

2012 CILS/ NCEIS Islamic Studies Postgraduate Conference Abstracts

Name: Abd Rahman, Mohd Rosmizi

Institution: Monash University

Title and Abstract: Al-Ghazali on the Essence of Good Deeds

Performing good deeds, especially the prescribed religious acts of devotion, is part and parcel of the Muslim's life. However, the majority of Muslims put great emphasis only on the diligent outward performance of good deeds, and on the observance of the outward requirements. Some Sufis however, especially al-Ghazali, go beyond this normative practice, arguing that a mere outward observance of good deeds is still insufficient, and indeed is still at risk. There are certain inner preconditions, which are the kernel of good deeds, that need to be observed. However, these inner dimensions of good deeds are not well expressed and appreciated within orthodox Islam. It is only visible to those whose hearts have been purified, and for whom the veils which prevent this insight opened. This presentation attempts to analyse some of al-Ghazali's penetrating and spiritual insights into the inner dimension of good deeds. Al-Ghazali was able to express lucidly this inner dimension which was once inexpressible within orthodox Islam. His view of the issue does not only improve the quality of good deeds of individual Muslims, but to some extent, it is also applicable to other religious traditions.

Name: Abdi, Supriyanto

Institution: The University of Melbourne

Title and Abstract: The Struggle for State Neutrality and Religious Freedom in Post-New Order Indonesia: Contributions and Limits of Liberal-Progressive Islam

Despite the reaffirmation of the non-sectarian character of the Indonesian state and the strengthening of the constitutional guarantee for religious freedom during the constitutional reform period (1999-2002), religion-state relations and religious freedom in Indonesia have remained characterised by certain paradoxes. One of these paradoxes can be seen in the enactment of a number of laws strongly influenced by particular interpretations of Islamic law at the national level and the introduction of various "shari'a bylaws" at the regional level. Another paradox is the remaining in force, and its recent affirmation by the Indonesian Constitutional Court, of Law No.1/PNPS/1965 on Blasphemy which gives the state the power to set and maintain the boundaries of religious truths. In these two developments, the principle of state neutrality has been put into question with certain religious interpretations are allowed to dictate the state's laws and policies. These paradoxes, however, have been under serious challenges, some of which came from "liberal" and "progressive" Muslim intellectuals and activists who strongly oppose both the formalization of Islamic law and the continuing application of the Blasphemy Law. The paper will examine the contributions and limits of discursive efforts made by a number of liberal and progressive Muslim intellectuals in response to these two particular paradoxes. Two main questions will guide the analysis of the paper. The first is how and to what extent they could reconcile the liberal premises of state neutrality with the historically dominant ideological narrative of the Indonesian state as a compromise between its "Islamic" and "secular" orientations. The second is whether and to what extent they could win political and popular support in a more open but increasingly contested public sphere in post-New Order Indonesia.

Name: Alajlan, Abdullah

Institution: Flinders University

Title and Abstract: Are Current Credit Risk Mitigation Policies Credible? Does the Islamic Banking System Have an Alternative Option?

Regulating risk management is one of the biggest challenges facing the financial industry. While banks are commercial enterprises that have enjoyed unprecedented development, regulators are concerned about the risks that Islamic financial institutions face. Moreover, there is a growing trend of credit risks generated by Islamic banking modes which has led to unsatisfactory investment performance. Interest-free and profit-loss sharing (PLS approaches sometimes collide with current credit risk management tools (derivative, rescheduling of debts, risk-based pricing). Therefore, credit risk is the most important source of Islamic banking instability and generates 70% of the total risk. Lack of regulation, misunderstanding of the PLs approach and the contractual relationship between financier and lender in the Islamic law are the main reasons behind poor risk management in the Islamic banking systems. This paper articulates the shortcomings in current credit risk mitigation policies and sheds a light on hedging policies in the Islamic banking system with their benefits for the economic world. Finally, this paper endeavors to provide a legal framework for credit management based on Islamic law.

Name: Bhatti, Aziz

Institution: La Trobe University

Title and Abstract: "Pakistanization" of Indonesia and its future implications for Australia.

The Indonesian government has employed a draconian law called 'Presidential Decree of 2008' marginalizing its minority Muslim sect Ahmadiyya and the religious activities of the group. After its promulgation, it has already caused enough damage not only to the Ahmadiyya followers but the radical Muslims have used it as a stepping stone to press the government and to tighten their grip on the Indonesian society. This presidential decree of 2008 is a carbon-copy of Pakistan's 'Ordinance XX of 1984' against the same Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. This research has three primary aims. 1) to list down the damage this ordinance 'XX' has caused to the Ahmadiyya Muslims and to Pakistan; 2) to list down the damage the 'Presidential Decree of 2008' has caused to the Ahmadiyya Muslims in Indonesia and to Indonesian society since 2008; and 3) the future threat of a radicalized, intolerant and an extremist Indonesia to our homeland, Australia.

Name: Che Daud, Burhan

Institution: Monash University

Title and Abstract: Nur al-Din and the Quest for Tajdid in Medieval Syria

This paper attempts to examine Nur al-Din b. Zengi (d.569AH/1174CE), the medieval Muslim ruler of Syria within the framework of *tajdid*. Nur al-Din's quest for *tajdid* will be analyzed through two significant yet intertwined themes; the renewal of leadership in medieval Syria and Nur al-Din's jihad enterprise. It will approach the specified theme in three key objectives. Firstly, it will examine Nur al-Din's style and pattern of leadership. Secondly, it will evaluate Nur al-Din's approaches to leadership in his struggle to establish Muslim unity. Thirdly, this paper will critically analyze Nur al-Din's understanding of the notion of jihad, its development and implementation throughout his political career. This paper argues that significant achievements and contributions made by Nur al-Din during his 28 years reign have not been as well-studied in the western world as those of Salah al-Din (d.589/1193). This paper also argues that Nur al-Din, as a very pragmatic leader, differed from his predecessors and contemporary rulers in the way he implemented his leadership style, policies and approaches through focussing on the framework *tajdid* in order to establish unity among the Muslims in Medieval Syria.

Name: D'Alton, John

Institution: Monash University

Title and Abstract: Combating the Soul in al-Muhasibi and Isaac of Nineveh

When al-Ghazali wrote his works on purification of the soul he drew especially on the 3rd/9th century works of al-Muhasibi. Al-Muhasibi developed a rich terminology of inner spiritual battle and soul purification which he considered was 90% of jihad. Smith, Schoonover, Renard and Picken have described his works but not analysed the metaphors and concepts involved. This paper analyses key aspects of al-Muhasibi's approach to combatting the soul, and briefly compares this with Isaac of Nineveh's roughly contemporary writings, demonstrating significant similarities and differences between them. This analysis informs the current debate over the meaning and methods of jihad.

Name: Drennan, David

Institution: University of Sydney

Title and Abstract: Fatwas, Principle-Based Jurisprudence and the Post-Madhhab Turn

Since the early twentieth century, a major focus in the Western study of Islamic law has been regarding Islamic law and its relationship to social and legal change. Progressing from the Orientalist position that Islamic law was removed from socio-cultural change, and hence, irrelevant, Hallaq and others have shown that it was through the incorporation of fatwas into the corpus of the legal schools (madhahib) that Islamic law remained relevant. Hallaq also argues that in the contemporary period, the pre-modern structures based on adherence to the madhhab have all but become obsolete, resulting in a major structural change in Islamic legal thought. Today, we see that important pre-modern and classical texts of both Islamic substantive law (furu') and legal theory (usul al-fiqh) are consulted, but no longer within strict school boundaries. Instead, a comparative-based approach to the madhahib and collective fatwa pronouncements have become the norm, alongside a focus on legal maxims (qawa'id fiqhiyya) and legal objectives (maqasid al-shari'a). This paper discusses this process of legal change through using The Amman Message and related contemporary texts as a case study, analysing in particular the works of three highly respected scholars, Ali Gomaa, Abdallah bin Bayyah and Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

Name: Esse, Abdirashid

Institution: Australian Catholic University

Title and Abstract: Demand of Islamic Socially Responsible Investing:

This paper presents a conceptual model for normative Islamic investment. We describe how this ethics model seeks to balance the needs of diverse stakeholders, and discuss its enforcement mechanisms. This method of ethical investment is common for behavioural finance which puts specific additional criteria such as screening of stocks. Furthermore, the financial theory based on Modern Portfolio Theory (Markowitz, 1952) and Capital Assets Pricing Model (Sharp, 1964) has shaped the analyses of the investment performance. It is based on the notion that investors act rationally and assess all available information in the decision-making process according to the market efficiency hypothesis. However, it is not the only factor that an ethical investor is seeking to obtain a return on their investment. Colby et al. (2008) has measured sixteen behavioral mutual funds and found that flow of funds into ethical funds is higher than the traditional funds. In the rapidly growing field of Islamic investment, investors are seeking investments that are established and provide reasonable returns. However, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) developed prospect theory and confirmed by experiment that has predicted risk attitudes. They concluded that risk aversion gains moderately to high probability and losses low probability, while risk seeking gains low probability and losses moderately to high probability. The main objective for building this model is to examine the prospect theory of Islamic ethical- investor and confirm the reliability of this experiment.

Name: Farate, Eduardo

Institution: University of Melbourne

Title and Abstract: Western Australian Muslim Parents; Stories from the Home Front

This paper presents some of the findings of a research project that looks into the experiences of a cohort of Muslim families that have settled in Western Australia. It focuses on findings related to parenting, in particular some of the challenges identified by parents, the strategies they use to address them and who or where they may turn for assistance. Participants interviewed for this research originated from countries in Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia and Australia. The interviews involved a total of 32 adults — which included six couples. Most interviews were held in the Perth metropolitan area and four in Katanning, a regional centre in Western Australia's Great Southern region. Ten of the participants interviewed arrived as refugees within the last five years. Findings appear to show that parents' ability to handle challenges and negotiate the new social reality is influenced by such things as their journey into Australia and their experience in the country of origin. Parents who originated from more 'westernised' societies, or were born, or raised in Australia from a very early age, appeared to have a more relaxed parenting approach, but still in-keeping with Muslim values and norms.

Name: Gourlay, William

Institution: Monash University

Title and Abstract: Re-Emergent Islamic and Enhanced Pluralism: The Kurds and Alevis in Modern Turkey

In 1923 a Turkish nation-state was created from the remains of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire; the Turkish nation-building project, underpinned by the philosophy of Kemalism, included an imposed notion of homogenous ethnicity. Secularism and shared "Turkishness" were to replace Islamic faith as the binding agents that would assure national cohesion. Such a position denied an identity to non-Turkish minorities and expressions of ethnic difference, such as those voiced by the Kurds, were construed as separatism and were suppressed by state organs. Here instrumental rationality was given precedence over moral rationality: protection of the state was privileged over individual or collective rights. In recent decades, however, a more inclusive and pluralist discourse has opened up regarding ethnic diversity. This paper will examine how events since the 1980s have seen the re-emergence of Islam in the public sphere, and the extent to which this has contributed to an atmosphere where minority issues may be more openly debated. Focusing particularly on the experiences of the Kurdish and Alevi communities, this paper investigates notions of 'Muslimhood' and Islamism and the ways in which they affect the state of play in the modern Turkish nation-state as regards pluralism and democratisation.

Name: Guk Isik, Ayse

Institution: Australian Catholic University

Title and Abstract: Muslim-Ezidi Relations in a Multi-Ethnic Context: The Possibility of Co-Existence

The Ezidis are a religious group sometimes known as 'devil-worshippers'. Indeed, they show respect to *Melek-e Tawus* (the Peacock Angel) which they believe plays a significant role in the creation of the world. Being different to Muslims and Christians with whom they have lived in Mardin, Turkey, they have faced some difficulties to represent themselves. This paper aims to analyse the relations of Ezidis and Muslims in Mardin to examine the possibility of co-existence. The paper discusses cultural prejudices between these groups that have been produced by religious beliefs before giving examples of close relations between them. Some Muslim Mardinities believe that the Ezidis are *haram* to Muslims. This understanding restricts their relations. However, they have improved relations by constructing mediator institutions such as milk siblinghood and the institution of *Kirvelik* to eliminate tensions created by religious differences. These institutions also establish virtual kinship and require the prohibition of marriage between Ezidis and Muslims. Consequently, this paper attempts to understand the possibility of co-existence in a multi-ethnic context in the case of the relations of Ezidis and their Muslim neighbors.

Name: Hassan, Abdi

Institution: Victoria University

Title and Abstract: Problems and Prospects of Islamic Banking in Australia: the issue of Shariah Compliance for International financing under the Murabaha contract.

At present, Islamic banking is the fastest growing sector of the global financial market. The growth of Islamic finance has been estimated to be 15-20% annually. The Islamic finance is rapidly growing and expanding into non-Muslims countries particularly in the west. As a result western financial institutions are increasingly interested and involved with this emerging niche market. Currently, there are more than 300 Islamic financial institutions operating in more than 75 countries, including Australia. Majority of the Islamic financial operations are conducted through Murabaha method and many of these transactions involve with international trade finance which is governed by the Contract of International Sales for Goods (CISG). Thus, these transactions operate within different regulatory systems and are required to comply with these different and sometimes opposing legal systems. The compliance of the financial transactions with the Shariah principles gives them the legitimacy to be considered a Shariah compliant while their compliance with the conventional regulations is necessary for their acceptance and success in the conventional markets. However, these overlapping regulations may create legal challenges for the Islamic International financial transactions. There are vast researches on Islamic banking; however, there is little research on the Islamic International financing under Murabaha contract comparing it with the United Nations Contract for International Sale for goods (CISG). The international trade financing under Murabaha contract within the framework of CISG is one of the most significant current discussions within the current global economy and international financial transactions. Therefore, this study intends to examine the financial implications of the International trade finance under the Murabaha contract within the context of CISG and Australian financial regulatory framework.

Name: Iqbal, Asep

Institution: Murdoch University

Title and Abstract: Online Framing Contests: The Internet and Intra-Movement Contention Within the Salafi Movement in Indonesia.

This paper seeks to examine a religious movement's reading of the internet from a user-centred perspective: mobilizing the internet for waging war against those considered as to have violated 'pure Islam'. It argues that the framing contest within the Salafi movement is a struggle for symbolic religious leadership, that is, the sacred authority to interpret Islam on the behalf of ummah (Muslim global community).

In doing so, it focuses its analysis on the use of the websites by the actors of Indonesian Salafi movement and their engagement with the intra-movement contention. Mobilizing the websites, the Salafis are involved in the internal process of contention in which each competing faction struggles to influence the direction of the movement by framing the other as transgressors of the pure Islam and portraying itself as true guardians, followers and observants of the authentic Islam.

Using the engagement with Salafi manhaj (method) as a point of analysis, the paper attempts to identify Salafis's online framing strategies of "the other", those who are considered to have violated the pure Islam as prescribed in the Salafi manhaj, followed by explanation of why the Salafis engage in these online framing contests by considering the nature of religious authority within the Salafi movement and motives derived from their religious ideology and values.

Name: Krayem, Mehal

Institution: University of Technology, Sydney

Title and Abstract: Online Framing Contests: Australian Arabs and Muslims in Australian Popular Culture

"You know Malik, you've got cultural and language skills that are in demand. I mean I know you turned down affairs but if you came across to us, you could make a difference" - Skerrett to Malik (East West 101).

This quote comes from a conversation between two fictional detectives (Malik and Skerrett) in SBS's East West 101, a show described by critics as reflecting a true image of cultural diversity in Australia. This quote aptly describes the relationship that many migrant groups seem to share with the state. Their differences are presented as an asset valued by mainstream institutions under the guise of what is now known as 'productive diversity'. This paper will unpack the underlying criteria of Malik's success both as a Muslim character and as a model of successful productive diversity. It will use Hage's understanding of the concept of whiteness to discuss Malik's success as rooted in his accumulation of appropriate cultural capital. It will address the intersection between cultural capital and productive diversity, illustrating how Malik and by extension other Muslims utilize their cultural capital in addition to their other cultural and language skills to allow them to occupy the position of the 'good migrant'.

Name: Kaplanian, Carol

Institution: The University of Western Australia

Title and Abstract: Honour Killings - New findings on this global perplexity

Having presented at the same conference in 2008 during the first year of my doctorate, this 2012 presentation will reveal the findings. My area of study falls under a social policy analysis of honour killings in Jordan. A grounded theory approach to analysis has seen the examination of religion, gender, culture, family, society, law and the importance of honour to society. It was important to examine those areas to understand the relationship between the progression of law (and subsequent harsher penalties on perpetrators of honour crimes) and the mentality of society. What has been revealed is complex. While the progression of law and the mentality of society are not moving at an equal/parallel pace, entrenched ideologies in certain sectors are fuelling notions of honour, gender, religion and familial construct in new generations of Jordanians. Today, the Jordanian government is battling to attain an equilibrium, which can only be created through holistic changes to its entire system. Those ideas and theoretical underpinnings will be explored and presented at the conference, as will its importance to policing and cultural progression within culturally and linguistically diverse communities throughout the world.

Name: Latham, Susie

Institution: Curtin University

Title and Abstract: Eradicating Female Genital Cutting – Lessons From a Small Iranian Town

Some forms of Female Genital Cutting (FGC) raise serious health and consent issues which international agencies and some members of practising communities wish to address. Iran is not on the World Health Organisation list of countries where FGC has been documented. However, this paper presents for the first time the example of a conservative Arab Iranian rural town from which FGC was totally eradicated by the late 1950s. Through the stories of elderly women, it traces the decline of the practice from Type II to Type I to a symbolic ritual to complete eradication over two decades. Final elimination of cutting was achieved almost immediately by a decree from Muslim leaders that the practice was haram. This research demonstrates the critical role Islam and other religions can play in eradication, a role understated in international agency statements. It suggests the harm minimisation approach of moving to lesser, safer forms of cutting may be an effective step towards elimination; supports the theory that social conventions can change rapidly when a critical mass of people realise others will also change; and challenges the assumption that eradication of FGC requires enlightened outside intervention or a western feminist awakening.

Name: Morsi, Yassir

Institution: The University of Melbourne

Title and Abstract: The Consumable Islam

Under the influences of late capitalism's corporate politics, the commercialization of culture and the impact of mass media on branding products, the Muslim as a traditional cultural entity, and legalistic subject is vanishing. Furthermore, following the trend, young Muslims in western media are now commonly a product that sells back to western audiences the triumphant individualism of liberal ideology by claiming religion is a private matter, and that Islamic truths are in flux, and ever changing. The aim of this paper is to establish two assumptions. (1) In our late modern liberal society we see an unbridged distancing between signifier and signified. Thus, (2) in a liberal and post-modern celebration of individualism there only need be signifiers without attachment to the signified, or in this particular example, as according to capitalism, we can have Muslims without Islam. The signifier without the signified.

Name: Musa, Nurfilah

Institution: The University of Melbourne

Title and Abstract: The Intergovernmental relations in the Administration of Islamic Matters in Malaysia – Is Cooperative Federalism Possible?

Cooperative Federalism is common in many federations. This type of federalism is usually established through intergovernmental relations between the federal and the state governments for the purpose of cooperation, collaboration and consultation. According to the Malaysian Constitution, administration of Islamic affairs is a state matter. However, developments in the administration of Islamic matters in Malaysia in the last two decades have changed the federalism dynamics. Intergovernmental relations between the federal and state religious departments was not an important aspect previously but now becomes increasingly important. This paper argues that cooperative federalism may be able to overcome some of the problems caused by the constitutional division of powers in the administration of Islamic matters in Malaysia. After identifying some of the problems in the constitutional division of powers in the administration of Islamic affairs in Malaysia, this paper is going to demonstrate how intergovernmental relations and cooperative federalism may be a possible solution. The problem of enforcement of halal certification on product, food and premise is chosen for this purpose. Current developments in the area, possible cooperative federalism mechanisms and some probable challenges in implementing cooperative federalism mechanism will be discussed taking into account the present political situation and the constitutional monarchy setup in Malaysia.

Name: Novakovich, Hamida

Institution: The University of Western Australia

Title and Abstract: Defining Contemporary Muslim Art in Australia

Contemporary 'Muslim' art in Australia is at its infancy with only a handful of exhibitions such as the Melbourne based You Am I exhibition exploring the emergence of 'contemporary Muslim art' since 2009. Post 9/11, Muslim identities and the expression of these identities have emerged as a major focus of attention in recent academia. As the Muslim community continues to be under the spotlight in the Australian and international media, exhibitions showcasing the work of Muslims or Muslim culture has also emerged. Within the Muslim community, the place of arts has always been contested. Yet, exhibitions of Islamic or Muslim art around the world have fuelled the emergence of artistic practice of Muslims, especially in the West. In this paper I seek to explore the challenge faced by Muslim artists in Australia who's work has fallen under 'contemporary Muslim art' and/or 'contemporary Islamic art'. I explore a number of recent exhibitions that focus on Muslims in different ways in order to question how artists may exhibit their work and in doing so challenge boundaries such as 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' art.

Name: Owaydah, Khalid

Institution: Flinders University

Title and Abstract: Criminal Liability and Principles of Self-Defence in Shari'ah

The lack of the Western analysis concerning criminal Islamic law leads to a misunderstanding by Western countries, such as Australia, about criminal Islamic law; in particular the right to self-defence law. The theory of necessity is one of the most important theories in criminal Islamic law. Self-defence in Islamic law 'Sharia' has been divided into two parts: general, and private. This study investigates, examines, and analyses primary sources of Islamic law in relation to individual self-defence law and in comparison to Western law. It will focus on primary sources; while secondary information will be gained through criminal justice literature. The aim of this study is to ascertain whether there is a right for those who use force to defend themselves against criminal acts under the theory of necessity. One major objective of this study is to explain Islamic criminal law relative to self-defence law within the non-Muslim context. In conclusion, this research substantiates the significance of having an individual right for self-defence under the theory of necessity and investigates the concepts and principles of self-defence in Islamic criminal law.

Name: Pausacker, Helen

Institution: The University of Melbourne

Title and Abstract: Indonesian Beauty Queens Representing the Nation – Religion and Ethnicity

Beauty queens have been described as embodying the nation, bearing their nation's name on the sash around their body as they stand on the international stage. The Indonesian population is composed of both diverse ethnicities and religions, and the question of how the nation should be viewed internationally has played out during the post-Soeharto *Reformasi* (reform) era in debates around beauty queens. The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) reported Nadine Chandrawinata (Puteri Indonesia or Indonesian Princess 2004, who was Indonesia's entrant in the Miss Universe 2005 contest) to the police, after she was photographed wearing a bikini during the international contest. The group argued that they had reported the (Christian) beauty queen to police, because the national representative of a nation with a majority of Muslims, should be modest and conservatively dressed. Other sections of the community focused on the ethnic representation of the nation through the beauty queen, criticising the choice of Nadine, who was of mixed ethnicity (with both European and Chinese blood). The debates around beauty queens therefore mirror the debates that currently surround Indonesian national and religious identities.

Name: Polat, Çemen

Institution: Monash University

Title and Abstract: The Gülen-hizmet Movement: The Sources of Funding

The importance and relevance of the philanthropic movement inspired by the philosophy of contemporary Turkish scholar and author, Fethullah Gülen has attracted the attention of scholars on a global scale. The focus of this Gülen-*Hizmet* Movement, the largest faith-inspired transnational movement in Muslim and non-Muslim world with an approximate financial value of \$25 billion, has been progressively recognized for its important contributions to educational, cultural, social and economic development in Turkey and abroad. The success of educational institutions associated with the Gülen-*Hizmet* Movement, with their reputation for quality education and universal ethical values is now renowned worldwide. Yet the economy of the Movement, particularly the funding of Gülen-inspired schools has been criticised for lack of transparency, enabling detractors to argue that the Movement is receiving financial aid from sources that are sectarian and non-altruistic. Hence, this paper examines the source of funding and analyses the financial mechanisms and the altruistic ethics behind the sponsorship of Gülen-inspired educational institutions. Arguments and conclusions drawn on this article are based on the critical analysis of existing scholarship and empirical data collected in three different countries including Australia, Turkey and Turkmenistan.

Name: Rochmat, Saefur

Institution: Victoria University

Title and Abstract: Abdurrahman Wahid on Islam and the Republic of Indonesia: A Fiqih-Plus Paradigm Approach

Abdurrahman Wahid introduced a socio-cultural approach to deal with the issue of the relationship between Islam and state. This approach is a kind of modification to the fiqh approach advocated by Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) to suit it to the development of modern sciences as well as to understand the latter based on Islamic cosmology. According to him, Islamic identity is Islamic cosmology which views the spirit and the material intermingling in the worldly life. Accordingly Muslims should respond to the issues of modernity based on this Islamic tradition to guide modernity discourses. By so doing they can help to mediate the conflict of ideologies on the basis that “the normative” intermingles with “the particular” and, as a consequence, that there is no absolute truth prevailing in this worldly life.

Name: Stone, Mark

Institution: Monash University

Title and Abstract: Pluralism and Islam

I have had a long-standing interest in the way religions view one another, and the relationships, continuities and differences in ideas between the great traditions. Wishing to pursue this interest, I completed my degree with first class honours in religious studies and literature in 2010 at Latrobe University Bendigo, then received a scholarship to commence my PhD studies at Monash in 2011. My focus is upon religious pluralism and alterity in Islam, but I am also interested in art, aesthetics, and mysticism. I currently live in rural Victoria. My proposal is to briefly explain and discuss the main aspects of my current PhD research. Firstly I will introduce some of the main methodological and philosophical issues concerning religious pluralism as it particularly relates to the study of Islam. Then I will discuss pluralism and the Quran, seeking to identify the possible basis of an Islamic pluralism in Quranic principles and key verses. I will place these statements in historical context wherever possible. Although it will not be possible to enter into a detailed discussion within the time allowed, I will also discuss the question of contradictory statements concerning the religious Other in the Quran, and briefly examine some ways in which these might be understood in the context of the Quran's unique rhetorical structure and mode of address.

Name: Tabbaa, Mohamad

Institution: The University of Melbourne

Title and Abstract: Freedom of Religion: What exactly is being protected?

There is today increasing pressure on Muslims in the west to adopt human rights ideals, particularly the right to freedom of religion. This right, which was one of the first to be recognised as a fundamental human right, is seen as an essential step forward for human progress, and as a path towards tolerance and co-existence. However, given the expansive power of human rights language today, the claimed neutrality of this ideal warrants closer scrutiny. It is my contention in this paper that, although freedom of religion may empower some vulnerable populations, not everything about it is quite so simple and positive. At the very same time as it protects, the freedom to practice religion as understood in liberal societies may also exclude certain religious populations, thereby delimiting or even removing its protection towards them. This paper will explore the 'dark side' of the concept of freedom of religion, through an investigation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Ultimately, I will ask what exactly is being protected by this celebrated right, and whether it may actually be excluding certain religious groups under the guise of protection.

Name: Tumbas, Nicholas

Institution: The University of Melbourne

Title and Abstract: What is Islam? A Reading of *On Multiples of Reality* by Alfred Schütz

Discourse abounds as to what Islam cannot be, and what it cannot accommodate. This is partially a function of the tyranny of the post-modern vogue, as well as various discursive agenda exogenous to both Islam and the sincere endeavour to understand it. This paper, in dissent, attempts to describe what Islam *is* and strike a balance between the reification and prescriptiveness of excess essentialism with the dynamic post-modern, antipathetic toward Meaning. Through a creative reading of the phenomenology of Alfred Schütz tempered with elements of G.A. James' German phenomenological tradition: including Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger as well as Chantepie and van der Leeuw, this paper construes Islam as a reality. As such, in the spirit of Schütz even if not using his nomenclature, it is a *shade of consciousness* shared by a matrix of *Knowing-Being selves*. On a practical level, the elements of the phenomenological understanding elucidated are equated to four more utilitarian concepts demonstrated to influence this *shade of consciousness* and shape the topography of Islam as a reality: the spiritual-transcendental, the temporal, *motif* and text.