

edited by
MORNY JOY

After Appropriation

EXPLORATIONS IN INTERCULTURAL
PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

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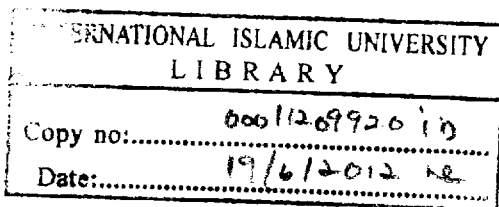
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studying the “other”: challenges and prospects of muslim scholarship on world religions¹

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INTRODUCTION

In institutions of higher learning in the Muslim world, in contrast to similar institutions in Western countries, scant attention is paid to the field of comparative religion. This, however, was not always the case. Between the third/ninth and sixth/twelfth centuries, Islamic civilization witnessed the rise – and also eclipse – of the discipline of *‘ilm al milal wa n-nihal* (literally, “knowledge of religious groups and sects”). According to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, interest in learning about other faiths and in interreligious debate and discussion during this period was so high that these areas became subjects of “salon conversation” and a “public past-time.”²

Among the works written during the heyday of comparative religious studies in Islamic history are: *Ar-Radd ‘ala n-Nasara* (“Refutation of the