

Instinct

Psychology



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In the movie "Instinct", Dr. Ethan Powell is caught committing a crime and subsequently imprisoned in a Florida mental institution, where aspiring psychiatrist Dr. Theo Caulder takes over his important case. Dr. Powell, who has been with a group of gorillas during all that time, is not talking at all and seems to be living in a dream world. In this essay, we will look at the psychological perspective "Behaviourism" and how behaviourism influences the character's characteristics. It is stated that behaviourism is directly shaped by one's environment.

Dr. Powell a man who leaves humanity to live with gorillas returns to humanity once again, completely different than before he left humanity. We first see this in the film when Powell goes berserk when arrived back home in Florida. Dr. Powell's characteristics are later revealed when interviewed by Caulder. During the first interview, Dr. Powell does not respond to any of the questions asked until given a pencil and paper to write. Dr. Powell acts viciously in a way that a gorilla would act when approached suddenly.

Dr Powell acts this way because how he has been in an environment filled with gorillas. He lived with gorillas far too long that he developed characteristics quite similar like a gorilla. Not only does Dr. Powell change through a behaviouristic perspective but Dr. Caulder and the other inmates at the prison changes throughout the movie from the interviews, experiences with Dr. Powell and the events that occur in the movie. As Caulder continued to interview Powell, Caulder began to change his plans about how to get Powell to open up to him by getting the other inmates involved.

For example in the movie, when the prison guards gave each inmate card to manipulate them, Caulder stepped in and decided to use a different method for everyone to get their fair share of going outside. This resulted in everyone favouring the idea of everyone going outside. Caulder seemed to be motivated by Powell's stories from when he was with the gorillas and this changed the way how Caulder treated the inmates including Powell. The Behaviourism perspective is accountable for most of the characters' thoughts, behaviours or changes in thinking because of the different environments that the characters were set in.

Powell was with gorillas which changed how he behaved towards humans, Caulder who acted differently after the stories that were told to him by Powell and the inmates because of Caulder who decided to change the atmosphere in the prison. With that being said, Powell, Caulder and mostly the rest of the characters in the movie "instinct" are greatly influenced by the Behaviourism perspective because of the environment they are put in and the changes of one character's decisions and actions.