THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology

We can think of a perspective as…

a **LENS**

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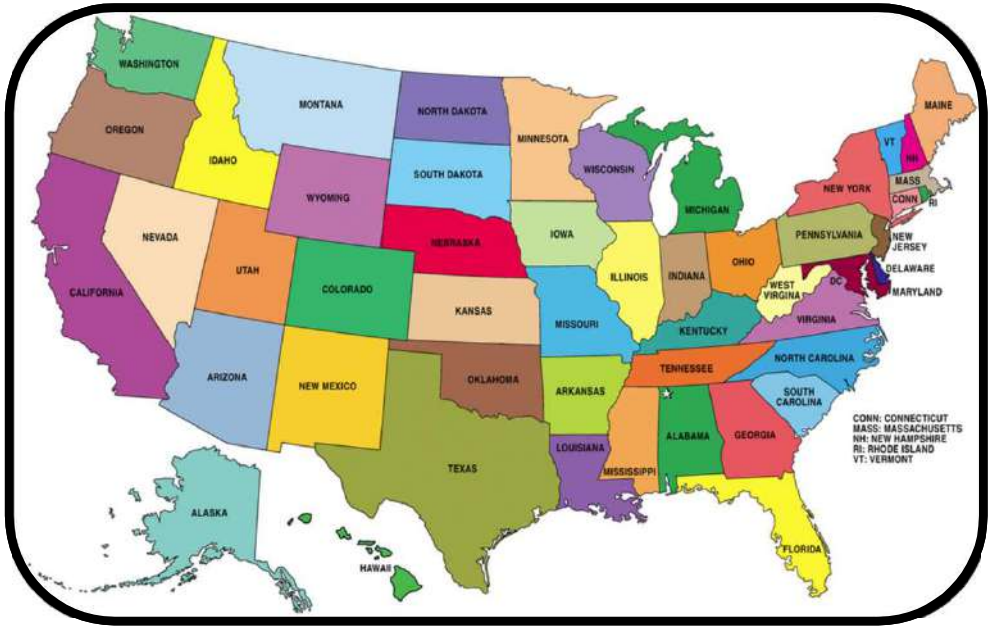
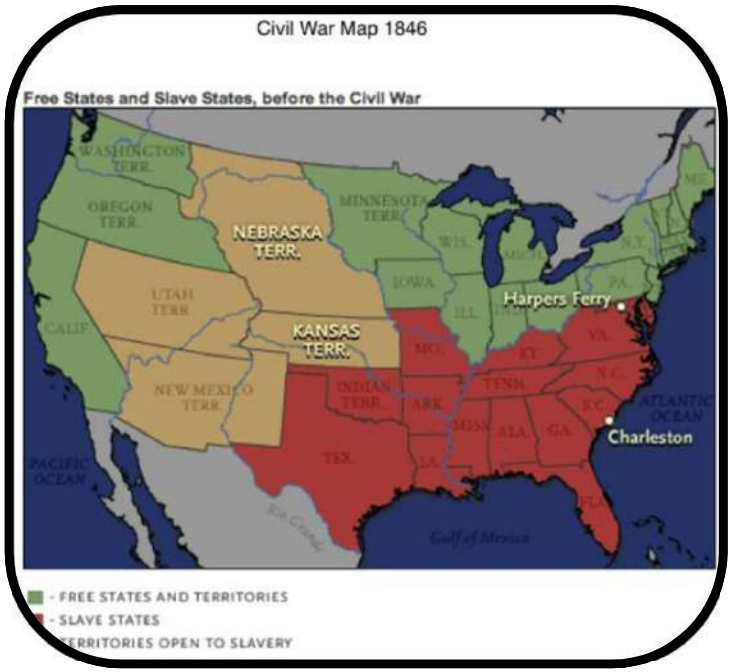
a **LENS**

allows us to see the social world from a certain perspective, *with a particular* ***focus***.

We can think of a perspective as…



a **MAP**



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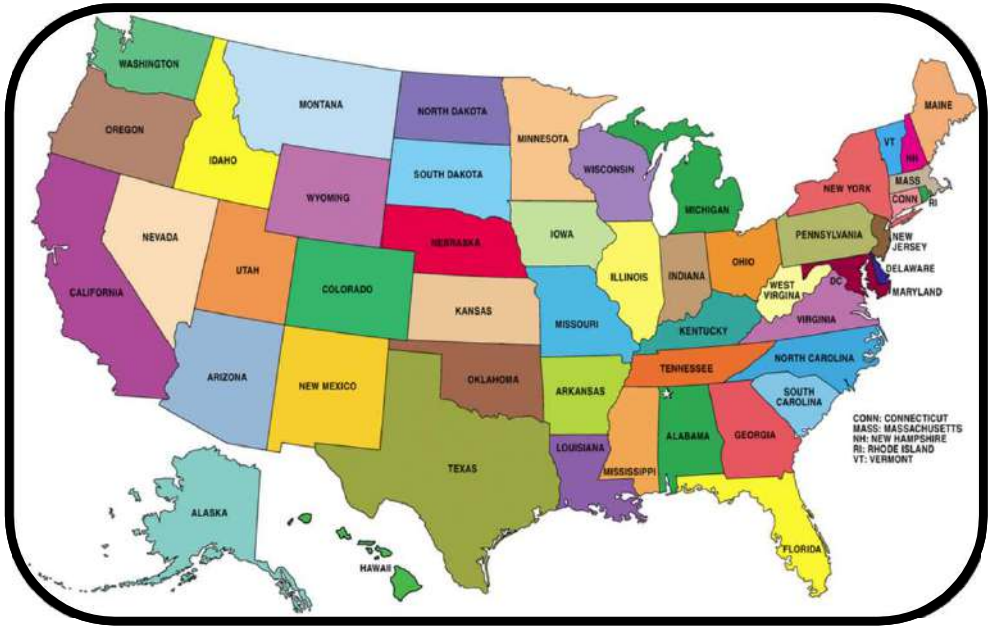
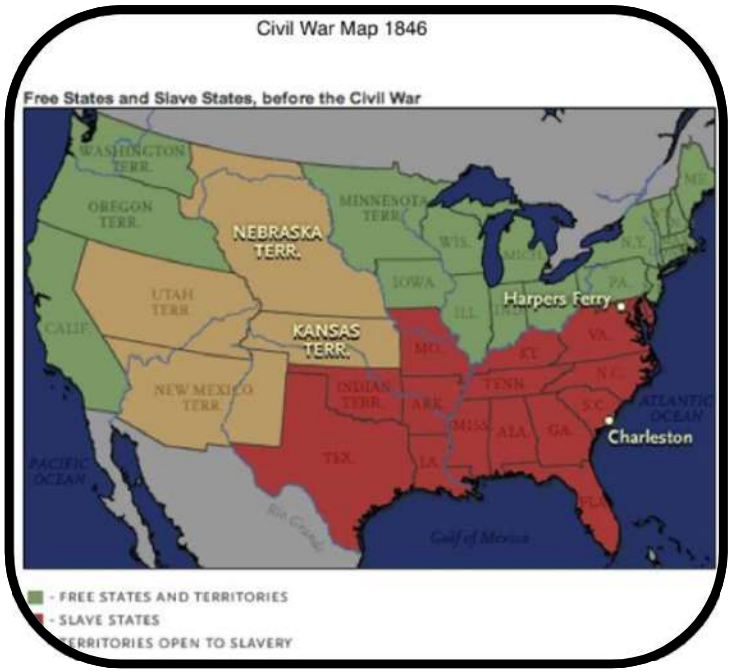




a **MAP**

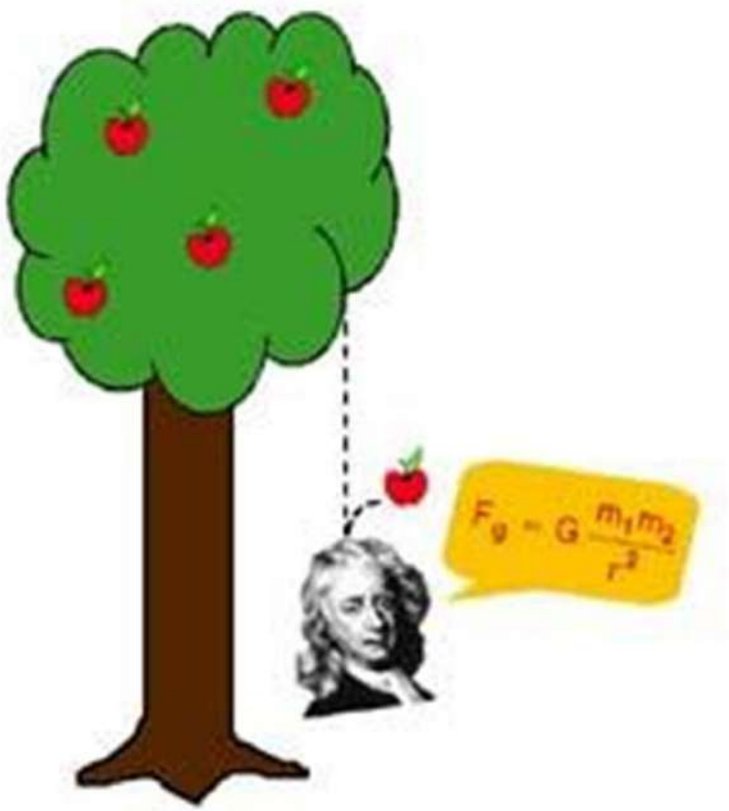
provides a focus

guides us

points out obstacles and destinations

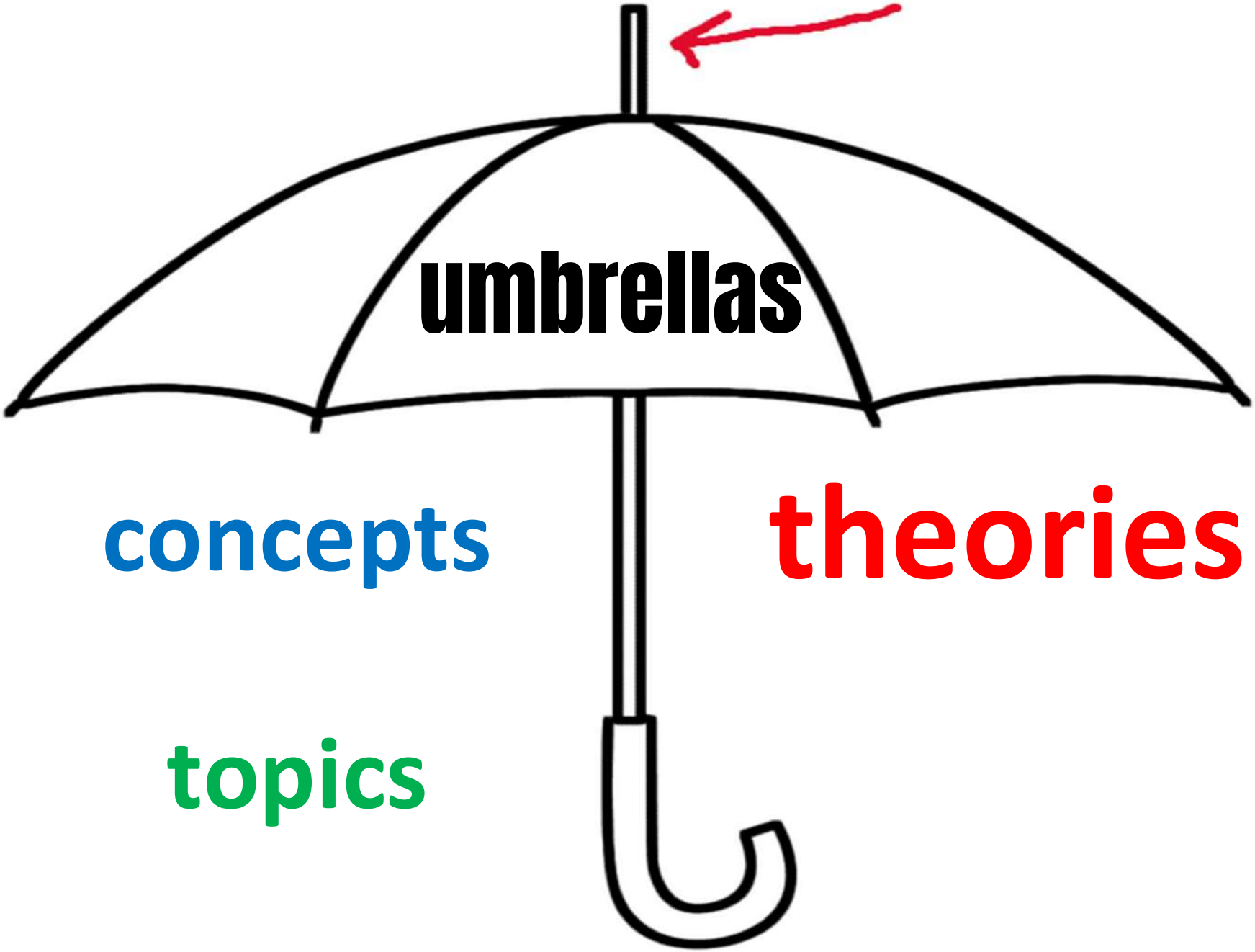
Theory is about **generalization**, relating a new situation to an old one in order to discern patterns and create explanations or predictions.

E.g., Theory of Gravity
Newton didn't invent the idea that things fall down. He offered a theory to explain why and how this happens.



Theory is different from **opinion** (a personal viewpoint) and **fact** (something we know through our senses).

theoretical perspectives are like…



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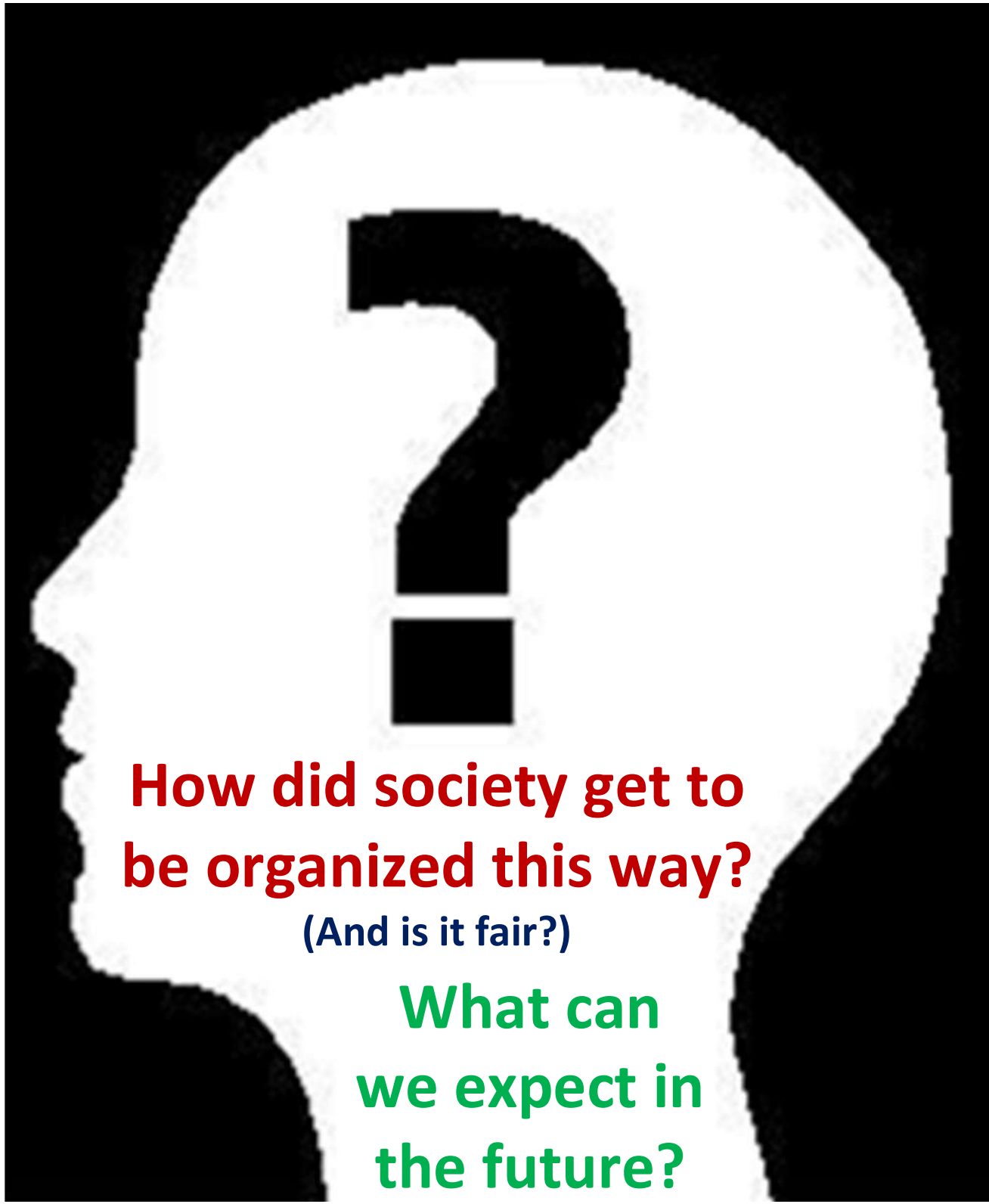


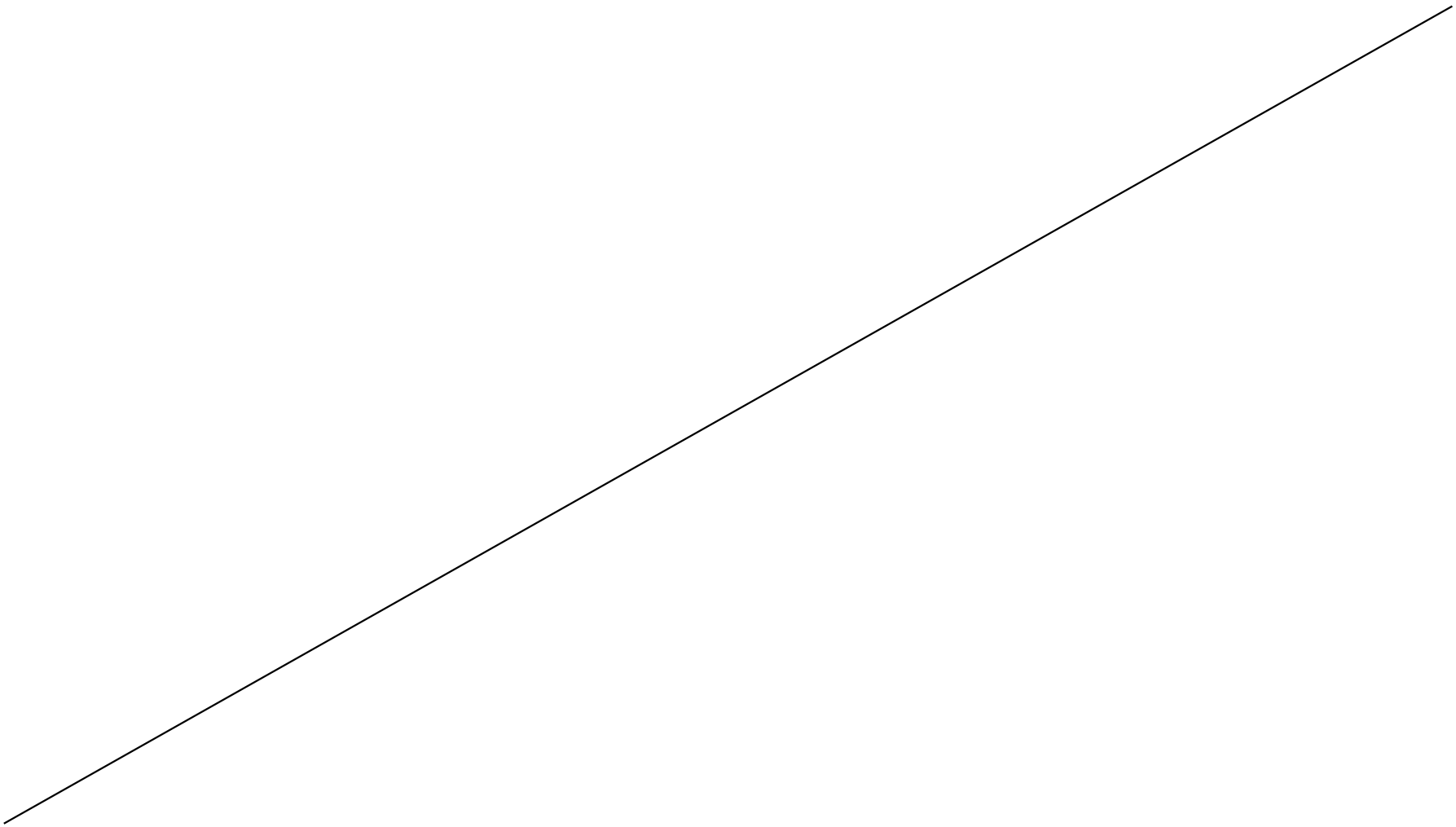
GROUP ACTIVITY

1) **Read through the statements with your group.**

1) **Note connections or similarities among different statements.**

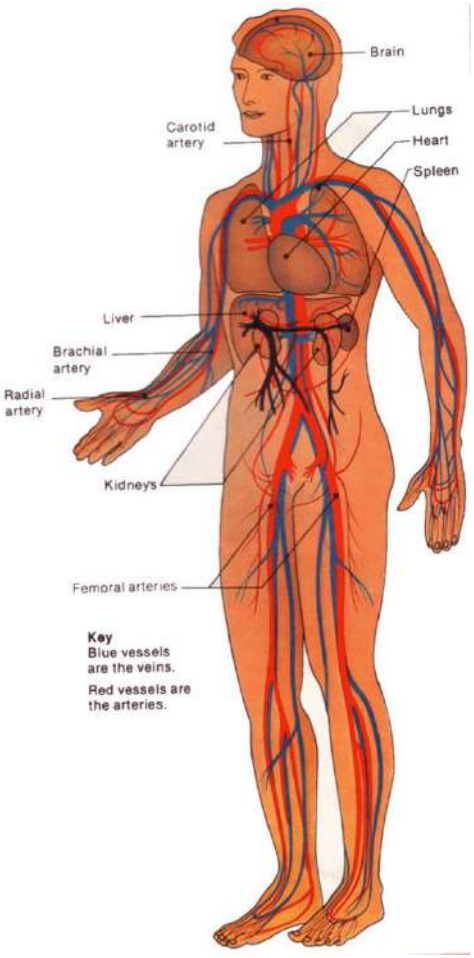
1) **Rearrange the statements into FOUR groups that you think reflect distinct theoretical perspectives.**

1) **Give each theoretical perspective a name and a symbol.** (Be creative!)



CONFLICT THEORY

FUNCTIONALISM

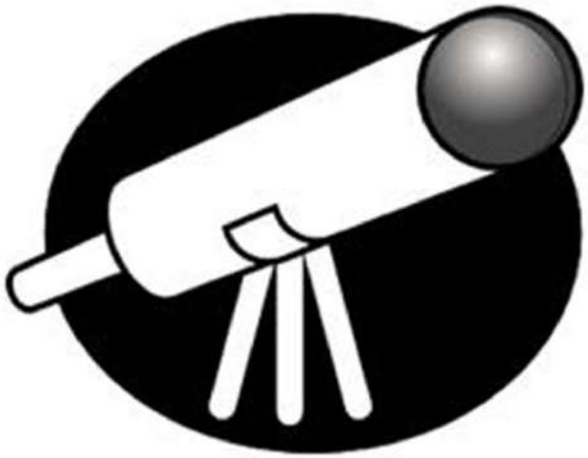


CONFLICT THEORY

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

FEMINISM

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

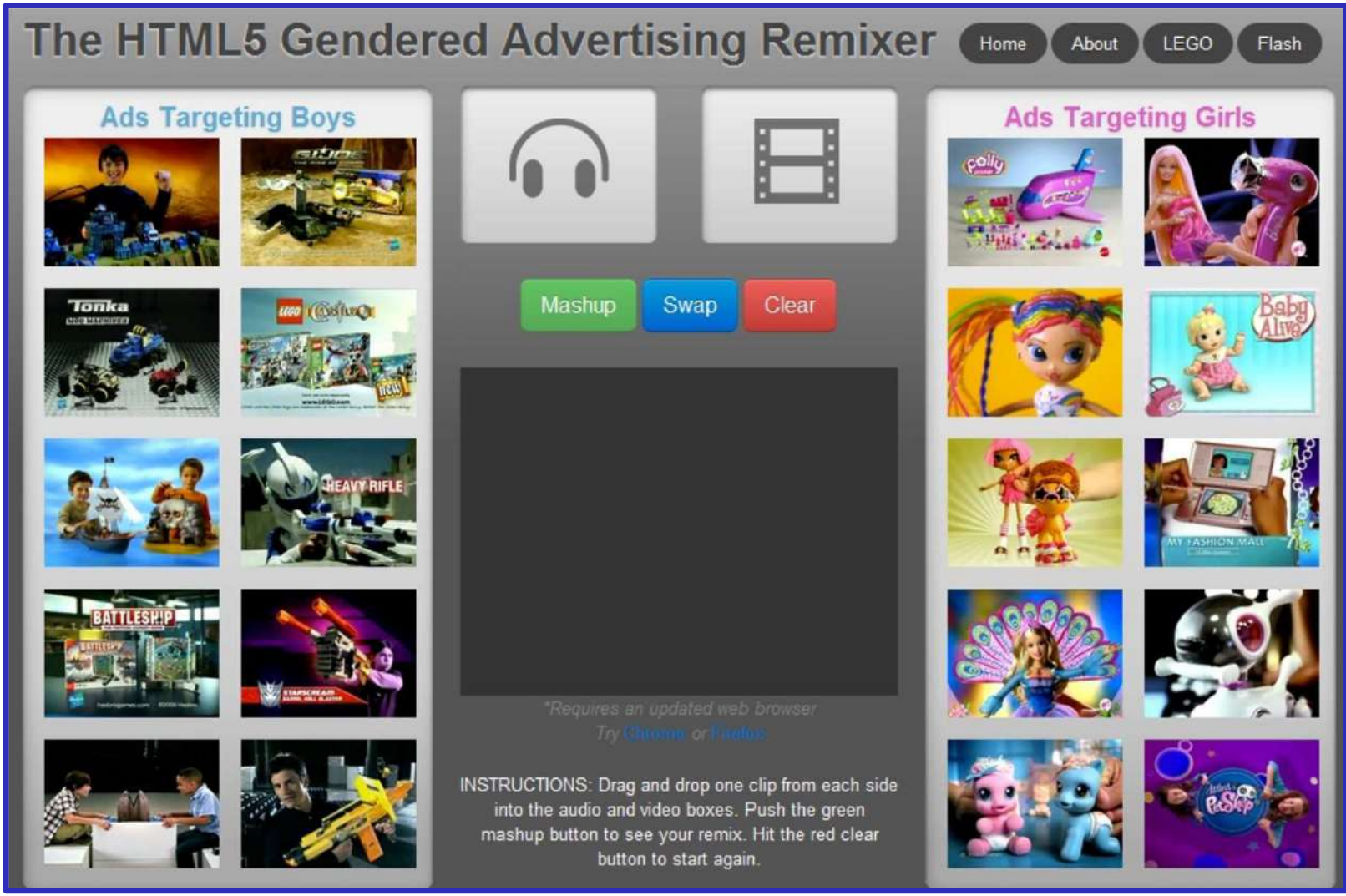


Macro Perspective

Vs.

Micro Perspective

APPLYING THE PERSPECTIVES



1. How would each theoretical perspective approach the issue of **gendered toys**?
2. What questions might they ask? What aspect would they focus on?
3. Brainstorm ideas with your group.

for more on the

FOUR THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

See handouts

- "Sociological Perspectives Applied to Different Issues"
- "Summary of Sociological Perspectives In-Class Activity"