



Self-Actualization, Democratic Education, and Hip Hop Culture: Their Relationship to Reducing the Aggressive Impulse

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The Black & Latino Policy Institute



Inter-relatedness

Yaacov Hecht

- Democratic Education -

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- Reducing the -

- Aggressive -

- Impulse -

- ~ ~ -

Abraham Maslow - - - Hip hop culture

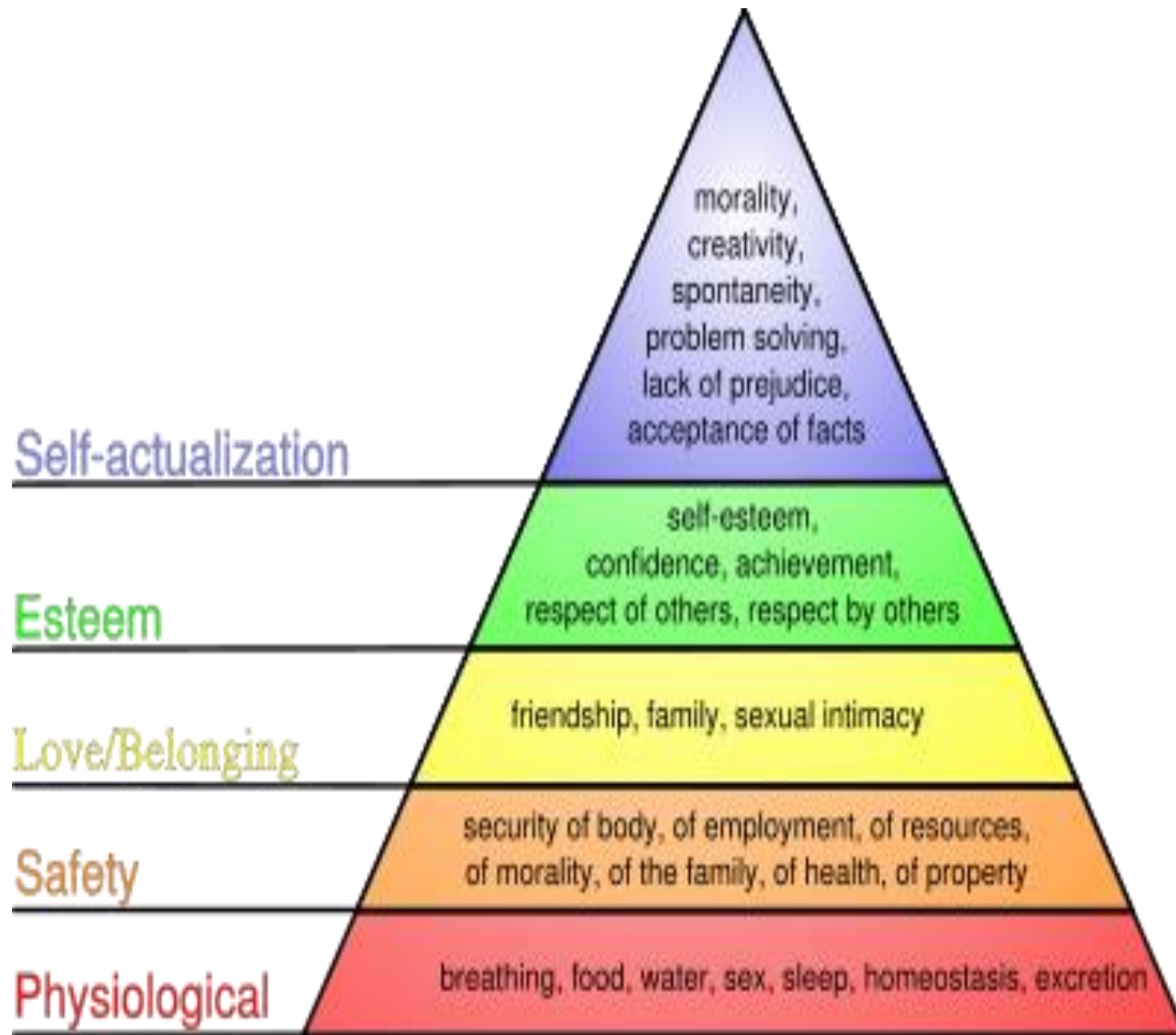
Self-Actualization

“Keepin’ it real...”



Maslow


- In the late 1950's, Abraham Maslow created his Hierarchy of Needs. The “father of Humanistic psychology” worked with others to understand our human potential as well as our limitations.



Level 6 the desire to know and understand and 7 aesthetic needs

Self-actualization

- Self Actualization is the intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately, of what the organism is
- Our desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency to become actualized in what we are potentially
- A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if each is to be ultimately at peace with themselves. What we can be, we must be. **We must be true to our own nature.** This need we may call self-actualization



Yaacov Hecht's* Assertion: One-Size-Fits-All: Normalcy as the Source of Problems in Society

*“If such a thing as a psycho-analysis of today’s prototypical culture were possible, such an investigation would show **the sickness proper to the time to consist precisely in normality.**”*

~ Theodore Adorno, Minima Moralia

**Founder & Director of the Institute for Democratic Education Tel Aviv,
Israel www.democratic-edu.org.*



Yaacov Hecht on:

Democratic Education

“Democratic education is self-managed learning.”

“The goal of democratic education is to self-actualization.”

Democratic culture

“A democratic culture is one that guards the equal right of every individual for self-actualization.”

Pluralistic Learning

A type of learning that acknowledges uniqueness—each person is different with both weak and strong attributes, talents, and abilities.

Institute for Democratic Education: Uniqueness Manifesto & Social Justice

- Every person has a **right to know, develop, and express their uniqueness**
- Every person is capable of **recognizing** the uniqueness of every other member of society
- Every person is capable of **understanding** that difference and/or **uniqueness** do not pose a threat, but are rather an opportunity for the individual and the community as a whole.

The anti-normalcy orientation of democratic education is the essence of human equality and social justice for all.

Pluralistic Learning: Excellence Centers

- Places outside of school that would represent a variety of intelligences and subjects, interests, occupations/careers, etc.
- *What is your uniqueness?*
- *What do you bring?*
- *What makes you authentic?*
- Here, students could see what they are **passionate** about learning and doing
 - They could begin intense personal study and/or **meet with adults who have the skills, careers, interests, talents they wish to have**
- This would be the first of many steps to self-actualization



All kinds of minds

“I look forward to the day when our schools offer every student the opportunity to become an expert on a chosen topic.”

-- Mel Levine, American psychologist

The challenge for schools is to enable the creation of a fluid educational system where **difference is a “taken for granted”** attribute of every child who enters a classroom.

Inter-relatedness

Yaacov Hecht's

- Pluralistic Learning -

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Abraham Maslow's - - - Hip hop culture
Hierachy of Needs It's global potential




The Promise of Hip-hop Culture

- The promise of hip-hop culture is that it will do what the 60s generation could not or did not do and that is to **advance national civil rights to global human rights.**
 - ~ The Black & Latino Policy Institute

Hip-hop

- A worldview of those born after 1965
 - Authenticity
 - Social Justice
 - Loyalty
 - Respect
- 5 Elements
 - MC-ing/rap
 - DJ-ing
 - Dance/B Boys
 - Graffiti/Tagging
 - Human beat box
- Spin offs
 - Political force: Hip-hop Summit, Hip Hop Congress, “Vote or die” movement of 2004 in US
 - Clothing/dress/”sagging”
 - Video (6th element?)
 - Urban genre’ novels
 - Poetry Slams
 - Magazines
 - Music styles: Trip-hop



Hip-hop promotes itself as itself, rather than as something else

- **Lying within a struggle for respect amongst its peers, hip-hop re-appropriates what a larger society has taken from it. Hip-hop is historically and culturally based. It is built upon a long-existent black musical tradition. It knows where it is from and continually makes reference to its predecessors by its style and structure. It models for youth the authenticity they seek. **It promotes itself as itself, rather than as something else.****

Brady, D. "Keepin' It Real, Keepin' It Right: Identity Culture, Hip-hop, and Young, Black Men in America's Schools. *Democracy In Education*

“Keepin’ it real; Keepin’ it right


- Hip-hop is about “Keepin’ it real” vs. “busters,” “perpetrators,” “wanna be’s.”
 - In the understanding of the hip-hop nation as a family, others who do not fit the true “b-boy” (hip-hop) mold, are **considered to be inauthentic** and disrespectful imitators.
 - Verbal battles between M.C.'s (rappers) began when it was perceived that someone wasn't being **true to themselves, or "true to the game"** (Brady, 2000).

Too much school, too little education

"I failed your class 'cause I ain't with your reasoning.
You tryin' to make me you


-- Boogie Down Productions, 1989

- Education as passive conformity, in order to fit in, is in stark contrast to the oppositional nature of hip-hop culture, a culture that arises out of the need for authenticity where many do want to pay the psychological and social price to “get along to get ahead.”



Self-actualization and hip-hop culture

“Keepin’ it real...”



“The final aim is not to know, but to be. There never was a more risky motto than: Know thyself. You've got to know yourself as far as possible. But, not for the sake of knowing. You've got to know yourself so that you can at least be yourself. ‘Be yourself’ is the last motto.”

-- John Edwards *“What We Steal from Children”* quoted from D. H. Lawrence

How will my own existence be clarified?

- This is a message to the oppressor, not in hope that he will listen, but with the expectation that my own existence will be clarified.

-- James Cone, *Black Theology 6-Black Power*, .1969

Commercialization turned hip-hop into “hip-pop”

- Rap is not about perpetuating stereotypes. Genuine rap is not all about “the cheese” or being top player or pimp. Yet, when white media deemed certain styles of rap as “gangsta,” soon ignorant and “wack” MCs began “fake” attempts to live up to this reputation.

-- D. Miles Brady 2000

The original gave way to the copy

- Within this equation, skin color is usually, but not always a determinant. Those black folk who misuse the **genuine values** of hip hop culture, are identified as "crossovers" and "sell-outs who need to get the hell out."
- Those unauthentic **white folks** are typically considered to be "**Frankenstein** creations" outfitted in the expensive garments of young blackness.

-- D. Miles Brady 2000




The clarifying potential of hip-hop culture

With no tenable link to Africa and the desire to distance themselves from their enslavers, Blacks have continued to create and recreate forms of cultural expression, and thus personal identity.

Out of this same desire for re-creation was born the clarifying potential of hip-hop culture.

-- D. Miles Brady 2000



Out of this same desire for re-creation was born the “self-actualizing” potential of hip-hop culture.




If what Yaacov argues is true and viable in that:

- *“A democratic culture is one that guards the equal right of every individual for self-actualization,”*

then we can also say:

- *“A hip-hop culture is one that guards the equal right of every individual for self-actualization.”*



Hip hop culture, a democratic culture, and Maslow's concepts have the same basic foundations:

AUTHNETICITY

Self-actualization through clarity

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Democratic education with its emphasis on **self-actualization** & **diversity** (the **uniqueness** of each person) reflects hip hop essence of:

“Keepin’ it **real**, keepin’ it **right**”