

Human psychology and products of nature

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To what degree is human psychology (mind, behavior, and development) a product of nature (genes and biology), and to what degree is human psychology a product of nurture (learning, environment, and social cultural factors)?

Human psychology relates to an individual's mental state, emotion, personality, behavior, and relationships with others around him/her. The human brain controls all the traits expressed by an individual and these traits are influenced by characteristics that are both hereditary and environmental. Certain behavior, we say are in-born. A child has certain characteristics that are reflective of its parents. Short-tempered, shyness, or other attitudes are all part of the genetic influence. If a child is intolerant, abstemious, arrogant or just simply shy, the behavior can be traced to the genetic influence of its parent.

If a child in its early years is adopted by its adoptive parents, but the child radiates a different level of intelligence and resemblance, it can be attributed to the genetic influence. However, if the child grows up to display traits of its adopted parents, then the child is said to be influenced by the environment¹.

If a parent wears glasses, it invariably shows on a child in the family. This can be construed as a strong indication of the genetic influence on the physical development of the child. Similarly, children with blue or brown or green eyes, inherit this from their parents. The brain is a complex and intricate part of the human anatomy. It is made up of over 30000 genes that control all functional activities of the human body. The brain develops in accordance to its surroundings and relates to it. When a new born baby

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begins to identify and understand its surroundings, one would acknowledge it to the influence of nurture. Obviously, parents would stake claim to their dedicated hard work and persuasion. Why can't it be because of one's genes and biological composition that helps the baby grasp its immediate surroundings? It is a possible explanation, no doubt. We have seen the effect of biological influence on the behavior and development of a person. The environmental influence on the human mind is attributed to the influence of nurture.

When a child grows up in a neighborhood of violence and hatred, the child will be influenced by these factors, to grow into an anti-social element. The role of the parents in leading by example assumes significance here. The environmental influence has a strong bearing on the way the child grows to be in future. Genetic influence has shown that a lot of personal traits of a parent are inherent in the child at birth itself. There is a misconception that the genetic influence is so strong that a child will remain very much the same as his/her parent in later life. This is totally untrue. A child may have inherited the genes of his/her parent at birth, but this does not necessarily mean that the baby will follow the parent in his/her life. A sportsman for example, could influence the physical and mental development of the child, but the child need not necessarily follow the parent's footsteps.

Environmental aspects play a prominent role in the development of its learning, and social life. As Todd Stark (In Ridley's 'In _Nature_Via_Nurture_') said, " there is no denying that genes are indeed everything, and influenced by both nature and nurture. Without the presence of genes, there would be no logical thoughts or expressions; but then, the chemical effects of genes are influenced by the environment and developed by experience. Behavior

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has an influence on what happens in evolution, and this can be seen through organisms which actively modify, select, and construct their own niches, according to the preferences set largely by their genes, an important factor in reproductive fitness, and the selection criteria of biological fate (Matt Ridley, amazon. com, 2007)2.

References

1. 0Carol K. Sigelman and Elizabeth A. Rider, Life-Span Human Development. Thomson Wadsworth, 2005, Google Book Search
2. 0Todd I. Stark, Cellular Wetware plus Books, Philadelphia