

Chapter X

CBM Elements IV

This chapter continues with CBM Elements and the design factors related to the anthropology of culture. Cultural history is covered in its entirety.

CULTURAL HISTORY

E8. Cultural History - Narrative representation of historical events.
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Cultural history covers these types of history: artistic, agricultural, crime, disease, economic, educational, ethnic, familial, gender, geographic, health, legal, linguistic, political, racial, religious, reproduction, science, sexual intercourse, social, time periods.

Cultural history is a narrative representation of events. This history is comprehensive in that it includes many of the histories that have been written by or about a population. Histories serve to preserve the past, tell the stories of human beings, record information, and chronicle a legacy. The point of building or researching a cultural history, according to Burke (2004), is to explore new facets of history and re-evaluate the old.¹

A cultural history is a universal history that includes all information that is discovered. This information can be gathered from a variety of sources including primary source documents, secondary source documents, oral histories, interviews, artifacts, and other forms of media. Within the larger society, histories may be recorded or chronicled by historians, writers, scribes, or other persons who are known to possess knowledge or who can interpret knowledge. Other histories may be documented by local inhabitants. Locate histories written about the population from people who live in and outside of the society or culture. Oral histories, that are recorded personal narratives of everyday people, may also be acquired. These histories aid in obtaining a balanced representation and can further authenticate historical representations. If these histories do not exist, then this weakness may become evident in the design. Access multiple media formats (pamphlets [e.g., religious, fraternal], radio, newspapers, magazines, books, television, documentaries, local historical societies, etc.) to compile these histories. There are also other methods for gathering historical data such as chronology, cliometrics, demographics, genealogy, and historiography.

Artistic

An artistic history is represented through the creative expression evident in a society, culture or a particular target audience. These forms of creative expression manifest in a variety of forms such as dance, painting, music, theatre, and sculpture) that are aesthetically pleasing to others. Art can serve a variety of functions in a society. It is a form of artistic expression for the artist. The observer of the art receives personal satisfaction. For example, many Westerners receive personal satisfaction from attending musical concerts, dramatic plays and museum exhibits. (See Cultural Aesthetics for more on art).

A society's longevity is represented in its art. Art serves to communicate the ideologies of a society. This is exemplified in many cultures where art is integral to religion and politics. Artwork serves many religious and social themes, as it is represented in temples, churches, and synagogues. Art may also serve as a form of social control. In many ancient societies, the construction of ziggurats, pyramids, temples and cathedrals were visual representations of God's power and the power of the society's rulers (Ferraro, 2004). Art may preserve or challenge the status quo. In many societies, the ownership of art is a symbol of high status and thereby preserves the status quo of art as something that is owned by the elite. When art challenges the status quo, other dynamics of that society merge, such as political strife and social reform. In Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, male youth engaged in spray painting the city with graffiti. The youths' outrage was that they did not have anything to do in their spare time, and they were not allowed in the malls without a female

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