

Nature vs nurture

Psychology



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Nature vs Nurture School Nature vs Nurture Nature versus nurture is an important debatable topic. Some people support biological determinism whereas others are the followers of environmentalism. During our class discussion, most of us prefer to talk about nature and nurture rather than nature versus nurture. I am also of the same opinion that it is impossible to separate nature and nurture.

Nature Over Nurture: Temperament, Personality, and Life Span Development introduces the five-factor theory (FFT). FFT asserts that personality traits are endogenous dispositions and are not dictated by environment (McCrae et al., 2000). I do not agree that personality traits and human behaviors are predominantly determined by biological factors. In fact, I even find it hard to believe in biological determinism for personality traits. Man realized the power of biological factors only after the discovery of genes. In the past, people seemed to believe in the inevitability and permanence of the genetic factor. Once we were told an illness was related to genes, trying to treat or cure it seemed like a waste of resources. However, it has been scientifically proven that the top cause of death i. e. heart disease is not related to genes. Many other diseases like cancer and mental disorders are not caused by genetic factors as well. Actually, I believe the role of environment in determining personality traits is more prominent than realized by people. For example, young adults who are abused in certain ways experience genetic changes. Genes here is not the deciding factor. Instead, environmental factor goes beyond it and can active or deactivate certain genes. Breast cancers have certain relation to genes, but people with that gene are not necessarily destined to have breast cancer. Similarly, most people who suffer from breast cancer do not have that gene.

The reading talks about the role of environment, which includes parenting importance. It says parents are important because they nourish and protect the children, instill habits and values in them, and provide them with some of the earliest models for social interaction and emotional regulation (McCrae et al., 2000). This reminds me of a video I saw before, which made me believe that parenting as a nurture factor can also influence nature. The video was an interview with Dr. Allan Schore, who talked about how attachment works between infants and parents. The study found that infants' genes were being affected by hormones stimulated by attachment relationship. The endorphins and cortisol level is affected by attachment, and regulates the genes. (Youtube, 2011).

In our class, I shared an example of a depressed mother. Her child was naturally born with a supersensitive body. Intimate touching or any other relatively intensive interaction (e. g. playing together for a long time) hurt that child. Such over-sensitivity is naturally born with, but I believe it is the mother's psychological states, thus the prenatal environment, that caused sensitivity. The child adapted to his mother's body and activity level before he was born. The "depressive and low energy" environment shaped his genes. In fact, many other examples sparked in my mind as we discussed the nature and nurture relationship, and all those examples demonstrate that life is more complex than we think. It is even impossible to clearly determine what is caused by nature. The "Dutch Hunger Winter" provides an excellent example for this. During that winter, no one had enough food. A fetus was enduring hunger while it was still in the mother's body. This fetus would adapt the in-body environment and change into something very special: it could store every bit of sugar and fat. People may claim this ability

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is genetic or heritable because it is naturally born with. However, most children born at that time were experiencing high blood pressure and metabolic syndrome half centuries later because of their prenatal environment.

References

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