

Introduction to Human Sciences (HS8.102)

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What Is Culture? (contd.)

Culture may include

- a general state of mind
- a general state of intellectual development in society
- a body of arts
- a way of life

Culture is present in the organisation of society, the structure of the family, and the institutions which are involved in social relationships.

The Study of Culture

Aristotle held that truth can only be arrived at through knowledge, which should direct practice in the arts and science.

He posited a hierarchy of knowledge, at the bottom of which was the functional knowledge of everyday necessities, and at the top of which was the philosophical knowledge which had no purpose other than itself and was an act of leisure. There is a fundamental break between the useful, or the pragmatic, and the beautiful, or the aesthetic.

A similar economic hierarchy of labour can be traced. “Lower” order activities, not involved with beauty or thought, produce a class dedicated to production. Distance from this physical labour produces class.

Thus, class structures are produced; caste is another social institution that perpetuates this division.

The history of idealism is the history of coming to terms with the established order; culture the mediation between idealism and material conditions of exploitation.