INSTITUTIONALIZING PAIDEIA AS A BASIS FOR TEACHING AND THE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract Understanding the history of the university/colleges, the roots of the university within Islamic civilization provides a reminder of the moral mission of the university within Islamic societies but also should be taken seriously in so-called western debates about the normative nature of higher education and its cultural and institutional roots. Not only is this influence of historical interest but it is also critical to understanding the moral dimension to the history of the university and opens us up to engaging in dialogue over the very meaning of our higher educational institutions and their practices.

Keywords: Adab, Colleges, Waqf, Paideia, Islam.

INTRODUCTION: HISTORY MATTERS

A university properly understood is an institution based on principles of care and compassion, manners, civility and the cultivation of and social responsibility. George Makdisi in his celebrated book, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* provides arguably one of the most erudite, balanced and informed investigations into the relationship between the first colleges of medieval Europe which were based on the charitable trust tradition and the Islamic tradition and institution of *waqf* وقف.[1]The traditional spiritually imbued cultures of charity, care and faith which informed the medieval Islamic *waqf* and 'the rise of the colleges' was as Yaacov Lev writes, 'instrumental for the cohesiveness of society and eased social tension and misery'.[2]Understanding the history of the university/colleges, the roots of the university within Islamic civilization provides a reminder of the moral mission of the university within Islamic societies but also should be taken seriously in so-called western debates about the normative nature of higher education and its cultural and institutional roots.Not only is this influence of historical interest but it is also critical to understanding the

moral dimension to the history of the university and opens us up to engaging in dialogue over the very meaning of our higher educational institutions and their practices.

Nicholas Tepstra makes the interesting point that 'there are enough parallels in economic activity, civic engagement, and urbanistic presence that at least one agenda for future research into the charitable institutions of Christian civic religion should be the exploring possible Islamic connections and inspirations.'[3] As a concrete example Monica M. Gaudiosi draws our attention to the argument that 'Islamic influence was prominent in the development of the English trust'.[4] In regards to the development of the Oxford colleges Gaudiosi points out: 'Oxford University would seem to represent the quintessential English academic institution. Yet, in its early phases of development, Oxford may have owed much to the Islamic legal institution of waqf (pl. awqaf), charitable trust.'[5]

How we understand the history, the story, and the narrative of the university informs how we engage the problem of the moral compass of universities more generally. It also influences our understanding, the horizon of our understanding of what a university properly does and its essential character. The influences of Islamic civilization on the foundation of our idea of the university with its emphasis on charity and the common good provides us with a strategic point of reference to critique the direction and self-understanding of the contemporary university. Ignoring or dismissing the cross-cultural roots of our most formative educational institutions and the formative civilizing and institutionalization processes that informed this historical story hides from view what may be one of the most important contributions to a critique of the excesses of modernization, rationalization and detraditionalization in education.

Rene Guenon whose work has influenced an impressive array of scholars from E.F. Schumacher through to Seyyed Hossein Nasr refers to the dominant characteristic of modernity in terms of the 'reign of quantity'.[6] The breakdown of traditional authority and the transformation of the institutions that gave traditional values their grounding into organizations that are increasingly subservient to spectacle, mediatized forms of technology and the needs of what Anton Zijderveld calls abstract society, re-frame and inform how we think about things and how we engage with each other.[7] What provides me with grounding in a shifting

modern capitalist society that, 'all that is solid melts into air'.[8]

Recognizing and engaging the diverse roots of our *shared* institutional history and the central indeed pivotal role that Islamic civilization played in the emergence and development of the university is a critical part of shifting the horizon of the university allowing our contemporary institutional discourse of the university to be truly inclusive. It is also critical in reinvigorating our moral discussion about the nature and mission of the university. To shift the horizon requires dispensing with the colonial lens we use to view so-called 'non-Western' civilizations. This colonial lens which reinforces, 'negative images and stereotypes' of Islamic civilization underpins the public perception of Islam and hinders efforts to recognize and set right the narrative of the university in the public eye.[9]

The idea of the university as a dynamic and inclusive moral community is a desirable public purpose one which must be based on a university narrative of recognition and mutual respect. There is no doubt that recognition and respect of Islamic civilization in the discourse and narrative of the university serves a critical and positive public purpose and advancing this purpose benefits us all. Dismissal and fear of Islamic civilization is egregiously diminishing and hobbling our capacity to engage understand, and recognize each other. It is *impoverishing all of us*. This dismissal and fear means that our contemporary debate about the values and aims of higher education is also impoverished. Furthermore, the popular dismissal and forgetting of the pivotal contribution that Islamic civilization has made to the idea and practices of the university closes off from us critical contributions from Islamic civilization which can provide us with support for a more just and balanced notion of the university. This forgetting is powerful despite the scholarly recognition of the debt that the university as an institution owes to Islamic civilization. All of us Muslim and non-Muslim are impoverished by this 'theft of history' to use Jack Goody's evocative phrasing which exists in our popular understandings of the history and nature of the university.[10]

Following the kind of intuition of Marshall Hodgson who saw 'that Islamic history was a strategic point from which to undertake a critique of the discourse on Western civilization'[11] it may be possible to advance a re-examination of the narrative of the university and its contemporary nature

as well as re-examine forms of cultural and moral socialization drawn from the history of Islamic civilization and the history of higher education which can provide a principle of civility and binding socialization based on a principle of alternative modernization to the now dominant Eurocentric model. In other words are there alternatives to the now dominant Eurocentric imaginary in higher education. Is there any alternative to current rationaliation, deinstitutionalization of traditional norms and habits and the trajectory of modernixzation in higher education? Or is it correct as Niall Ferguson asserts that: 'As for non-economic institutions, there is no debate worth having. All over the world, universities are converging on Western norms.'[12]A core idea that underpins the following discussion is that from the history and cultural milieu of Islamicate civilization a principle/practice of moral institutionalization and habitualization can be found which grounds, civility and well-being in higher educational institutions. This principle is what we will now turn to.

ADAB

The argument in this paper is that such a principle of civility which allows creativity and complexity but also acts as a binding moral discourse exists in the principle and practice of *adab*أدب. The concept of *adab* provides us with an example of flexible institutionalization which is specifically relevant to the central mission of educational institutions: teaching. The ethos that informs *adab* is found fundamentally in the commitment to knowledge and learning that informed the early Islamic contribution to the formation of higher educational institutions.[13] To begin understanding both the contemporary relevance of *adab* to education in general and teaching we must understand that the concept of *adab*is itself multi-layered and 'highly polysemous'.[14] Furthermore as William Chittick points out *adab* is a word, "for which we have no adequate English equivalent'.[15]Ebrahim Moosa quotes UwaysWafāal-Kha¯nza¯da who provides a standard definition of *adab*:

> "Right conduct (*adab*) constitutes the sum of prudential knowledge that shields one from all error in speech, acts, and character. It signifies all the Arabic sciences, for they cumulatively promote etiquette. *Adab*is thus a *habitus* or disposition (*malaka*) that protects one from disgrace. A perfectly urbane and cultivated person (*adib*)

There is also a significant body of research which points out certain consistencies with concepts such as *paideia*παιδεία.*Adab*issometimes translated as *paideia.*[17]Werner Jaeger defined the concept of *paideia* in terms of the molding of character central to a whole education and clearly the concept of *adab* with its strong educative characteristic and *paideia* with its emphasis of educating the whole person have certain similarities.[18]Tarif Khalidi argues in regards to the similarity between *adab* and *paideia* that: 'One could argue that the classical Greek 'Paideia' is a more accurate rendering of the term since *Adab,* like Paideia, refers to a process of moral and intellectual education designed to produce an *adib,* a gentleman-scholar, and is thus intimately connected with the formation of both intellect and character.'[19]

Adab reminds us of the spiritual dimension to being educated, well-mannered and cultured. If *paideia* is understood not so much as simply the cultivation of rational faculties distinct from the spiritual dimension but rather in Pierre Hadot's terms as also embodying often implicitly a 'spiritual exercise' then it's even closer correlation to *adab* becomes more evident.[20]However even given this the differences between the concept of *paideia* and *adab* are important to understand especially given the importance and significance of *adab* to contemporary discussions of education. Two critical differences between paideia certainly as it was expressed in late antiquity and *adab* draw our attention to the significance of *adab* and its potential to help resolve or at least think of our contemporary educational problems in a different and more productive way. Firstly, *adab* is more definitely and solidly imbricated with religious content.[21] Secondly, *adab* applies to all people not simply to an educated elite or narrowly prescribed elite of scholars and monks withdrawn from the world.[22]*Adab* is a form of socialization of this world not one for people seeking apartness or hermetic retreat from the world. Ebrahim Moosa drawing upon Peter Brown's well known discussion of *adab* and *paideia* writes:

> 'Just as the Greeks sought perfection of the soul in philosophy by means of *paideia*, so Muslims sought perfection of the soul through the teaching of *adab*, or norms of conduct. The historian of late

> antiquity Peter Brown correctly identifies two crucial differences between *adab* and *paideia*. First, *paideia* in late antiquity had no religious code and imposed no religious sanction. It was essentially a secular system of grooming. Second, *adab*became part of a public discourse in Muslim societies at various levels, whereas there was no equivalent of a general Christian *adab* except in the monasteries of the late antique world. The *adab* that Ghazālī proposed was for a world outside monasteries; it was directed at a more general public.'[23]

Adab understood spiritually informed institutional practice is at odds with what many critics see as the modern culture of possessive individualism, greed and lack of propriety and restraint. The key idea in regards to *adab* which can sometimes be overlooked in understanding how it functions and why it is distinct from contemporary approaches to educational development lies in the fact that it is a practice quite contrary to pedagogical practices and understandings which privilege and a completely morphogenic view of learning and educational development.[24]*Adab* as a form of practical rationality allows those who are imbued with it and function within its *habitus* to engage the increasingly morphogenic nature of changes and pressures in society yet provides the necessary space for cultural continuity and stability to be maintained, in conditions and in adaption to change.

In many respects *adab* redefines our relationship to morphogenetic change in the sense that it provides an important dynamic and stabilizing function.[25]Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud refers to this process as 'dynamic stabilism'.[26]*Adab* forms dispositions or what Bourdieu refers to as a *habitus* which requires the slow and deliberate process of habit formation and learning which are central to constructing a form of subjectivity that is both able to engage the pressures wrought by morphogenic change around it yet strong enough to form what the ancients called the 'habitus within the soul'.[27]*Adab* with its focus on civility, mutual respect and regard for others both grounds our actions in an ethical field or horizon which tempers competition and polarization in human relations which are the core contributors to violence and conflict. The concept of *adab* refers to the inculcation of good behaviour proper self and other regard decency and humaneness which if properly institutionalized provides a sense of stability, coherence and continuity to human beings in their interactions with each other.

George Makdisi is critical in helping us to understand the institutions of Islamic civilization as *adab* institutions which were both humanist and religious. According to Makdisi, 'Humanism never cut itself off from the domain of religious studies. Indeed it could not do so, any more than religious studies could do without the fields of humanism.'[28] What is critical to note here is that the kind of humanism understood in *adab* institutions is not the same as the way in which the idea of secular humanism has developed in European history. In other words, the humanism that Makdisi is describing in relation to *adab* is itself deeply connected to and informed by a spiritual sensibility. Perhaps another way of stressing and explaining the points made above is to reinforce the idea that *adab* connects to an idea of the whole person.[29]

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF *ADAB* IN TEACHING

There is a significant historical literature which relates to *adab* education and teaching. Mohd Nasir Omar points out:'The books on *adab*(*good manners*) and *makarim al-akhlaq*(*noble qualities of character*), which have embodied the earliest works in the field of ethics in Islam'.[30] Some of the most important texts in the field include *The Refinement of Character*by ibn Miskawayah (932-1030), *The Memoire of the Listener and the Speaker in the Training of Teacher and Student* by ibn Jammah (1241-1332), *Instruction for the Student: The Method of Learning* by al-Zarnuji (d.1223) and *The Book of Knowledge* by al-Ghazali (1058-111).[31] These texts among others provide a solid and important historical resource for scholars and educators wanting to understand and grasp the nature of *adab*and education and *adab* and teaching. The historical manuals and writings on *adab* and teaching found in the works cited above but also in the many manuals and pedagogical texts put an emphasis upon the personal character of teaching and how it develops a moral personality and personal habitus rooted in principles of civility and propriety.

The discourse of *adab* provides us with a language that suggests the centrality of moral mission to education, human cultivation and teaching. *Adab* broadly speaking has three core themes or characteristics: Firstly, the formation of character and an individual's moral formation is linked to a person's knowledge and learning and is a key aspect of *adab*. In this sense *adab* has some similarity to the ancient Greek notion of *paideia* as we indicated above.Secondly *adab* also refers to the relations between nature and culture: the nature of group habits and customs. The third aspect is

more aesthetic and refers to behaviours, manners, and ways of speaking, appearance and literary style. Arguably this has some similarities with Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital.[32]

Adab is important to educational philosophers and those concerned with finding ways to discuss teaching that are not beholden to instrumentalism, nor to narrow cultural particularism. Good teaching derives from a commitment to values of learning and education combined with social obligation and commitment and an understanding of how dispositions are formed. What kind of practice defines the core of the idea of teaching? This is an issue of some importance since the debate over the idea of teaching as a social and moral is central to the argument presented here. Is teaching simply 'a means to other ends' or does teaching have in its essence a concern with dispositions and positive qualities which when understood in a balanced fashion provide teachers with a way to ground their practice in a sustainable ethos.

Adab can form the basis of a renewed practical rationality for higher education and has specific relevance to the social and moral practice of teaching. *Adab* provides the basis for forms of institutional habitualization that are conducive to the formation of balanced, respectful and proper social interactions. *Adab* can provide the basis for positive and inspiring teaching practice which can redirect our essential mimetic desire to a positive and inclusive end. *Adab* disciplines us and acts to put a limit on the acceleration and explosion of endless social demands, wildly fantastic expectations and unrefined self-assertion which ultimately leads to conflict, anxiety and resentment. At the same time *adab* provides us with a framework through which the dialogical impulse which drives reflection and reflexivity in knowledge can be sustained. *Adab* reduces complexity in the normative and social environment of teaching through its institutionalization of civility appropriate action and ethical limits and thus provides the framework or meaningful context for the development of knowledge and learning with reference to the ideal practices of a 'harmonious life'.[33]*Adab* cultivates dispositions or what we often refer to as character traits or virtues. Julia Annas argues that:

'A virtue, being a character trait or disposition, is built up from habituation, and can be called a habit. But… it is not a mindless habit which bypasses the agent's practical reasoning. This is because it is a disposition to act, exercised through the agent's practical reasoning. It is a

disposition built up as a result of making choices, not a causal deposit within the agent of the effects of past behaviour. The difference here can be illustrated by the difference between being habitually honest on the one hand, and biting your nails on the other. Further, a virtue is a disposition exercised in making choices. When the honest person refrains from taking

strengthens her honesty.[34]

Fundamental to rescuing the social commitment and obligations that inform teaching is a commitment to civility and conviviality/manners which lie at the heart of right behaviour. In many respects *adab* as a practice represents the institutionalization of civility, propriety and commitment to knowledge with a moral basis which manifests as an excellent example of practical reason truly embedded within teaching culture. In this way, our discussion of *adab* is also a key way in which we can demonstrate and give meaning to a key aim in a university:the re-institutionalization of practical reason back into its teaching practices.[35]*Adab* manifests quite clearly as a critical way to understand teaching as a social and moral practice[36] In this sense engaging with the discourse of *adab* can be an important contributor to our approach to teaching and the broad culture of educational institutions. In terms of our discussion of teaching the significance of drawing on the idea of *adab* for education is that *adab* is, 'concerned with the etiquette of being human.'[37] It is a humanizing practice and *adab* points to the essential issue of nurturing human morality in our everyday forms of propriety which is a basic educational aim. *Adab* in its deepest sense combines the theoretical knowledge of what we ought to do with the ability to practice these in our life.[38]

The discourse of *adab* may help to shift thinking about teaching and education more broadly not simply in the Islamic world but beyond it and in this way help all of us see some of the problems in the discourse of teaching which stem from the broader loss of meaning in modernity and the concurrent disintegration of our language of education stripped of spiritual depth and philosophical rigor. As Elizabeth M. Bucar points out it is '*adab*discourse that is the closest to current philosophical and religious discussions of virtue.'[39]According to Talal al-Azem a key idea of education and teaching in Islamic civilization has been its commitment to cultivating

and grounding a moral and social ethic which was institutionalized through *adab*.[40] Here teaching is not strictly reduced to a professionalized process of instrumtal competencies but is rather better understood in terms of the craft of teaching. According to Talal al-Azem: 'The personal character of teaching was recognized as a keystone of educational practice in the theoretical literature and manuals to students and educators. Indeed, in the eyes of many a premodern Muslim writer, teaching was categorized as that most personal form of creative production: a craft.'[41]*Adab* in respect to teaching is not a practice of trivial or dogmatic rule following, nor should it be understood in reference to overly professionalized and specialized discourses of teaching. Talal al-Azem points out:

"The very notion of proper attitude and conduct was central to the educational enterprises that served to inculcate the moral imagination of Islamicate society. *Adab* not only defined scholarly practice, but served to govern the institutions and their social operations and, to protct against the damages resulting from specialisation and professionalization. In turn, the educational experience perpetuated the theoretical and embodied transmission of *adab*. In the final calculation, this is what kept premodern Muslim traditions of institutional education not merely personal, but profoundly human.'[42]

A sense of humility and obligation and a genuine commitment to human solidarity and mutual recognition are grounded in concrete traditions and practices. Teaching is one such practice and the importance of *adab* to humanizing this practice is central to its attractiveness. The inculcation of *adab* the practices of virtue, civility, propriety back into our institutional life requires a re-grounding, a re-sacralisation of institutional life as the basis for 'reciprocal stabilization of behaviors' based on habitualized ethical norms.[43]Regard for others manifests in how we engage with each other, how we treat and show respect to each other. How we encounter each other is formed and shaped by the processes of institutionalization we undergo which provides necessary 'cultural stabilization' and 'coherence and continuity' to human beings.[44]*Adab* suggests that to be properly educated one must have one's knowledge tempered by a recognition of and engagement with values that transcend mere individual wishes or ego. *Adab* links teaching with the seeking of knowledge with the good, the proper and transcendent values. The key to

the idea of *adab* is that it understands knowledge as always being imbricated with values which ultimately help in the cultivation of proper and balanced life. Personal cultivation, refinement, right manners and a proper relationship both to the Almighty, truth and to others is the mark [illegible]

commitment with ethical practices. Moosa writes:

'Adab is a word that does not translate as easily into its approximations of ''civility'' and ''etiquette'' as is often thought to be the case. Adab is something more: it is that pedagogy that results in the cultivation of a virtue and motivates all human practices. It is both the education itself and the practical formation of norms for right and exemplary conduct; and, more, it is the internalization of norms in order to ingrain into the psyche a certain virtue (faḍīla). When virtue becomes an indelible part of what Muslim philosophers and ethicists call one's inner disposition, or habitus (malaka) of the soul/self, only then can one claim to have acquired adab, or ethical norms. Not only is adab that learning acquired for the sake of right living, but it is a knowledge that goes beyond knowing. Muslim ethicists describe adab firstly as a disposition toward knowledge. It is, then, primarily the attitude and disposition that enables one to experience the effects of knowledge and be transformed by its animation in the self. Ghazālī described the goal of adab as the disciplining of the spirit (nafs) so that the spirit may direct the body to perform deeds of merit almost instinctively.'[45]

The spiritual dimension to *adab*in our worldly practices (teaching) may at times be implicit but it is always present and is critical to its 'binding' power.Syed Naquib al-Attas argues: '*adab*identifies itself as knowledge of the purpose of seeking knowledge.'[46] What is it that we seek? What is it that animates and provides direction for our search? What is it that we seek to follow and replicate? As mimetic beings in modern life we have arguably become object oriented, individualistic, possessive and competitive. Without institutionalization of normative practices and habitualization of manners, mores and forms of behaviour *adab* which ground and inform the way we engage each other and interact with each other our natural disposition towards care and altruism lacks direction, support and positive cultural articulation. The quality and nature of our institutional life can in principle either help us to positively educate,

support, reinforce, fill out and develop us in positive relation to our altruistic selves or our institutional lives can increasingly act to distance us from this.[47] What we identify with, behaviours, and norms and how our empathetic relationships are developed links to our mimetic capacities. Ultimately, *adab* entails an aspiration towards an 'imaginative ideal' of 'moral community' that is humane, educated, civil and decent.[48]

*Adab*as institutionalised teaching practice embeds and grounds individuals in a moral, social and cultural order which provides meaning and balance to an otherwise chaotic environment of drift and homelessness.[49] The key to the idea of *adab* is that it understands knowledge as always being imbricated with values, 'which can be shared by Muslim and non-Muslim' which demonstrates clearly the inclusive and universal aspects of Islamicate civilization.[50] Ultimately *adab* which articulates 'self-conscious deliberateness' through habitualization and institutionalization of a culture of civility.[51] In Dewey's terms: 'Conduct is always shared' and to change conduct requires a 'change in objective arrangements and institutions.'[52] Insofar as teachers internalize this 'imaginative ideal' of 'moral community' and practice it in their teaching as a basic modelling for their practice they exhibit a kind of positive mimesis. Positive mimetic impulse stems from an acceptance of human limitation the need for civility, care, hospitality informed by our openness to each other which rests ultimately on our openness to the spiritual dimension of life.[53]

ADAB AS BINDING CIVILITY FOR COSMOPOLITAN PRACTICE

Reintroducing back into our higher educational discourse an engagement with the concept of *adab* provides one path for us to rethink our educational imaginary and the effort of embedding and cultivating practical ethics in our teaching and provides us with a way to genuinely introduce students and teachers alike to genuine cross cultural ideals of teaching. It provides the basis for creativity (knowledge) and cooperative care (ethics) to be integrated which is to suggest in another way that it develops dispositions and capacity to develop properly one's ethical judgment in the service of knowledge acquisition and attainment.[54] Adaptation and reflective dialogue are always a part of any healthy institution and the practice of *adab* provides a principle of dialogical reflexivity and reduces conflict insofar as it provides binding forms of manners and norms necessary for principles of civility to operate.[55]*Adab*

helps us to define the quality of our relations and in this engenders respect. Nell Noddings views on teaching as a relational practice coheres with some of the arguments produced here with regards to *adab*and its

norms of civility which are critical for cosmopolitan societies.

*Adab*points us back to issues of grounded obligation, manners, culture and responsibility and civility. According to Julia Bray 'adab is both polite learning and its uses: the improvement of one's understanding by instruction and experience, it results in civility and becomes a means of achieving social goals.'[57]*Adab*is also adaptable to cosmopolitan societies. In other words, while it is usually identified as part of the ideals of Islamic civilization as referred to earlier by George Makdisi, *adab* can also be understood as Vivek Bhandari argues as a cosmopolitan ideal 'shared by different social constituencies.'[58] This does not constitute a contradiction but rather illustrates the inclusive and cosmopolitan nature of Islamic civilization as a basis for the development of *adab*.[59] In fact, as Barbara Daly Metcalf points out the content of *adab* has been shared by non-Islamic cultures throughout history and has pre-Islamic roots in ideas of civility that were found in pre-Abrahamic as well as pre-Islamic Middle Eastern societies.[60]

In regards to teaching and education, Bridget Blomfeld author of *Adab Courteous Behaviour in the Classroom* makes the argument that: 'Therefore regardless of one's religious beliefs, the concept of *adab* makes lives richer and more meaningful. It gives practitioners the ability to live ethical lives and be conscious and respectful of others and of themselves.'[61]Blomfield expands on her positive regard for *adab* as a universal ethic when she reminds us that, '*Adab*leads to the desire to serve humanity in gratitude and humility'.[62] The core point being made here is that *adab*should not be understood from a narrowly sectarian perspective, nor dismissed through ignorance. The breakdown of other regarding practices and dispositions in both institutional settings and in individuals suggests that the discourse of *adab* is not less but more relevant to the contemporary problems of teaching. Institutionalizing *adab* where it is culturally relevant into universities and their teaching practices provides a potential stabilizing mechanism which can help to overcome and address the pathologies of anomic hyper individualism and exclusionary group

orientation.[63] Such an ethos informing the social and moral practice of teaching is particularly useful in multicultural societies where there is a search for some moral grounding in institutions yet a desire to avoid sectarian excess. Civility is the bedrock upon which cosmopolitan societies prosper.*Adab* has much to teach us in this regard and its roots in cosmopolitan Islamicate civilization also has much to teach us about how we view contemporary arguments over binding values, social cohesion and institutionalization of moral norms and habits.

CONCLUSION

*Adab*balances personal honour, civility culture and in this fashion, represents both a traditional conceptualization of ethical conduct and habitualization as well as concept that is extremely useful and productive for critiquing contemporary modern education.*Adab* which integrates a sense of honour and obligation back into our concept of education. *Adab* also focuses us on our institutional roles which provide a firm grounding for our 'other regarding' ethos in institutional settings. The focus on grounding 'other regarding' ethics through institutionalization of *adab* reintroduces to us to a discourse of older concepts of obligation, duty and propriety which suggests that the problems of re-institutionalising virtue in educational institutions and specifically in teaching is part of a broader debate about the re-engagement with ideas of virtue, character and the necessary dispositions we need to develop and inculcate as teachers. [64]

The institution of *adab* grounds virtue, through 'the cultivation of proper ethical conduct through a slow process of educating and disciplining the self (body and soul)'.[65] The critical point made in this discussion is that *adab* strongly relates to concepts of propriety, obligation and responsibility and these must not just be asserted in educational institutions but realised in their social practices such as teaching as well.[66] As Charles Tilly points out, 'getting relations with specific other people right matters fundamentally'.[67]*Adab* also opens our minds to a language of education that is deeper and not positivistic. When *adab* and commitment to obligations in our educational institutions inform social relations, they transform the social capital of an educational institution in fundamental ways. The result is properly balanced social cohesiveness and tolerance.

Do the roots of *adab* in Islamic civilization mean that it is irrelevant to contemporary times or non-Islamic civilizations? The argument that I am offering is that this is not so. Following the kind of intuition of

Marshall Hodgson who saw 'that Islamic history was a strategic point from which to undertake a critique of the discourse on Western civilisation'[68] it may be possible to advance an examination of *adab* and teaching as way of reminding us of recovering not only a deeper and richer historical and cross civilizational understanding of teaching but also providing a renewed basis for critique of currently existing 'values' and ideologies which while currently dominant are arguably at odds with our desire to realise our aspirations to a truer and deeper humanity. In other words, opening the discussion of teaching to the discourse of *adab* can help break down barriers to intercultural understanding and help reinvigorate discussion about the broader need to engage the cultivation of dispositions in diverse cultural contexts which are even more needed in a world increasingly adrift and at odds. Engaging the idea of *adab* also gives us a discourse that opens discussion of the spiritual and non-instrumentalist dimensions to what it is to be educated.In this sense *adab* provides us with a language and conceptualization that can address the

practice.

Not only can engaging with and considering *adab* in relation to teaching provide a way for us to advance our knowledge and understanding of Islamic civilization, it can also help reignite a broader debate over the spiritual practice of teaching and help point to the relationship between civility and learning which are even more necessary for teachers and teaching. *Adab* properly understood can provide the structure for well-being (*eudaimonia*: εὐδαιμονία) and natural piety to flourish. Such goals are not something limited to one culture or civilization. Despite our differences we do not suffer utter incomprehensibility between us in our discussion of the moral and ethical basis of teaching. Learning from each other and from the best models represents the most positive mimetic impulse, an impulse which in its positive form is life affirming and world opening. In discussing *adab* and teaching we point also to the important contribution that the discussion of *adab* can have in advancing both inter-civilizational understanding and in reenergizing discussions about the philosophical and spiritual grounding of teaching and education. That engaging the issue of *adab* also entails challenging and questioning some of the assumptions and claims of what

Charles Taylor refers to as our secular age and addresses the negative stereotypes of Islam so often seen in contemporary discourse goes without saying.[69]*Adab* very well may be that 'light beyond the shore' of our current educational practices.[70]The existence of such a light gives us room for hope.

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[9] Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

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