

# Character Motivation and Human Behavior

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An overview of several  
psychology theories  
as analytical tools

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with *much* thanks to Michole Mattix



# Behaviorism

- A belief that behavior stems from conditioning. In other words, a person behaves according to what he/she has learned from experience.
  - What he/she has been rewarded or punished for doing
  - Association of a learned behavior from another event
  - Conditioning occurs through interaction with the environment
  - Behaviorists believe that our responses to environmental stimuli shape our behaviors



# Behaviorism Examples

- “Negative attention is better than no attention at all” (*he/she wouldn't be doing it if there wasn't some kind of payoff*)
- Delayed gratification vs. immediate (*a learned behavior*)
- Behavior of role a model (*someone you look up to and the consequences they encounter*)
- Not liking Pizza Hut after one bad meal (*association might mean not liking any fast food restaurant*)



# Humanism

- The belief in the potential value and goodness of human beings
- An emphasis on common human needs
- Seek solely rational ways of solving human problems
- The belief that all humans have great potential
- The human spirit is powerful
- We are all born good with greatness inside

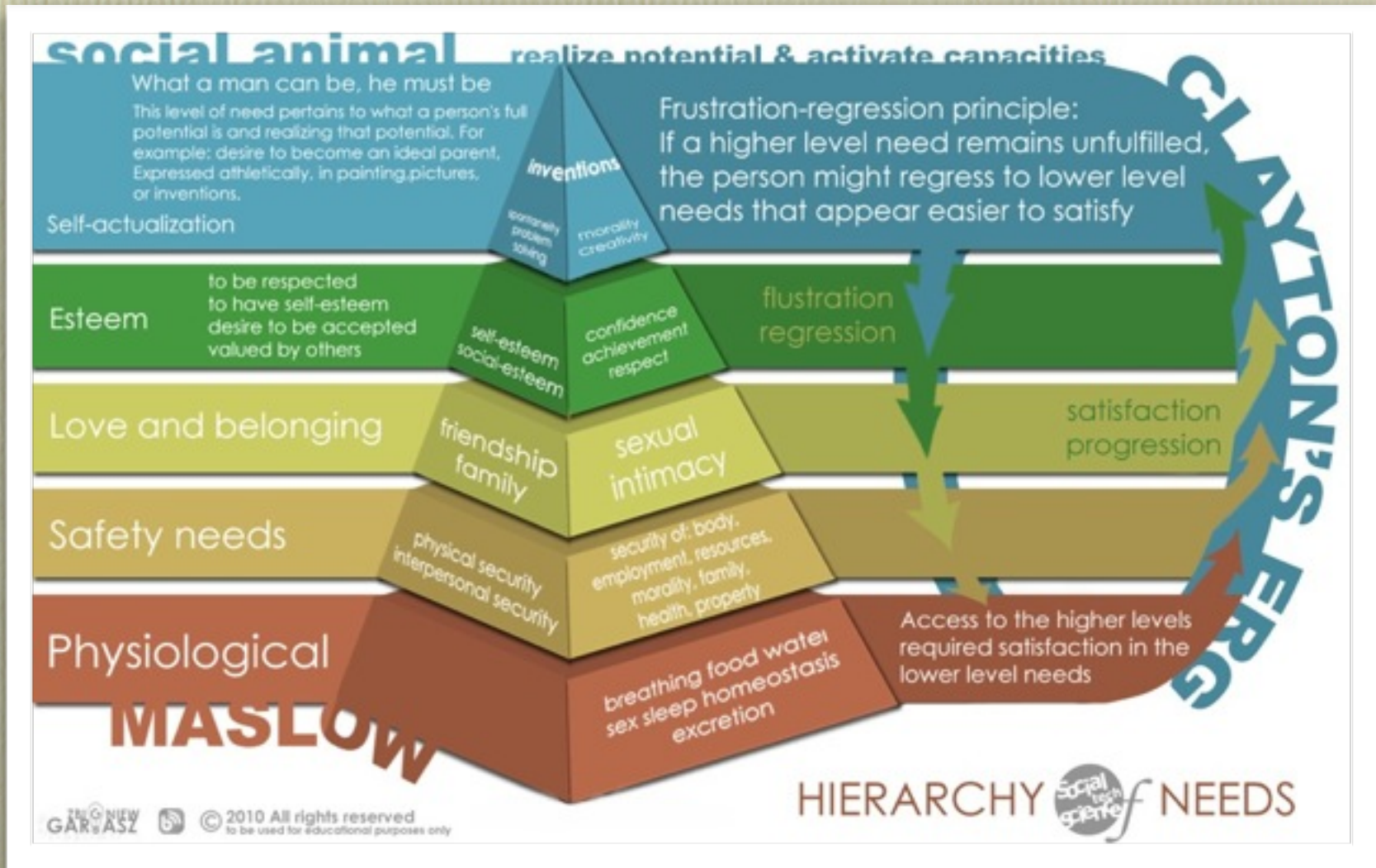


# Humanist Examples

- We behave according to certain needs. If these needs are met or not determines how we act (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs):
  - Self Actualization (*reaching one's potential; contributing to society in a positive way*)
  - Esteem (*self worth*)
  - Love & Belonging (*strong, emotional connection to people*)
  - Safety (*security*)
  - Physiological (*hunger, thirst, shelter*)



# Humanist Examples





# Cognitive Psychology

- Focus is on mental processes, including how people think, perceive, remember and learn
- The thoughts we have inside our own heads contribute greatly to our actions.
  - Example:
    - What we hear becomes our thoughts, our thoughts become our beliefs, our beliefs create our actions
    - The emphasis is on our internal sentences, our thoughts:
      - “I am so good at this!” or “I hate school!” (*You start believing what you say, then acting upon that*)



# Neurobiological Psychology

- This approach is all about the physical makeup of our brains and bodies
- Behavior is based on electrical and chemical events taking place within our bodies
  - Our DNA; predisposition to certain behaviors (*tend to be shy; athletic; humorous*)
  - Chemical (im)balance in our brains influences our behavior – as well as chemicals we give to ourselves (*Ex: depression, addiction*)
  - The physical creation of our brain due to environmental influences



# Psychoanalysis

- Belief that human behavior is deterministic
- Behavior is governed by irrational forces, the unconscious, and our instinctual and biological drives
- Psychoanalytic theorists do not believe in free will
- Psychoanalytic theorists also believe that behavior is indirectly influenced by our childhood experiences
  - Could be unresolved conflicts with our parents; stored somewhere in our brain (*the unconscious*)
  - Also behavior could be based on our impulses; whether we were taught to control them or not



# Sociocultural

- Sociocultural theorists believe in the important contributions that society makes to individual development
- This theory stresses the interaction between developing people and the culture in which they live
- We do what others who share our culture do:
  - Culture could be defined by religion; family; peers; media; ethnic background; etc.
  - Example: North American culture vs. Italian with regards to being on time