**Cultural Materialism**

* Cultural Materialism is an anthropological school of thought that believes that technological and economical factors are the main influences on a culture.
* This school of thought was founded by Marvin Harris in 1970 after he wrote the book *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* in 1968.
* Some questions that would be asked in this field are:

1. How is it that the type of culture developed is influenced by population and economical factors in the area?

2. What are laws of development that apply to every culture?

* Another theory that cultural materialists believe is that the type of society that develops in a given area is based upon the types of technology and economic methods reinforced. This theory is known as determinism.
* According to cultural materialists views, their are three levels of society. Level 1 is Infrastructure, level 2 is Structure, and level 3 is Superstructure.
* Infrastructure (level 1) determines both Structure (level 2) and Superstructure (level 3), although levels 2 &3 also can have mild affects on level 1.
* Infrastructure (level 1) is known as the material factors, including the production of goods (how they are produced), and methods used to reproduce the population at a satisfactory rate.
* The society's structure (level 2) is determined by infrastructure, and consists of social classes, and the distribution of the wealth.
* Superstructure (level 3), also determined by infrastructure, involves the society's behaviour/mental process, as well as music, recreation and the arts.
* Cultural Materialism has been criticized for attempting to create laws that apply to all cultures and their development, when many anthropologists think that their role is to just examine and make conclusions based on what they see. Others think that cultural materialists are biased and try to make the cultures reflect their laws.