Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization
ISSN 2614-5472 (p), ISSN 2614-7262 (e), Volume 2, Number 1 (2019), Pages: 1-30

The Important Place of Indonesia in the Formation of International Culture Today

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Abstract

This paper begins with excerpts from Ervin Lazlo's book, The Systems View of the World, one version of the emerging paradigm for understanding the universe, the natural world, the human psyche and human culture. The second section presents excerpts from Antonio Damasio's book, Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain. Damasio is a highly respected neuroscientist whose discoveries about the inner mapping of the human brain have led him to reject Enlightenment views of human psychology and replace them with another version of Lazlo's "systems" approach. The third section presents Indonesia's Pancasila, a five-point political ideology that serves as the foundation for their democratic republic. This ideology begins with the belief in God, but the notion of "God" is one more example of a type of "systems" thought. The fourth section includes an interview from Dr. Amad Kardimin, professor of education at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic State University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Kardimin describes the beliefs and way of living in the small village where he grew up. I will interpret what he says in light of my own scholarship about Aristotle's model of the flourishing human life, a life of both practical and theoretical wisdom. Even though the people in this village are not formally educated, they are living much more wisely than many highly respected intellectuals today. Finally, I will quote from a number of public intellectuals in the United States who are very worried about the decline in quality of life in the United States today. This decline will lead to an increase in authoritarianism in the U.S. I conclude that too many developing nations have looked to the West, especially the United States, for guidelines about how to "move forward." Their best and brightest young people are sent to Western universities and go back home to educate their own best and brightest to think and act like Westerners. This is a mistake. Indonesia is continually working on a model of education that unites the moral with the

intellectual virtues. The West, especially the United States, has focused on higher and higher levels of education in science, math, and computer science without adequate concern for avoiding greed, pride, power hunger and other vices. Indonesia and other developing nations should recognize the importance of an education for wisdom. Leaders in all sectors should exhibit both moral and intellectual excellence. The future of international culture, politics and even of life on earth is at stake.

Keywords: Paradigm, Culture, Intellectual, Moral.

A. Introduction

This paper begins with excerpts from Ervin Lazlo's book, *The Systems View of the World,* one version of the emerging paradigm for understanding the universe, the natural world, the human psyche and human culture. The second section presents excerpts from Antonio Damasio's book, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain.* Damasio is a highly respected neuroscientist whose discoveries about the inner mapping of the human brain have led him to reject Enlightenment views of human psychology and replace them with another version of Lazlo's "systems" approach. The third section presents Indonesia's *Pancasila*, a five-point political ideology that serves as the foundation for their democratic republic. This ideology begins with the belief in God, but the notion of "God" is one more example of a type of "systems" thought. The fourth section includes an interview from Dr. Amad Kardimin, professor of education at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic State University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Kardimin describes the beliefs and way of living in the small village where he grew up. I will interpret what he says in light of my own scholarship about Aristotle's model of the flourishing human life, a life of both practical and theoretical wisdom. Even though the people in this village are not formally educated, they are living much more wisely than many highly respected intellectuals today. Finally, I will quote from a number of public intellectuals in the United States who are very worried about the decline in quality of life in the United States today and the way this decline will lead to an increase in authoritarianism in the U.S. I conclude that too many developing nations have looked to the West, especially the United

States, for guidelines about how to "move forward." Their best and brightest young people are sent to Western universities and go back home to, in turn, educate their own best and brightest to think and act like Westerners. This is a mistake. Indonesia is continually working on a model of education that unites the moral with the intellectual virtues. The West, especially the United States, has focused on highly and higher levels of education in science, math, computer science and ways to apply that knowledge without adequate concern for avoiding greed, pride, power hunger and all the Aristotelian vices. I call upon Indonesia and other developing nations to recognize the importance of an education for wisdom, one in which the intellectual virtues are integrated with and kept under the control of leaders who have integrated intellectual training with a love for wisdom. The future of international culture, politics and even of life on earth is at stake.

B. The Rejection of the Enlightenment: Erwin Lazlo's Systems View

First, when studying the natural world, systems thinkers focus on the way the biosphere as a whole determines the nature and evolution of each part, "In evolution there is a progression from multiplicity and chaos to oneness and order. There is also progressive development of complex multiple-component individuals, few in number but more accomplished in behavior than the previous entities. Evolution does go one way rather than another" (44). In the response to the Enlightenment method of scientific inquiry, we cannot study data apart from the complex, interlocking systems within which any causal connections occur. In response to modern, Cartesian or Kantian rationalists, consciousness is not detached from the natural world, but is the result of evolutionary processes. What we think we know about the universe should, indeed correspond to what is "out there." Scientific knowledge is not a human-constructed system of *a priori* categories separated from the "things-in-themselves."

Second, Lazlo and systems thinkers reject the human psyche as a "blank slate," molded entirely by experiences. Rather, all of our intellectual capacities have evolved from our studies of living and

non-living beings on earth and of the universe. After a long process of developing more and more complex types of cognition—sensation, memory, cause-effect connections, etc.—Lazlo says that we were able to recognize that we are continually seeking out patterns everywhere and trying to develop a body of knowledge that describe those patterns. The insight, "knowing that I know" or "knowing that I am always seeking to understand" is what systems thinkers call "reflective consciousness." Lazlo calls this "a uniquely human property .. . the ability not only to perceive and feel things, but to know that one perceives and feels them and hence to order them in the light of one's purposes" (66).

This capacity led us to the development of language and then to the creation of the complex and interacting social systems that we call culture, "Social systems, like system in nature, form 'holiarchies' . . . There are many levels, and yet there is integration" (53). Human culture naturally emerges from our natural capacity to understand. Lazlo says, "Fulfillment means the realization of human potentials for existence as a biological and a socio-cultural being. It means bodily, as well as mental health. It means adaptation to the environment as a biological organism constituting an irreducible whole of its parts, and as a socio-cultural role carrier . . . in his or her society" (82).

This drive for fulfillment does not separate facts from values. The goal of every human being is to flourish, to exercise our natural capacities as they have evolved and become part of our nature. We need to live in complex social communities in order to activate and exercise all of our natural capacities. Since these capacities are natural, we also need to recognize our deep connection to the natural world and to live consciously within those limits. Healthy societies are sustainable: they are deliberately constructed to meets people's material needs without unnecessarily exploiting, poisoning and depleting natural resources.

This view of fulfillment also needs to include the reintegration of the world's religious traditions into our view of reality, "the rational discoveries of science need to be complemented by affective, basically spiritual, insight. Here is where the time-honored tasks of

religion, as 're-ligio'—the binding and integration of people within meaningful communities—takes on a fresh aspect" (88). The world's religions have always condemned greed, pride, power lust, vanity and all sorts of vices that are now the major drivers behind our destruction of the earth's resources.

Lazlo points out what ought to be obvious to everyone who looks beyond religious ideologies to the virtues of the great religious leaders of history and to the common patterns in the way they lived there lives. Lazlo says, "There is, obviously, a significant humanistic and ecumenical component in every great religion. Judaism sees humans as God's partners in the ongoing work of creation and calls on the people of Israel to be 'a light to the nations.' At the heart of the Christian teaching is love for a universal god reflected in love for one's fellows and service to one's neighbor. Islam, too, has a universal and ecumenical aspect: Tawhid, the religious witness 'there is no god but Allah,' is an affirmation of unity as Allah means divine presence and revelation for all people. Hinduism perceives the essential oneness of mankind within the oneness of the universe, and Buddhism has as its central tenet the interrelatedness of all things in 'dependent co-origination.' In the Chinese spiritual traditions harmony is a supreme principle of nature and society; in Confucianism harmony applies to human relationships in ethical terms, while in Taoism it is an almost esthetic concept defining the relationship between man and nature. And the Baha'I faith, the newest of the world's religions, sees the whole of mankind as an organic unit in process of evolution toward peace and unity—a condition that it proclaims both desirable and inevitable. The great religions could draw on such ecumenical and humanistic elements to nurture a creative elaboration of their fundamental doctrines, supporting and promoting the shift to the new holistic consciousness" (89).

Lazlo points out what I consider the key to the shift we have to make, from trying to "save the world" through the education of the reasoning powers that lead to scientific, mathematical and technological knowledge, what Aristotle calls the "intellectual virtues," to a focus on the cultivation of the highest power of the

psyche, mind (*nous*). This power is connected to our deepest and motive primitive instinctual drives, pleasure and fear. It also can be, and should be, connected to all of the moral virtues and the intellectual virtues. It has to be educated to study human virtue and vice and the way of life of a wise person, so that knowledge will be governed by the love of wisdom.

Lazlo calls on leaders in all fields, the sciences, social sciences, humanities and religions to work together to educate our minds and engage in the process of "the evolution of the *noosphere* in Earth as the next, and especially significant, phase in the world's evolutionary self-creation" (89). My own scholarship has been focused on the Ancient Greek notion of wisdom and the way the cultural tradition was structured for many centuries in more and more sophisticated ways to enable and encourage as many people as possible to achieve the highest levels of flourishing as possible. This focus on citizen engagement in public life is the foundation for the kinds of democratic republics Westerners claim to value and embody and so-called "developing" nations are trying to develop. However, if we do not return to some modified form of the cultivation of wisdom as understood in ancient societies, this effort will fail. At the moment, our capacity for knowledge is leading to a larger and larger gap between the rich and poor, the exploitation of natural resources for wealth that will destroy life on earth unless we change course, and the hiring of the best and brightest formally educated minds in every nation to use their capacities to get rich, or to get their employers rich, without concern for whether the products they are making promote or undermine human flourishing.

C. Antonio Damasio: Neuroscience Today and the Union of Brain/Body with Mind/Soul

Many different disciplines and schools of thought within them have questioned many different aspects of the Enlightenment paradigm. I have written extensively on a number of them, including Carl Jung and a number of archetypal psychologists and Paul Davies and the emerging view of "functionalism" among theoretical physicists and members of the Artificial Intelligence community.

This paper will focus on one book written by a neuroscientist about human psychology because of the great impact of his work on human beings today. Neuroscience is the cause behind the creation of anti-depression drugs and pain medications including opioids. The epidemic in American's addicted to opioids alone indicates how powerful they are.

I will limit my discussion to one of Damasio's books, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Healing Brain*. The book describes what this type of research tells us about the brain and the connection between mind and body. It also explains what these findings imply for how we ought to live. Damasio is reaffirming the model of wisdom as the goal of human life. He prefers Spinoza's way of describing and living according to that model, but he points out the many ways the world's religions and the rituals and traditions associated with each one have tried to develop and sustain human flourishing. Neuroscientists now call this "homeostasis," the integration of all the systems in the biological, emotional and intellectual mapping in the brain and the goal of integrating all of those systems so they they are all as active as possible. Aristotle called this *eudaimonia* and the world's religions call it wisdom. The ancient traditions focus on the education of the mind (*nous*) as the way to achieve that goal.

Damasio's rejection of the Enlightenment paradigm begins with the "blank slate" view of the human psyche, the model used as the starting and foundation assumption for all of the social sciences and psychology at that time. Damasio says, "The brain does not begin its day as a *tabula rasa.* The brain is imbued at the start of life with knowledge regarding how the organism should be managed . . . the brain brings along innate knowledge and automated know-how . . . there is nothing free or random about drives and emotions" (205). Damasio makes a clear distinction between emotions, what he calls the "natural wisdom" wired into our brains, and feeling, our self-conscious awareness that we are experiencing various emotions, "When the consequences of such natural wisdom are mapped back in the central nervous system, subcortically and cortically, the result is feelings, the foundational component of our minds . . . feelings can

guide a deliberate endeavor of self-preservation and assist with making choices regarding the manner self-preservation should take place. Feelings open the door for some measure of willful control of the automated emotions" (79). Using Lazlo's language, feelings are one aspect of our reflective self-consciousness. We don't just react to the outside world. We are aware of our reactions. Emotions are unexamined; feelings are examined.

Damasio summarizes his position, "*That the body (the body-proper) and the brain form an integrated organism and interact fully and mutually via chemical and neural pathways. *That brain activity is aimed primarily at assisting with the regulation of the organism's life processes both by coordinating internal body—proper operation, and by coordinating the interactions between the organism as a whole and the physical and social aspects of the environment. *That brain activity is aimed primarily at survival with well-being" (195). Damasio then goes on to describe the important place of mental images in the development of the reasoning process that he calls "mind." "*That in complex organisms such as ours, the brain's regulatory operations depend on the creation and manipulation of mental images (ideas or thoughts) in the process we call mind" (195).

Damasio describes the transition from biology to culture, from facts to values, "the mandate for self-preservation . . . contains the foundation for a system of ethical behaviors and that foundation is neurobiological. The foundation is the result of a discovery based on the observation of human nature rather than the revelation of a prophet" (171). Damasio claims that culture naturally emerges from biology, "Beyond basic biology there is a human decree which is also biologically rooted but arises only in the social and cultural setting, an intellectual product of knowledge and reason" (173). Such decrees all include "the law that men must yield, or be compelled to yield, somewhat of their natural right, and that they bind themselves to live in a certain way . . . our brains are wired to cooperate with others" (173).

Damasio recognizes that these new discoveries about the brain require a change in the way we engage in "social science" and a reexamination of the kind of intellectual training that the humanities

was originally designed for. The humanities disciplines arose when educators focused on the power of the mind and its education. The Enlightenment focus on empiricism and rationalism lead to a different way of studying humanities disciplines. The humanities disciplines were constructed as type of empiricism or dualistic rationalism. Now Damasio advocates a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of human beings, "in order to comprehend these cultural phenomena satisfactorily we need to factor in ideas from anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, and evolutionary psychology, as well as finding from studies in the fields of ethics, law, and religion" (159-160). Damasio calls for "a new breed of investigations aimed at testing hypothesis based on integrated knowledge from any and all of these disciplines *and* neurobiology" (160). The Greek model of liberal arts education was the West's original form of "integrated knowledge."

One major contribution to an integrated study of human nature is what Damasio claims is a biological fact that "human beings require . . . some clarity about the meaning of one's life" (268). He claims that the biological mechanisms underlying our behavior, the drive for self-preservation, also led evolutionarily to this yearning to understand the meaning of one's life, "the yearning is a deep trait of the human mind. It is rooted in human brain design and the genetic pool" (269). Humans have "deep traits that drive us with great curiosity toward a systematic exploration of our own being and of the world around it" (269). These same traits "impel us to construct explanations for the objects and situations in that world" (269). The world's religious and philosophical traditions are responses to this deeply embedded drive.

The search for meaning goes beyond our physical needs and is what Damasio calls a "spiritual" drive. Damasio clarifies "what I mean by a life of the spirit . . . spiritual experiences, religious or otherwise, are mental processes. They are biological process of the highest level of complexity . . . I assimilate the notion of spiritual to an intense experience of harmony, in the sense that the organism is functioning with the greatest possible perfection. The experience unfolds in association with the desire to act toward others with

kindness and generosity . . . The center of mass of the feelings I call spiritual is located at an intersection of experiences" (284). They include the experience of sheer beauty and actions that include the feeling of love.

Damasio even uses the word "intuition" to refer to an overall synthesis of our physical and spiritual processes . . ., "the spiritual is an index of the organizing scheme behind a life that is well-balanced, well-tempered, and well-intended . . . the basis for an intuition of the life process" (285). Further, "spiritual experiences are humanly nourishing . . . joy and its variants lead to great functional perfection" so everyone should seek out joyful experiences in life. Spiritual experiences should include positive relations with other people because biological research has shown that "cooperative human behavior engages pleasure/reward systems in the brain" (285). The English word "intuition" is often the word used to translate the Greek "nous," which I have been translating "mind." Damasio then points out, "we have the power to evoke spiritual experiences. Prayer and rituals, in the context of a religious narrative, are meant to produce spiritual experience" (285). For most people, spiritual experiences are evoked in the context of organized religion and a religious tradition. For Damasio, such experiences are provoked by "The contemplation of nature, the reflection on scientific discovery, and the experience of great art" (285). The English word "intuition" is often used to translate the Greek word *nous*. Damasio describes this power as the one that controls our ideas about higher powers, about how to treat other people, how to construct flourishing societies and how to govern our own inner and outer lives. Damasio's view is another kind of systems thinking.

D. Indonesia and *Pancasila*

Everything I have described thus far is ultimately connected to my argument that Indonesia's *Pancasila*, a model of a democratic republic based on a foundation of religious pluralism, can be a very important and useful model today. From what I know of the history of how political leaders have used *Pancasila* to promote their political goals, the uses and abuses of *Pancasila* follow the same patterns as

the uses and abuses of the political philosophy of the Athenians and the uses and abuses of the United States' political systems and beliefs of our "Founding Fathers" today. This paper focuses on the philosophical foundations of *Pancasila* rather than the historical context, characters, and situations involved (The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, "Pancasila, The State Philosophy").

"Pancasila" comes from two Old Javanese words that were derived from Sanskrit: *"panca"* ("five") and "*sila*" ("principles"). All five are intended to be inseparable and interrelated:

1. A divinity that is an ultimate unity (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa).*
2. A just and civilized humanity (*Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab),*
3. The national unity of Indonesia (*Persatuan Indonesia),*
4. Democracy predicated on the inherent wisdom of unanimity arising from deliberation among popular representatives (*Karakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan Perwakilan),* and
5. Social justice for all Indonesian people (*Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia).*

The understanding of "divinity" in Principle 1 has to include Hinduism, Buddhism, Protestant Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Confucianism, and Islam. Other religious traditions have been added and I assume more will continue to be added over time.

E. Weaving Together Aristotle's Model for Wisdom with A Contemporary Example of a Wise Person: Dr. Amad Kardimin, Professor of Education at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic State University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

This section of this paper contains an interview on May 6, 2017 with a colleague and friend, Dr. Amad Kardimin. His story is a very good example of how the multicultural environments within which Indonesians grow up combined with the political ideology of *Pancasila* leads to an understanding of Islam that is humanistic and ecumenical. He is also one example of what Aristotle would call a wise person living a flourishing life. This section is transcribed without editing from what Dr. Kardimin said because I want to show

how natural Aristotle's are. After the interview, I describe each of Aristotle's virtues and which aspect of the villager's way of life that shows they are exercising each virtue. The virtues (or corresponding vices) emerge as a response to the human condition, our dependence on the natural world and our dependence upon each other in ways that follow patterns. Students and followers of any of the world religions should also be able to recognize that the great spiritual leaders of those traditions, Jesus, Buddha, a Hindu Brahmin, Confucius, Socrates and Muhammad, all exercised these virtues. Here is the interview.

> "My village is about 60 Kilometers from Yogyakarta. It has about 300 people who belong to about 20 extended families. It is named "Pule," after a huge tree in the village. The tree is over 100 years old and is believed to have a spiritual power to manage the other spirits. The villagers give offerings to the great spirit in the tree in order to ask the tree to manage the other spirits and protect them from harm. These beliefs and rituals originated in the original, animistic, indigenous culture. The villagers believe in staying in touch with nature and with their ancestors, the foundational convictions of all animistic cultures. Many villagers throughout Indonesia have the same animistic indigenous cultural traditions and have retained those views and rituals to varying degrees and in varying ways. The village culture was changed by waves of conquerors with Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Catholic and Protestant traditions, with Islam as the tradition they identify with most often. Some of them still practice their religion like their ancestors did long ago."
>
> "Yet even the way Islam is practiced is very different from what the majority of Muslims consider mandatory to be a Muslim. The people in my village say that they are Muslim but they do not need to pray at all, much less to pray specific prayers at five specific times of the day. They say they are at one with the Deity, which is the 'God in my soul.' They say, 'I am the God, the God is I am' is admittedly more like the Hindu view that like the God of Islam, but they still identify as Muslims. Twice a day, they offer a different kind of prayer, a silent prayer which is an offering to Nature. They also fast and take a pilgrimage to Mecca, if at all possible."
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> "The villagers are traditional Indonesian farmers. They have rice fields and use buffalo and cows to push the plows. They have fish, ducks,

swans, banana trees, coconut trees, papaya trees, vegetable gardens and most of them have some sort of second income. To get money to send their children to college, they often sell one of their big animals, a buffalo or cow."

"The village elders accept the village's traditions and beliefs. Their children and grandchildren, those who graduate from local schools and go to college in the cities, learn the sciences and social sciences and learn to think differently. They try to change their elders. Time will tell how much the village changes over time."

"During the month before the Muslim fast, a period called Ruweh, the villagers visit the tombs of their ancestors. They make food and eat it together. They have a group prayer, asking for repentance in two senses. They ask the God to forgive their ancestors for any misdeeds and they ask for forgiveness for their own misdeeds. They ask God to give the dead a comfortable place to be for eternity, then they visit their relatives. During the fast, not all the villagers fast at the same time. Some begin a few days earlier and end a few days earlier. The month after the fast is called Le Baran or Iedul Fitr / the great day for the Moslem after the whole month of fasting. Again, former villagers return home and discuss how to rebuild their village. They donate money, make huge meals to 'break the fast,' pray together, and visit their neighbors."

"I am an Islamic teacher. I give sermons, advise them about their problems and collective decisions, recite the Koran and its teachings. I am considered a leader of the village, so, during *Ruwah*, (The Javanese Calendar before the fasting month coming) I discuss the meaning of life and the afterlife with them. I am happy to do so because as I was growing up in the village I was given many educational values. I was shown and taught how to live wisely, how to communicate with other people, how to respect, serve, and help people, how to tolerate differences, keep the peace and avoid violence and animosity between people. Before meals my parents gave speeches about moral values and how to live. My parents modeled wisdom, self-discipline, hard work and dedication. They taught me about my great grandfather and his strict values. These are the values of culture in general, not just my village culture."

"Every so often, the richest villagers invited a team of puppet performers to come and put on a play. Those plays described the lives of the ancestors, the particular people in that village, going back many

centuries. People from many nearby villages also came and the stories included the ancestors from their villages."

"In 2006, a huge earthquake hit his village. 6000 people were killed and 1000 homes destroyed. I was 30 years old and my son was 6 years old when I took him going out from the shaking house. I was hurt and hospitalized and had to rest for two years. Every July 27, the earthquake is remembered. According to the traditional wisdom, this event has given the villagers the energy for resilience and the desire of villagers to continually help and encourage each other. Even today, over 10 years later, every weekend villagers come together as volunteers to rebuild the town. Life is simple. People live in harmony with nature and with each other. Every Sunday, young people who go to school or have moved to larger cities come home to visit."

"My dream is to set up an NGO to educate the villagers and to improve the quality of their lives. I want to set up a network that identifies people who work elsewhere and who want to contribute to this project to explain what skills they have and when and how they would like to contribute. I would coordinate all of these people and skills, so we could set up programs and activities that would achieve the goal of a higher quality of life."

F. Aristotelian Wisdom in a Small Indonesian Village

Aristotle discusses two objects of the activity of mind, one theoretical and the other practical. Theoretical mind focuses on the first principle, or ultimate underlying force, *Energeia,* or what is translated as the "Unmoved Mover." Aristotle's view is not anything like the God of Judaism, Christianity or Islam. It is more like the Hindu view of reality as energy in different forms. Without elaborating, Aristotle's view is consistent with systems thinking. We are the creature that evolved the capacity to recognize patterns in a universe where patterns exist. When we focus on human nature and culture, then, it makes sense that Aristotle thought of greed as the most evil desire because of its impact on our capacity for forming relationships. In our relationship with nature we commit the worst evil, *hubris,* translated "pride" or "overstepping the bounds." It has always been true that this kind of arrogance leads a nation to self-destruction. Today, that old vice is both most exposed and most

ignored. We are more arrogant than ever. In our relationships with other people, the evil desire makes us competitive and adversarial. We are unable and unwilling to form relationships based on trust and mutual good will. Without that foundation, the laws and other institutions end up simply preventing us from harming each other rather than enabling us to flourish.

The villagers have a deep intuition of higher powers and of their need to live within the limits of nature. They also know each other's characters well, they trust each other, and they have good will toward each other. The way they integrate their indigenous, animistic roots with Islam is an excellent way to integrate respect for the natural world with religious pluralism. They know that it does not matter if people think of trees as containing gods or they think of the natural world as the creation of God or Allah. The way of life, including emotional reverence and moderation in consumption, is what every religious tradition is most concerned with.

Second, in their idea of Allah, the villagers reject strict orthodoxy, whether of doctrine or of ritual. They understand very deeply the spirit of the religion and reject an obsession with following the letter of any religious law. This, again, is very true to the teachings of every religion about the deity or deities, however understood. Aristotle said that virtue is an *ergon,* a way of living, not a *logos*, a set of definitions. He said that most people would rather talk about virtue than actually engage in virtuous activities. Too many academics have that problem.

Third, when this intuition of the highest good is directed toward human affairs, it is focused on each person making decisions. In order to know what to choose, they must have the goal in mind. Every choice should aim to maximize the flourishing of everyone affected by the decision. The history of the village shows that the villagers have a good ideas about what actions are more likely to promote everyone's well-being. They also want to help each other, so they actually do what they collectively decide. They are great role models for the next generation. Children are very aware of the characters of their parents and other authority figures. They know when parents appear to be virtuous but have ulterior motives and

when their desires are irrational. From the story Dr. Kardimin tells, parents know the importance of integrity and show their children every day how to live an integrated life.

Fourth, Aristotle's two foundational virtues are temperance (self-control) and courage because they are immediately connected to the desires we share with the other animals. We experience intense pleasure when we eat or have sex as a part of our drive to survive. We experience intense fear when we feel threatened for the same reason. Children need to learn self-control in relation to eating and general impulsivity from an early age. They also need to learn how to face dangerous situations: what to fear and what not to fear, how much to fear, etc.

Dr. Kardimin was given an "integrated education" in respect to self-controlled eating at every evening meal, as the family sat together, ate and listened to discussions about virtuous people. Further, his family understood the importance of activating our capacity for reflection. Even though children are not self-reflective at birth, they develop that capacity by listening to their parents engage in reflection about life. This is an excellent way to mold a child to take pleasure in moral excellence for its own sake. Dr. Kardimin's family and the villagers do not love and respect each other in order to gain power or popularity among the villagers. They are not motivated by believing they will be rewarded by Allah after death. Their love and respect are based on the fact that each person has a divinity within him/her or is the creation of God or Allah. This is living the truth as an end in itself. Aristotle says that if we are to know ourselves and each other, we are our minds, our ways of living out the good life as we understand it. As we cultivate and educate our minds, we have a meeting of the minds with other people and develop friendships based on this meeting of the minds. These kinds of relationships are what enable us to flourish. They are what make our lives fulfilling and meaningful.

The villagers have also clearly learned how to exercise courage in the face of a very dangerous situation. Their experience with the earthquake has not made them phobic, afraid of everything, and it has not undermined their faith. The fact that their faith is rooted in a

bond with the natural world and with the spirit/minds of other people means that nothing will change those bonds. No particular natural event that happens to lead to the suffering of villagers will change their intuition of the sanctity of all life or the belief in Allah as the Creator. They do not think that Allah deliberately picked them out to punish or to test their faith. Instead of making them afraid or fatalistic, their understanding of Islam and the will of Allah have made them "resilient" and even more committed to "help and encourage each other." There are many other dangers and fears we have to face each day. The experience of the earthquake seems to have made the villagers resilient in the face of circumstances that they know are not really very threatening.

Aristotle's next most basic virtue is that of generosity or liberality. This is the desire to give time and money to fellow citizens, people outside of one's own family or circle of friends. Aristotle thought that a stable society had to have a large and stable middle class. He recognized that the actual prosperity of people in the "middle class" varies and even varies greatly from one nation to another and from one time to another. Social stability requires a relatively equal level of prosperity, to avoid animosity and conflict between the rich and poor. At best, everyone has enough extra time and money to cultivate community life, to talk to each other about community affairs, and to give money or material things to others. These activities are continual reminders of how much we depend upon each other. They also enable us to know each other's characters and to develop trust and good will. The villagers are clearly very generous in both of these senses.

Aristotle's virtue of magnanimity is the generosity of a wealthy person who gives large amounts of money in ways that promote overall well-being in the society. Kardimin's examples of when the rich villagers sponsor a puppet show is a great example of magnanimity. The wealthier villagers give in a way that binds together all the people living nearby. The puppet shows bind ancestors with the living and binds them all, regardless of religion, to Indonesia's long-established, multicultural tradition of puppet shows. The puppets speak truth to power; they tell the truths that others

cannot say. They are the hard truths that would undermine social stability if spoken, yet they must be exposed or else the social evils will only get worse. The puppets are trying to educate audiences, just like the Greek poetic texts did. They try to motivate audiences to live more examined lives, to know the darker aspects of ourselves and our societies so we can improve them. They try to educate "average" citizens to be able to identify corrupt politicians that use rhetoric to try and manipulate them. The social context for the shows means the villagers will talk to each other afterwards about the meaning of the plays, which would make them much more likely to learn the lessons. If a corrupt politician appears, they can compare him with someone in the puppet show they all watched. This is just like the place of Greek tragedy in Ancient Greek culture. The plays were performed, or excerpts from Homer were read, at religious festivals. It was the citizens' responsibility to learn the lessons. They were expected to use their God-given powers of critical thinking to identify and condemn evil people.

Another important virtue is the ability not to overreact in situations that arose anger. Many of these are connected to situations of fear, but not all. People get angry when their reputations are tarnished or when their expectations are frustrated. The villagers as described avoid overreacting or underreacting; they are even-tempered. The deep friendship bonds they have with each other reinforces even-temperedness. Their belief in a sacred spirit in each person motivates them to have mercy and forgive. The villagers' habit of asking for forgiveness for their own mistakes and that of their ancestors indicates that they will not be quick to condemn or judge. All of the great spiritual leaders were focused on their own flaws and did not judge others. The capacity to forgive is another Aristotelian virtue.

Another Aristotelian virtue is rational honor. A person with this virtue lives honorably, meaning they promote a high quality of life way beyond what is required to keep a job or to abide by the laws. Such people, says Aristotle, know they deserve public honor but do not seek it out. Rather, they make sure that other honorable people and activities are acknowledged publically. The villagers

understand the importance of reflecting upon the many ways, both in the present and in the past, their families and other villagers have lived honorably. From hearing these stories, children grow up knowing that a truly honorable way of life is the goal, whether or not their behaviors are publically recognized. This gives children the much broader perspective of thinking about what their ancestors before they were born to make their lives better. This extended memory should motivate children to want to do something to make the lives of future generations better. This reinforces the need to examine one's life through the lens of past and future generations.

Sociability is the virtue of getting along with other people, avoiding petty quarrels or small injustices for the sake of collective flourishing. The villagers live through all the major life changes: birth, marriage, death, success, failure, etc. They would not be petty or mean-spirited, but would overlook slight injustices for the sake of the quality of community life. The fact that they get to know each other's characters enables each of them to gain self-knowledge. Individuals can recognize their own moral and intellectual strengths and weaknesses through their interactions with others and can continually work toward higher and higher levels of intellectual and moral excellence.

Dr. Kardimin's description of the culture of his village represents an excellent case study in what Aristotle would call a well-functioning democracy. After the earthquake, they came together as equals to decide how to promote flourishing, individually and collectively, in the face of devastation. Surely, during this process there must have been many particular decisions to make. In each case, they were able to come together as equals, to deliberate, to come to a collective decision, and to implement the recommendation. In this process, the villagers undoubtedly looked to Indonesia's political system for help and advice.

Aristotle has another list of political virtues; those we exercise in relation to fellow citizens we do not know but who live with us under a common body of laws. The virtue of justice is the desire to rule for the sake of the ruled. Citizens with this moral virtue is conscientious about exercising all types of authority he or she has in

a way that promotes the well-being of those over whom they have it. In relation to economic association, such people develop a marketable skill that others need and then exercise it in a way that helps clients, or customers, or patients, or students or whomever seeks out that commercial good or service. They should not use people to gain excess wealth, power, or popularity. Even personal relationships, including parents, family and friends, ought to exercise their power for the well-being of those over whom they have it. Laws have to be made to regulate economic association to prevent abuses.

The other political virtues are the ability to make laws that promote overall flourishing. This activity includes laws, regulations and policies within an organization of profession. All leaders have to then apply the laws to specific cases, the judicial aspect of government and then enforce the decisions made by judges. At every level, people can exploit their power or promote well-being. Law and policy makers have to determine how to distribute social goods, like wealth, power, reputation, education, opportunity, etc. in ways that promote everyone's flourishing. They have to figure out how to punish those who break the laws in ways that prevent further harm and try to rehabilitate criminals so they can go back to civic life and flourish. They have to know how to combine justice with mercy. Dr. Kardimin does not talk about this level of interaction between the villagers and between them and the central government, but I certainly could have inquired further and he would have had a lot to say.

Finally, Aristotle describes the intellectual virtues, including but not limited to: scientific investigation, based on observation and induction; mathematical, deductive reasoning; the activity of calculating the most efficient means to achieve a given goal; the intellectual powers necessary to produce material things (*techne*). Aristotle says that these virtues are activated through teaching and learning while the moral virtues are activated by imitation and habit. He knew the great social damage that can be done when smart people have the opportunity to get high levels of education and then to use these skills to calculate how to get rich or powerful. They can take their societies to war for wealth or power. They can manipulate the

public. All of the Greek poetic texts, including Homer, tragedy and Plato's dialogues, tell story after story of the many ways smart people use their advantages to exploit people and destroy their societies.

Practical wisdom is the synthesis of all of these virtues, moral and intellectual. They all have to be continually tied to a desire for wisdom so that they will be used to promote human well-being. I hope this description makes clear that Aristotle's virtues and vices emerge naturally as human beings simply live out their lives. Further, they become active only in relationships with other people, as they develop and maintain the complex interconnected set of systems which we call human culture. Aristotle explicitly says what is obvious: we are social and political creatures by nature. For us, culture is a second nature. From Kardimin's story, it should also be clear that in their effort to live out the values in their religious tradition and in *Pancasila,* the villagers are also exercising Aristotle's virtues and living wisely and well.

There is one caveat, however, an irony which hopefully will not lead to the demise of this quality of life. Dr. Kardimin himself is aware of the possible corruption of the souls of the next generation as children leave home to go to college and are exposed to all of the distractions, temptations, and breakdowns in community life so prevalent in contemporary cities today. Ironically, the parents of the next generation want their children to be ambitious in the sense of developing their natural capacities, including their intellectual capacities. They make huge sacrifices, selling off one of their big animals, so they can pay for their children to go to college. However, the college students get put into a completely different and potentially morally corrupting environment. In every nation in the world, developed or developing, the education of the best and brightest at the nations' colleges and university needs to lead to the integration of moral with intellectual virtues. If they are not, and the smartest young people become greedy or power hungry, the future of the nation is at risk.

Not only in Indonesia, but around the world, many of the best and brightest go abroad or far away from home to get what is

considered the best education. This usually means studying in Western countries or studying with natives who studied in Western nations and are now teaching at the highest-ranked colleges and universities. It is becoming more and more obvious to everyone that too many of the world's best and brightest have split moral and intellectual virtue. They are using their intelligence to get richer and richer without any concern for the well-being of others. Globally, wealth is being concentrated into the hands of a very few. Education is becoming more expensive and less accessible. People living in rural areas would naturally hesitate to send their children to Western institutions for fear that they will be morally corrupted by the cultural climate on campus and by the assumption that their motive is wealth and power.

These parents have legitimate worries. When students come to college in the West, the standard curricula do not include even the idea of character, much less any kind of organization that unites moral with intellectual education. Most students attend secular schools and do not get an integrated education. Even in colleges affiliated with Christian churches, the vast majority of faculty members are not familiar with the virtue ethic of the Ancient Greeks, or of any ancient culture, and the educational systems structured to promote a life-long love of wisdom. Students are uprooted from their home communities, families, friends, and placed in situations where they are exposed to as many different points of view about values and the good life as the institution can expose them to. Both the readings assigned and the people they meet present them with a "smorgasbord" of options.

The dominant assumption is that there are no universal morals or agreements about better and worse ways of living. Facts are separated from values. Religion is assumed to be anti-rational and anti-intellectual. Scientific reasoning is the standard for truth and rejects any understanding of religion. The notion of character is considered outdated. Too many students either lose their religious faith or are forced to separate reason from faith. Today, the academy is still driven by Enlightenment assumptions, even when we know

that we live in a biosphere and should reform our model of reality in order to prevent our own destruction.

G. Sounding the Alarm: The Corruption of Higher Education in the West

Many different scholars in many academic fields have tried to alert the general public to the deterioration of culture in the West, especially the United States. I will point out a few and focus on the way higher education is now structured as a consumer good and assumed to serve primarily as a way for ambitious parents to provide their children with the tools necessary to become wealthy and powerful. Academic rewards are structured around a model of the "academic-industrial complex," creating huge quantities of professionally respected "research" that is written in jargon inaccessible to the public. The intellectual capacity for theoretical thinking has detached itself from daily life. Stories of sexual harassment by professors shows that a failure to exercise virtues leads to vice. The majority of professional scientists and social scientists, whether they want to or not, are working at companies creating products that feed greed and undermine human flourishing. Even in universities, research is often funded by external, commercial enterprises. Psychologists and social scientists use their talents to write advertisements or political speeches that appeal to irrational excesses. I will cite only a few of the scholars who are trying to sound the alarm.

One way the gap between the educated elite and the rest of society is in the great divide between people living in cities and those in smaller towns and rural areas. Wolfgang Streeck, professor at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne, Germany, says,

> There is an almost insuperable cultural barrier between the city and the country . . . City dwellers develop a multicultural, cosmopolitan outlook . . . Seen from the perspective of the provinces, of course, elite cosmopolitanism serves the material interests of a new class of global winners. Mutual contempt is reinforced by self-imposed isolation, both sides speaking only to and within their camps, one through the media,

> located in the cities, the other through self-constructed private internet channels.[1]

Dr. Kardimin understands this, which is why he wants to return to his village when he retires and start a non-profit. This is also why he often goes back to the village and serves as an Islamic teacher, leader and advisor. Indonesians need to look to Dr. Kardimin's way of life rather than the dominant paradigm in the United States and Europe. The growing division between rural and urban will only lead to a breakdown in truth and good will, internal faction within each nation and faction between nations. Rural citizens will believe that international trade deals and diplomatic agreements are designed for the benefit of the elite class at their expense, even when this is not the case.

In his article, "The Virtue of an Educated Voter," Dr. Alan Taylor, a Pulitzer Prize winning author teaching at the University of Virginia, write about the American founders' emphasis on education as critical for developing and sustaining a republican form of government, "Republican political theory of the day held that empire and monarchies could thrive without an educated populace . . . But republics depended upon a broad electorate of common men who . . . needed to cultivate a special character known as 'virtue': the precious capacity to transcend their diverse self-interests by favoring the common good of the political community."[2] America's Founders were well-versed in Aristotle's virtues and the foundations of Greek democracy.

Taylor explains the frustration of many of America's early political leaders, who tried to get citizens to recognize how critical education is for maintaining a republic. Too many citizens preferred to cut or avoid paying taxes so they could spend more money on unnecessary consumer goods. Taylor points out that the same problems exist today in America but, I would add, everywhere in the world, in both developed and developing nations. Higher education is being understood as a private achievement rather than as a public

[1] New York Times, July 28, 2017, The Interpreter Newsletter, Max Fisher and Ananda Taub.

[2] Taylor, Alan. The Virtue of an Educated Voter

good. Lack of tax revenue causes tuition rates to increase, which means more college-educated students came from higher-class families. The growing gap between rich and poor, as the Greeks warned, will make it more and more difficult for nations to develop or sustain democratic republican governments. Any nation can revert to a more authoritarian relationship between rulers and ruled without having to actually change its laws. Taylor says, "We need to revive the founders' definition of education as a public good and an essential pillar of free government. We should also recover their concept of virtue, classically defined, as a core public value worth teaching. That, in turn, would enable more voters to detect demagogues seeking power through bluster and bombast and pandering to the self-interest of members of the electorate" (8). Linking Taylor to Streeck, this educational gap will, in turn, further increase the animosity between city and country dwellers in all nations around the world.

In his essay, "The Disadvantages of an Elite Education," William Deresiewicz, who eventually left his job as a professor of English at Yale, discusses what he perceives as the corruption of institutions of higher education in the United States today. These are the schools where the best and the brightest students throughout the world are sent to get degrees that will enable them to live anywhere and have powerful and well-paying careers. The future of global civilization begins here. Deresiewicz explains how this types of education, "makes you incapable of talking to people who aren't like you" (2). Like Streeck, Deresiewicz points out his own experience of being able to have any kind of conversation with someone who came to his home to fix the plumbing. By virtue of its content, not just its cost, higher education at elite universities is separating the "haves" from the "have nots" and urban from rural.

The way of thinking cultivated continually throughout the system of elite education is what Aristotle called the exercise of the intellectual virtues, without any regard for the moral virtues. Deresiewicz describes the many ways that these universities "select for and develop one form of intelligence: the analytic" (2). Although he taught English, even professors in the humanities disciplines are

trained to think analytically. They get rewarded professionally by using analytical thought to examine literature, philosophy, theology and even poetry and they force their students to do the same. Although, he says, "Elite institutions are supposed to provide a humanistic education," Deresiewicz was concerned about "how very much of the human it alienates you from" (2). Elite education gives everyone the opportunity to become rich but it denies you "the opportunity to do work you believe in, work you're suited for, work you love" (5). Deresiewicz concludes that these institutions have forgotten "that the true purpose of education is to make minds, not careers" (6). Using the language of Aristotle, elite institutions in the United States do not educate the mind, but only train the intellectual virtues. They do not even aim to integrate moral and intellectual virtues. As the Greeks knew, this would inevitably lead to money and power-driven but also naturally smart and highly educated citizens to control their societies' laws and institutions, leading to concentrations of wealth and power in the hands of a very few. The same thing happened in Athens, leading eventually to the collapse of their great democratic society. Intellectual and cultural leaders in all the developing countries should not try to follow this model. They need to find they own way of educating for wisdom.

Not surprisingly, this corruption of higher education, the growing gap between rich and poor and the animosity between urban and rural and is undermining what Robert Putnam the Dillon Professor of International Affairs and director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, calls "social capital" in his book, *Bowling Alone: Declining Social Capital*. In an interview with Project Muse about his book and research, Putnam defines social capital as "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (66). Again, this is what Aristotle is talking about when he speaks of political association rather than relationships based on kinship or material prosperity.

Instead of referring to the Greeks, however, Dr. Putnam refers to Alexis de Tocqueville, who was well versed in the Greeks. After visiting the USA in the 1830s, de Toqueville described his reflections

in his book, *Democracy in America.* Among other observations, Tocqueville was struck by how many clubs Americans belonged to. He concluded that, "Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America . . . for understanding how democracy is developed and preserved"[3]

Putnam goes on, "Recently, American social scientists of a neo-Tocquvillean bent have unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions (and not only in America) are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement"[4] Further, "The norms and networks of civic engagement also powerfully affect the performance of representative government."[5] In Aristotelian terms, the forming of many different types of friendship bonds is necessary to develop and preserve true political association, which is necessary for human flourishing.

Given his research about the United States in the 1830s, Putnam is understandably worried about American culture today, "By almost every measure, Americans' direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily and sharply over the last generation, despite the fact that average levels of education—the best individual-level predictor of political participation—have risen sharply throughout this period."[6] This statistic alone indicates that the educated elite is not using their education to create a high level of culture. Rather, they are part of the separation of the rich from the poor and the isolation of the elite in large cities. They are also part of the political polarization that undermines all aspects of social and political life. The organizations that people do belong to, such as churches, tend to create group identities that further alienate people rather than bind them together. Putnam cites a number of possible causes, such as women moving into the workforce, people moving more to get and keep jobs, the breakdown of the traditional family,

[3] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,"* ed. J.P. Maier, trans. George Lawrence (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1969), 513-17.

[4] Ibid, p. 1

[5] Ibid, p. 2

[6] Ibid, p. 3

and the "technological transformation of leisure."[7] Putnam concludes that however it is done, in order to preserve cultures that develop citizens' capacities for higher levels of culture, everyone who values this goal needs to do what they can to "reverse these adverse trends in social connectedness, thus restoring civic engagement and civic trust."[8]

Even from my own limited conversation with intellectual leaders in developing nations, including Indonesia, the best and brightest are aware of these problems. Some of them, of course, have completely bought into this new cultural climate. Some return to their nation of origin, equipped with the tools of analytic thinking and ready to train their own best students, make and female equally, to do the same. Many, however, feel threatened by the trends in the United States and Europe. They want the best and brightest to become intellectually trained in ways that will enable their nations to compete in the new, technologically-driven world economy, but they do not want them to also become indifferent to the well-being of their own people. They want women to be able to develop their capacities as intellectuals and leaders but they do not want women's greater opportunities to lead to sexual promiscuity, divorce, and the breakdown of traditional families, extended families, neighborhoods and close-knit communities. They do not want to have to move away from their towns to get a better job. If they go to the city for college, they want to be able to return, as Dr. Kardimin plans to do.

To put it in Aristotle's terms, many of the world's best and brightest do not want to develop their intellectual capacities at the expense of their capacity for exercising the moral virtues. They want an integrated education and an integrated way of life. I agree with them. In my case, I fear a regress to authoritarianism and the loss of the level of free inquiry and free expression I have enjoyed thus far and taken advantage of. Those in developing nations understandably fear that their societies will revert to authoritarianism with those on the top becoming part of an international, extremely wealthy and powerful elite.

[7] Ibid, pp. 6-7
[8] Ibid, p. 8

H. Conclusion: Weaving it all Together

Indonesia is one player in the effort to develop what they call an "integrated" system of education. In Aristotle's terms, this means the integration of moral and intellectual virtues, the life of the wise person whose way of life is driven by an educated mind. Indonesia is particularly important on the world stage because it has the most Muslims dedicated to integrating Islam with democracy, religious pluralism and an international model of humanism which I think is best described by the Ancient Greeks. The Islamic State Universities and Institutes in Indonesia are deeply engaged in working out a curriculum that gives its Muslim students, most of the best and brightest Muslims in Indonesia, an integrated, ecumenical and humanistic education. This paper has tried to show that this is a legitimate effort, but it needs to link this process to broader trends in thought about the prevailing paradigm of reality in our time.

We have to weave together what is best from the world's cultural traditions, including Western humanism, in order to create a collective *noosphere.* I have shown why I think Indonesians and Indonesian Muslims who teach at UIN schools such as Sunan Kalijaga, have so much to offer the world community in this task. Dr. Kardimin's story shows how the experiences of one person in a very small and remote village in a developing nation can spend his professional career working on this kind of international model.

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