different solutions to sexual violence. TB offers Christ to harmonise the senses and to assume the spousal body in which the Word is inscribed. JFT agrees with TB and goes further by asserting that the harmony of the senses is achieved when—following faith to Christ and union with him (RS 14.5)—God’s love conveyed in the Word is received and internalised within a person’s inner being. In sum, while JFT suggests obedience to God’s Word, TB emphasises letting the Spirit of Christ enter our souls and craft Christ-likeness in our

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253 John Paul II, 257.
254 Ibid., 350.
255 Ibid., 357.
256 Ibid., 257.
heart. Practically, JFT’s notion of a Word-centered discipleship explains further what TB means by welcoming Christ into our heart.

3.4.2. Narrative

Both TB and JFT regard earthly marriage as a sign of a spiritual reality preordained in eternity (cf. Ephesians 1:13), and as something that has already happened and been fulfilled in Christ. Roman Catholic tradition defines a sacrament as “an efficacious, tangible sign and realisation of God’s salvation plan to humanity.” John Paul II describes the spousal body’s vocation as an analogy by which we understand God’s covenantal love to His people (cf. Isaiah 54:4, 62:5, Hosea 1:2; Ezekiel 23:1-49) and Christ’s to His Church (Ephesians 5:22-23); and as a sacrament through which the Holy Spirit leads men and women to live out the calling of self-giving in conjugal union. The marriage sacrament, which presupposes the Gospel and individual faith, is “a visible sign of God’s mystery [that] aims to proclaim the Gospel mystery and at the same time accomplish the mystery in a person.” Marriage becomes a sacrament insofar as the marriage vow (the speech) is spoken by the partners as the sacramental sign, and the conjugal union in the flesh is performed, thus making the sign visible. Marriage as a sacrament, then, is a formative act by which the spouses align themselves with God’s covenantal love.

However, JFT proposes that the received Word gives meaning to the spousal body and thus makes the sign of communion and covenant in the spousal body efficacious. It creates of itself a

\[257\] John Paul II, 489-490, n 88.
\[258\] Ibid., 502.
\[259\] Ibid., 522-523.
\[260\] Ibid., 489, 522-523.
\[261\] Ibid., 532.
realm of powerful truth for the body’s integral life. Without the Word, human sexuality finds its false meaning in other narratives through which the spirit world works. Furthermore, the different levels of receptivity to the Word among individuals may give rise, according to JFT, to different degrees of myth or narrative deception, which take the form of sexual violence. One may have Christian faith and yet at some point believe in certain myths, and this opens up a Christian to potential sexual violence instigated from the spirit world.

TB, as interpreted by West, describes the Word as inscribed in the human body, and sexual violence as the anti-Word in the body. The integral sexual body is “the Word made flesh.” Christopher West, in his interpretation of John Paul II’s TB, asserts that “[Satan] plagiarised the Word inscribed in the body (‘self donation’) and makes it his own anti-word (‘self-gratification”).” In short, the spirits pervert the soul of a person whose heart lacks divine love, and turn it from loving God and neighbour into venerating self. One problem with West’s approach is to articulate how sexual violence can be perpetrated against the (inscribed) Word which itself has an eternal character. JFT’s engagement with the spirit world clarifies TB’s notion of the human body as the Word or as theology: The human body is the manifestation of the Word only insofar as the Word is received in the human heart, affects the soul, and thus is expressed in the physical reality. The Word inscribed in the heart, and from thence in the body, is a gift of grace through faith, to be followed in obedience. It is not a created given. Here, JFT’s more Protestant origins can perhaps be seen. In contrast, the omission of the divine will—the false rasa—makes the sexual body and sexual identity subject to the spirit world. Hence the real battlefield is in the heart that receives or rejects the Word.

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263 Ibid., 423.
3.4.3. The embodiment of *rasa*

Perhaps one should not overdraw the contrast. For, similarly to *rasa’s* embodiment process, John Paul II introduces the term *language of the body* to refer to the sign that the person makes through the body. He explicates this as a two-way process by which a person speaks through the body and at the same time allows the body to speak to her/himself and on her/his behalf.264 Practically, anyone who speaks this body language according to the foundational truth—Christ—is in truth.265 This body language implies the existence of faith (cf. James 2:26). John Paul II comments,

Through the language of the body, man and woman encounter the great *mysterium* in order to transfer the light of this mystery, a light of truth and of beauty expressed in liturgical language, into the language of the body, that is, into the language of the praxis of love, of faithfulness, and of conjugal integrity, or into the ethos rooted in the redemption of the body (Rm 8:23).266

In other words, a sincere conjugal union could lead us to embody the covenantal love of God to His Church, wherewith the man and the woman are shaped into the divine Story. Hence marital life, specifically conjugal union, is a spiritual formation ordered to cultivating a life of love through exercising the language of the body.267

Both TB and JFT thus agree on the definition of sexual violence as the speaking of a malicious language to the body that will manufacture wicked feelings and senses of death and hatred in contrast with the divine will. Both theologies agree that sexual violence disintegrates a sexual person by writing the wrong meaning and feeling onto her/his sexual identity through violent acts: from being a beloved person, an individual turns into an object without true *rasa*. In sexual

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264 John Paul II, 542.
265 Ibid., 543.
266 Ibid., 615.
violence, the body is forced to receive the wicked *rasa*: depersonalisation, hatred, death, subjugation, and separation. As the physical body correlates with the emotional senses, the aversive sensation of violence informs the soul with malicious values and thus the false narrative of the spirit-world takes hold. The empty-hearted soul easily succumbs to this false story and embodies it as a reality. To integrate TB and JFT, sexual violence is a manifestation of concupiscence that objectifies a person, and its power on the body begins with the absence of the Word. From a JFT point of view, the primary Christian responses to this destructive possibility are evangelism, conversion, and discipleship.

To conclude, while both JFT and TB share a conviction about the metaphorical function of the sexual body, JFT complements TB with its explication of the role of the Word of God and the engagement of the spirit world, insights derived from JFT’s particular response to sexual violence in JFR rites. JFT clarifies the meaning of “the Word inscribed in the body” and “Satan’s attack to the body” articulated by West, and it does so by describing the role of the Word in the human heart and the devil’s opposition in the human soul, an understanding gleaned from JFT’s sensitivity to these realities within the Javanese context. While TB is centered in Christ, JFT assumes faith in Christ and emphasises the role of the Word of God in the human heart. The Word actualises the fullness of a person and enables that person to give him/herself fully in the conjugal union. Thus, the omission of the Word from the human heart is the beginning of sexual violence, in the sense that violence proceeds from the objectification of the spousal body.

**3.5. Summary**
A JFT of sexual violence is built out of the experienced web of spiritual reality, efficacious myths and narratives, and sexuality, where each element is connected with the senses spiritually, mentally, and physically. Sexual violence, then, is the spirit world’s attempt to distort the perspective of God’s covenantal love through perverting the function of human sexuality. It begins with the empty heart that has no true *rasa* or the divine will of God’s love that brings life. The empty heart makes a person more vulnerable to the infiltration and performance of false myths that nullify a person’s mental, emotional, and physical senses, while demanding that a person employ his or her sexuality as a means of salvation rather than an analogy of salvation. The perversion of sexuality can be considered a violent act because it harms the life of the Church by forfeiting the embodied proclamation of God’s love, weakening the faith and nullifying spiritual formation.

The remedy for such sexual violence and its causes is to receive and to embody the Word of God, through which the Holy Spirit brings order to the distorted soul and marred body. The Holy Spirit who works through the Word is more powerful than the spirit world that rebels against God through its myths, distorts the story of sexuality and perverts its function as central to salvation and communion with God. The Word shall prevail in a person, for it occupies the core, evokes the spiritual sense, and thus affects the whole being of a person through his/her senses. However, any acceptance of a JFT of sexual violence should guard itself against the danger of blaming the victims of sexual violence and of over-spiritualising the healing process. JFT may be prone to neglecting the active embodiment process of the Word in social justice. Further theological reflections on JFT in different narratives and settings are needed to answer these and other challenges. Finally, JFT’s explication of the effects of the Word of God and the spirit world on the human senses contributes to the contemporary Western theological discussion of sexuality, as can be seen in comparison with John Paul II’s TB.
CONCLUSION

This study began with a need to address sexual violence in Javanese folk religion (JFR) with a robust theology of sexuality and of the spirit world. The challenge to find an appropriate theology derives in part from the fact that the majority of circulating theological responses to sexual violence rely on theological themes other than sexuality; or that the theologies of the human person assume a certain Cartesian dualism that does not explicate the connection between the inner person and the body. One significant anti-dualistic theology of sexuality is offered by John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*. It derives from a rich tradition of Western Christian thought. Another potential theological source that presupposes a non-dualistic worldview and is sensitive toward spiritual reality is folk theology from the global south, such as the folk theology of the Javanese context. Javanese folk theology (JFT) arises as a response to Javanese folk religion (JFR), whose rites include the perpetration of sexual violence in order to obtain the spirits’ blessings. However, its theology of sexual violence has not been developed, and in order to construct it, we have had to first identity the seed of violence that lies at the base of the JFR belief system and to systematise the theological anthropology of Christian folk theologians—Paulus Tosari and Daud Tony—who were JFR believers before converting to Christianity.

In chapter 1, we have seen that JFR is a local animistic religion that adopts and adapts myths from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam with a fundamental belief about spiritual reality as its criterion. JFR narratives present human sexuality as the key to human salvation in the sense of communion with God, fertility, and wealth. Sexual rites in JFR pervert the original function of sexuality as it is known in scripture, from generating life through procreation into a medium of
exchange for obtaining other kinds of blessings. JFR is silent regarding the virtues of love and life in sexuality and marriage. This omission of virtues is the seed of sexual violence.

The thwarting of the true function or nature of sexuality is not exclusive to JFR belief systems, and thus the Church should be alert to the false narratives that oppose the Word of God and that have penetrated current culture and society around the globe. Examples of religious beliefs and cultural stories or practices in which sexuality is perverted into being a key to salvation include the following: the cult prostitutes in pagan religions in the Old Testament;\(^{268}\) the myth of the abduction of Sabine young women by the Romans, which promotes redemptive violence;\(^{269}\) and the prevalence of pornographic content in movies, popular romance stories, and advertisements in our modern society, which increases unrealistic expectations in sexual relationships and encourages the objectification of the body.\(^{270}\) These stories and others like them have shaped attitudes and behaviours in certain societies through active participation, language and interaction.\(^{271}\)

In chapter 2, I systematised a theology of the human being and its relationship with the spirit world based on the theological texts of Paulus Tosari and Daud Tony. The systematisation leads us to conclude that Javanese folk theological anthropology is a Word-centered anthropology that explicates the connection of the divine will—the Word received in the human heart—and the human senses based on these theologians’ experiences with the spirit world in the JFR context.

\(^{268}\) 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7.

\(^{269}\) The purpose of abduction is to build families to populate Rome. The women later mediated for peace during the strife between the Romans and their Sabine parents by acknowledging themselves as the cause of conflicts. The Sabine women thus were depicted as an object on one hand, and as a helper and redeemer on the other hand. The idea behind the concept of redemptive violence is that the death (by violence) or sexual sacrifice of the women is necessary to give birth to political transformation or nation building. Robin May Schott, “Sexual Violence, Sacrifice, and Narratives of Political Origins,” in Birth Death and Femininity, ed. Robin May Schott (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 28.

\(^{270}\) Gail Golding, Hands to End Violence against Women: A Resource for Theological Education (Toronto: Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada, 1988), 75.

\(^{271}\) Berman, 220.
The divine will is the overseer of the mental senses and physical senses. The presence of the divine will in the human heart will harmonise the human senses and thus align the elemental character of a person with God’s will revealed in His Word. The experiences of the folk theologians with the spirit world confirm the authority of the Word, which resides in the core of the human being, over the false religious or cultural narratives through which spiritual beings exert their influences on the human soul.

This first attempt at systematizing JFT opens up prospects for further research. A prospective theological exploration could explicate how the eternal Word received in our hearts as the true *rasa*—a key category in JFT—intrudes upon the temporal reality that confines our senses, emotions, and perceptions. The social sciences recognise that cultural narratives limit and “objectify” our lived experiences, including our perceived senses and emotional expressions. Further research could also explore how the relationship between the human senses and the Word of God challenges, advances, or agrees with the claims from the social sciences above.

Further research could delve into the internal consistency and development of JFT as a system of thought. The distance between the Word as scripture and the Word as Christ in Tosari’s explication to answer JFR encourages us to provide a more systemic Christology while remaining sensitive to JFR’s eclectic nature. Moreover, a reflection on theodicy based on spiritual experiences should be accompanied and verified with a sound biblical exegesis that goes beyond literal readings. Future studies in JFT could develop and further expand each theme at work in the interconnectivity of the Word, human senses, sexuality, and the spirit world into a

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272 This claim belongs to at least three disciplines: anthropological linguistic, phenomenology, and psychology. For example, for anthropological linguistic study in the context of modern Javanese society see Berman, 220; For phenomenological approach to sexual identity see Sara Heinamaa, “The Sexed Self and the Mortal Body,” in *Birth Death and Femininity*, 79; and for variations of expressions of emotions across different languages and culture, see Anna Ogarkova, “Folk Emotion concepts: Lexicalization of Emotional Experiences across Language and Culture,” in Johny Fontaine, Klaus Scherer, and Christian Soriano (eds), *Components of Emotional Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 62.
more comprehensive theological system. Finally, the validity of the JFT theological method, insofar as it includes *rasa* apprehension, moral discernment based on past experiences with the spirit world, and the priority of the heart, deserves further exploration and comparison with wider theological traditions.

Chapter 3 consists of a theological construction of a JFT of sexual violence and its comparison with John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*. When the spirit world is taken into consideration, what is seemingly non-violent could in fact be seen otherwise. Sexual violence starts with the omission of the divine will in the human heart, in a way that makes the soul vulnerable to spiritual influences aimed at destroying God’s creation. Sexual violence in the human soul begins with the rebellion of malevolent spirits against God, who seek to pervert God’s story of covenantal love into false narratives embedded in non-Christian cultures and civilisations. The thrust of the devil’s lie is to regard sexuality as a means rather than as an analogy of salvation, as something to be humanly manipulated for personal gain, rather than as the revelation of God’s own redemptive love in Christ. The embodiment of the false narrative through the apprehension of the wicked *rasa* obscures the image of God’s love as it resides in the sexual identity in the human soul.

The inclusion of the spirit world and its associated myths in Javanese folk theological conversation challenges us to broaden the traditional definition of sexual violence and the human person. Traditionally, sexual violence is understood in the following way:

A sin against a person, sexual violence violates the bodily integrity of another, thus denying a person the choice to determine one’s own boundaries and activities. Sexual violence violates another’s personhood because it objectifies the other, making her or him a nonperson…. By rendering a person powerless, that is, by taking away that person’s resources and sense of self, sexual violence creates a victim, someone who
experiences the environment as unsafe and is on alert because of never feeling safe within one’s own body.  

The newly expanded definition, built upon the insights of the connection of body and soul through the senses in JFT, would consider different forms of sexual violence to each element of a person. Thus, it would center upon the function of human sexuality as the expression of God’s covenantal love reflected in the human heart. Sexual violence is then an objectification of a sexual person that results in the obscurity of God’s covenantal love and of God’s story of redemption by confusing sexual identity and its functions in the soul through the false narratives generated by the spirit world. Unless the Word is present in the human heart, sexual violence disharmonises first our physical senses and then our emotional and mental senses. In this way, the spiritual senses themselves are finally darkened.

Salvation for the victims of sexual violence and for its perpetrators is found in Christ as the Word of God, in the sense of the divine Logos that governs the self, and of scriptural truth received by faith. The Word of God, through which the Holy Spirit works, conveys God’s love, which is felt by an open heart. From the anthropological perspective, the Word is a stronger narrative than the false myths of the spirit world because it has transforming power to harmonise body, soul, and heart through the harmonisation of the senses. In other words, God’s love in Christ, known in the Word, will align our senses in accord with the divine will and cast away any negative senses leading to death that are caused by the perpetration of sexual violence. God’s will in the Word is apprehended primarily by the meditation of scripture in the heart until the heart captures the rasa of the Word and is itself captured by its truth. A complementary method of apprehension is obeying the Word as a statement of faith to Christ (cf. James 2:26).

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273 Fortune, 3.
In conclusion, JFT’s engagement with the spirit world results in a spiritual approach to dealing with sexual violence. The primacy of this spiritual approach over one of concrete physical action is based on the structure of the human person, in which the heart oversees the soul and the soul oversees the body. Therefore, the Word, through which the Holy Spirit works to touch the heart, can overpower those false narratives through which the evil spirits exert their influence. Other approaches such as systemic legal changes and social justice should be viewed as complementary to this spiritual approach, because the apprehension of the Word through the endeavors of social justice is secondary to receiving the written Word in the human heart.

In addition, JFT claims that the state of the human heart is the main factor at work in the phenomenon of sexual violence. The heart is the abode of God’s divine will of love and life, which is explicated in God’s Word and manifested in God’s Son. The Word residing in the heart will oversee the mental senses and the physical senses, aligning them to the divine will of God. Conversely, a bitter and unforgiving heart is not aligned with God’s will, and thus it is more prone to being captured by the false narratives of sexual violence and by the spiritual and psychological impacts of sexual violence. Therefore JFT places the responsibility for sexual violence on each individual, both perpetrators and victims. This theological position, however, challenges JFT to further reflect on the issue of child rape and mass sexual violence in the context of war and terrorist attacks, and it invites greater reflection on theodicy, as indicated above.

JFT’s claim regarding the priority of the Word and engagement with the spirit world complements John Paul II’s definition of sexual violence as an objectification of the body without honoring the created person that the body constitutes. While John Paul II claims that the salvation of the spousal body can be found in Christ, JFT elaborates the role of the Word
received in the human heart after a person is in Christ: that role is to harmonise the senses, to
give meaning to sexual identity and the sexual body, and to enable a person to achieve the
fullness of life in communion with God. Furthermore, the JFT of sexual violence questions
West’s notion, drawn from TB, that the eternal Word is somehow intrinsically inscribed in the
body. For JFT, basing itself on a careful reading of the scripture’s discussion of sin and
redemption, the spousal body bears the potential for God’s image of covenantal love; and yet
that potential is actualised only insofar as the Word of God is received and embodied.

Lastly, this study has demonstrated that engaging the spirit world in theological analyses can
enrich our comprehension of scriptural claims related to and spiritual dynamics behind certain
pastoral issues. Surely, similar approaches can be applied to Christian expressions from different
contexts by analysing contextual theologies as local articulations of the Christian story, and by
comparing the theological analyses with the spiritual experiences of the locals within their
cultural narratives.
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