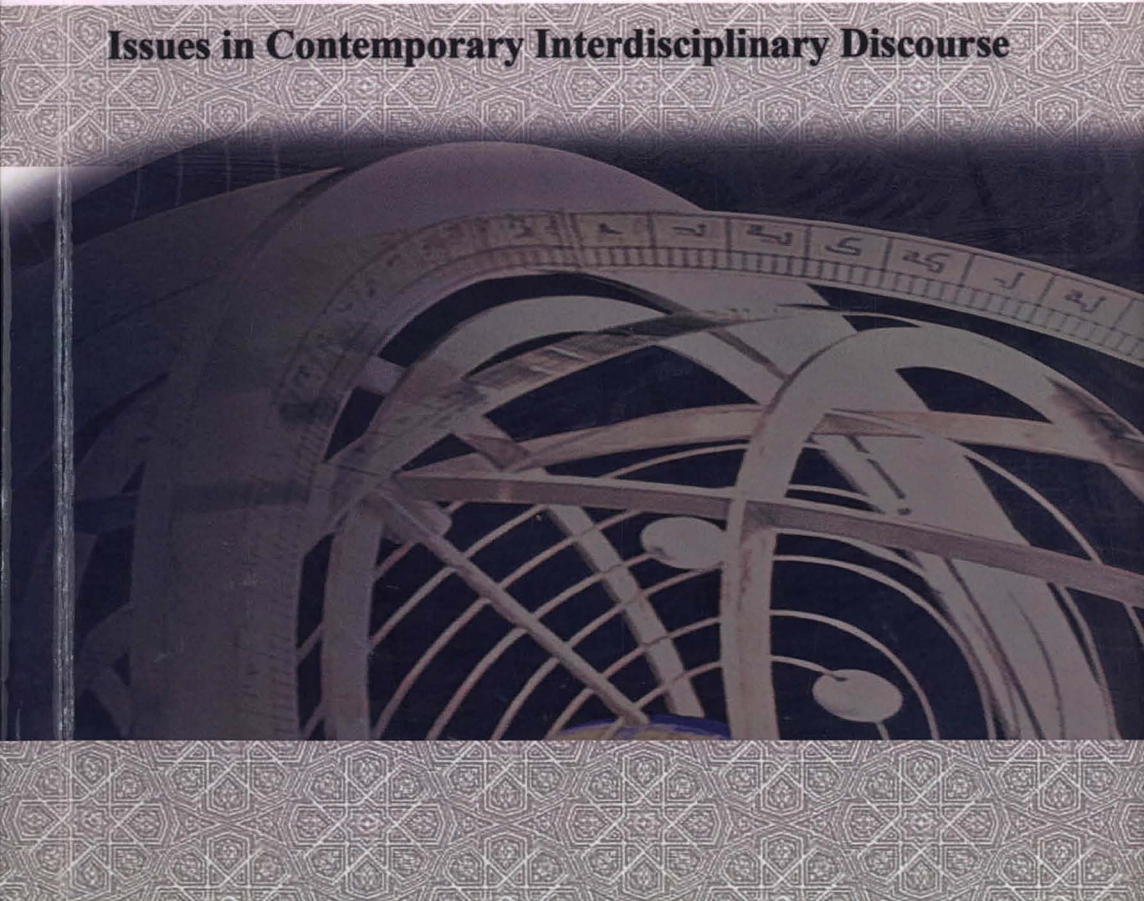


THE ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW, ETHICS AND CIVILIZATION

Issues in Contemporary Interdisciplinary Discourse



ABDUL KABIR HUSSAIN SOLIHU

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Edited by
Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu



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Chapter 1

Culture and Civilization: A Review of Concepts

Suleiman M. H. Boayo

Introduction

There is great confusion in grasping Western thought concerning the concept of culture and civilization. This is due to the fact that some scholars render civilization as a synonym for culture and others restrict it to the development of technology, institutions and material creations. There are scholars who make it to encompass all facts of development, whereas others confine its conception to the special aspect of individual progress. Some view civilization to include both individuals and society, and others assert that the concept of civilization is international, meaning that there is really only one civilization to which all societies contribute. As far as 'culture' is concerned, most scholars consider it as something peculiar to every nation, although some oppose this concept. The confusion of the concepts of culture and civilization among Muslim scholars is almost as complex as in the West, perhaps even more so. This is an underlying truth that should be accepted in the discourse of the concept of civilization in the Muslim conception.

This confusion creates a problem in the Muslim understanding of the civilization process. It leads to the translation of the Western concept of civilization into an unspecified Arabic term, resulting in confusion in contemporary Muslim thought as to how to define culture and civilization, as well as which term should be used to express the concept of civilization in the Muslim worldview, whether *ḥadārah*, *madaniyyah*, *tamaddun*, *'umrān* or *thaqāfah*.

This chapter attempts to examine the conceptual analysis and historical background of the terms 'culture' and 'civilization' in the Western and Muslim usages. It points out the confusion that arises when these terms were translated into Arabic, its impact on modern