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“Ouch! That Hurt.”

In our life we are surrounded with dangerous equipment, but it is the human instinct that mostly saves us whenever we are caught in unavoidable circumstances. According to Cambridge Dictionaries the definition of instinct is “the way people or animals naturally react or behave, without having to think or learn about it” (Cambridge University Press). Human instincts come in play when a message is sent to our brain, which gives an order to a part of our body to execute that eventually aids us from an unwanted or unavoidable situation (Gachter). For example, many people would say that if someone is warned that a bowl is filled with hot water but the person warned still touches it is not an instinct, but it is an instinct because your body doesn’t allow you to burn yourself, you suddenly move your hand from the hot bowl once you feel the tingling of your fingers getting burnt Humans and animals have similar instincts. For examples, a “man’s best friend,” a dog responds eagerly to sounds such as names, bells etc. This research paper will educate and inform readers about instincts and their role in our society, by introducing instincts and its type and leading into scholarly recourses for a better understanding.

Human instincts are given to us a form of present from god during are birth or in fact, before birth. Human instincts are in various forms, some of which we are familiar with and others are yet to be discovered. Instincts are like the blood flowing in our bodies. It doesn't require anything to operate, what matters the most is survival. The first instinct is the instinct to eat to survive even in our mother’s womb we feed (Bhanoo). Most the time we don't even notice that the instinct is the one keeping us alive, forcing us to live and giving us confidence. Even in the mother's womb our instincts are playing role even if we are unconscious, unborn and not physically present in the world. Instincts are natural and even existed in the first living organisms.

There are many human instinct, some are classified some are yet to be defined. Animals are humans have a lot in common since humans are the evolved form of animal species. Humans and animals have the same feelings and instincts in common, the difference is just the control over instincts. The killer instinct which is our ancestors have passed down to us. Which relates to our attraction to violence, for example in the “Violence among peoples in the light of human frustration and aggression”, B. de Gaay Fortman provides a general background to the study of aggression and frustration. He talks about the human brain and its relation to violence/aggression. He stated that “aggression is a form of behavior, intended to cause harm to those towards whom it is directed.” (Fortman 4), furthermore in the paragraph he explains the theory proposed by Freud “aggression as a major instinct” (Fortman 4). The theory of aggression as an instinct is perhaps the result of evolution. As people have evolved from being apes to being the civilized humans of 21th century, they have gained control over their instincts to kill. The evidence of aggression is given throughout the paper in various forms of examples; for example, “couples who quarrel most are also the most likely ones to engage into physical violence” (Fortman 6).

Concerning to the theory of aggression a fictional story by Mary Gaitskell can be linked, which is said to be written because of the high level of interest in violence by people. In the short story “The Other Place”, Mary Gaitskill presents us with a genuinely written fictional story that revolves around a character who fears that his lust for blood and destruction could possibly be genetic. Gaitskill also shows how his pursuit of violence might affect the lives of those around him. In the Gaitskill’s *New Yorker* interview by Deborah Treisman, we learn about some of the themes Gaitskill focused on as well as the reason behind her writing this short story. Gaitskill states “it’s both too deep and too fast-moving to be tracked; it blends with too many other things; the way dreams blend different things together.” in the interview “Mary Gaitskill on ‘The Other Place’” written by Deborah Treisman. This heightens the effect of violence and the darkness involved in the piece, the fast pace also shows how instincts react to certain scenarios.

Furthermore, Deborah Treisman quotes Gaitskill, “I would guess that it’s a combination of fear, excitement, and secret acknowledgment that this violence is part of our nature…” this statement relates to James Rowland Angell, a psychologist’s, statement “Anger and fear *are* instincts, and they are *also* emotions.” As many people might have been confused that feelings/emotions are not instincts are proven wrong in his text “The Important Human Instincts” (1/10). Additionally, Angell lists various instincts and explains them in detail, the list of recognized instincts are as follows: “Fear, anger, shyness, curiosity, affection, sexual love, jealousy and envy, rivalry, sociability, sympathy, modesty (?), play, imitation, constructiveness, secretiveness, and acquisitiveness.” (2/10). Later on, Angell successfully explains the instincts mentioned above in detail.

Through James Rowland Angell’s text as a lens when we look at “The Other Place” by Mary Gaitskill, we can find a lot more evidence of instincts such as the father being afraid that his son might have the same fate as him. “He won’t know that I’m there with him, because we will never speak of it. But I will be there. He will not be alone with that.” This text also shows the secretiveness factor of instincts, for example in “the Other Place” the father doesn’t share his feelings with his wife because he believes that she wouldn’t understand. Also, the father doesn’t want to share or let his son know that he has been through the same things as his son is going through. “The Other Place” title signifies a major detail of this story where the “other” place is where the father and the son belong, in which crime is excitement. Although, we can interpret that it is a place were normal people are the victims. The father also hints us saying “He won’t know that I’m there with him” because the “other” place is a vast where it is not very common to find others who belong to the “other” place as well.

Furthermore, our society has evolved from being Apes to being civilized but they still aren’t treating the special people in the right way, they are usually shot down or are treated like they are not normal. This superiority complex of some “normal” individuals in the society causes these special people to be extra conscious of their surroundings. As the consciousness heightens emotions humans tend to react and depend mostly on their instincts. This reaction is usually seen in people with disabilities. For example, in the movie, *Black* the protagonist Michelle, a blind and deaf girl, who struggles learning and surviving in this civilized world where she loses her eyesight while recovering from an illness. Michelle is trapped in her own existence where nothing but darkness lies. This is where Michelle is introduced to her new mentor, Debraj, who uses his excellent method to teach Michelle the way of surviving in this world where society is stereotypical towards disable people. This stereotypical behavior of individuals towards impaired, disabled and handicapped people increases their consciousness that triggers their instincts which makes them react aggressively/violently.

Additionally, our history has been teaching us a major lesson of instincts, as the definition of instincts defined by Cambridge university press is “the way people or animals naturally react or behave, without having to think or learn about it” but this counter argues the journal “From Hurricanes to 9/11: what the science of evacuation reveals about how humans behave in the worst of times”, Amanda Ripley, interviews Manuel Chea, a system administrator at the time of 9/11 “When I asked him why he had moved so swiftly, he had several theories. The previous year, his house in Queens, NY., had burned to the ground. He had escaped, blinded by smoke. Oh, yes, he had also been in a serious earthquake as a child in Peru and in several smaller ones in Los Angeles years later. He was, you could say, a Disaster Expert. And there’s nothing like a string of bad luck to prepare you for the unthinkable.” All of these incidents has made Manuel Chea’s lessons/experiences in the form of instincts, which is why he reacted so “swiftly”. Where it can be just personal experience it can also be just good instincts and reflexes. Amanda Ripley studied various incidents and created a list that shows accidents through the point of view of instincts.

The report made was “a man flees the collapsing towers on 9/11. Most people who died that day didn’t have a chance.” Humans always tend to react in unexpected ways during a crisis. After the airplane collision in Spain, 1977, many survived the impact but died in the fire. The accident led to research on why people sometimes freeze when they need to flee. Furthermore, due to the Estonia sinking in a storm in 1994, some passengers seemed paralyzed—while others became calm, cool leaders (Ripley). All of these incidents indicate that humans are losing their instincts as our generations move further ahead. The loss of people from 1994 storm to 9/11 shows us the record that a lot of people were killed, because of their lack of instincts and reflexes.

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