

Fiction by matthew arnold essay

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Matthew Arnold articulates various elements in his article that influence thinking regarding the essence of humanities within education systems. Arnold defined the element of culture within idealist terms noting that it is something all persons strive to achieve. Arnold's view thereby contradicts the anthropological perspective, which considers culture, not as something that people can acquire but rather as a person's entire way of life. This means that it is something people have inherent to their existence (David, Lewalski, Lipking, Logan and Maus 1905). Arnold's usage of the term affirms Victorian culture suggesting that people seek a certain approach to life instead of maturing into a way of life. The Victorian society exemplified Arnold's definition of culture. This is because the Victorian society upheld rigidity and conformity to ancient societal ideals established. Arnold defines the opposite of culture as people having the ability to do as they want without the occurrence of any major repercussions.

This perspective considers individuals who act primarily out of self-interest without taking into consideration the wellbeing of other people, as well as the entire society. Arnold does not appear to consider this as a choice but rather as a dire consequence of people, as well as the society's inability to envisage a society or a world well beyond an individual's limited and subjective perspective (David, Lewalski, Lipking, Logan and Maus 1903). Arnold's article thereby asserts that doing according to a person's desire is a primitive action that exemplifies the same form of incapacity. Arnold's work demystifies the conventional Victorian society as having inherent characteristics such as subjectivism and the ability to focus on the entire society as a whole instead of focusing on the individual. These problems are

inherent to most conventional societies. Arnold's article is essentially an impressive and thought-provoking read.

Work Cited

David, A. Lewalski, B. K. Lipking, L. Logan, G. M. Maus, K. E. (eds). The Norton anthology of English literature (8th ed.). Norton, W. W. & Company, Incorporation, 2005. Print.