Francis the words "nature” and "nurture” in 1874

Francis Galton, a 13th century Frenchman, first coined the words “ nature” and “ nurture” in 1874 to argue his case about the overbearing influence of genetics and environmental surroundings on individual development and growth (McDevitt et al 535). The debate has gained steam, and it is today discussed in high-level forums as researchers, psychologists and other theorists seeks to obtain answers to the various characteristics exhibited by the human race. It is against this background that this paper aims to evaluate some of the underlying issues in the “ nature” versus “ nurture” debate and how they affect personality development. Modern personality theories diverge in their suppositions about the constitution and etiology of the interplay between nature and nurture characteristics on the one hand and the effect such characteristics have on personality development on the other.

However, there seems to be a general consensus that the organized pattern of behaviors and attitudes that are unique to us is a construct of both our genetic configuration and our environment (McDevitt et al 537). Psychologists argue that personality development arises from the continuous interface between temperament, character and the surrounding environment (Lupu para. 4). Temperament, according to the author, is the set of genetic characteristics that overtly determines an individual’s approach to the world, thus nature determines the formation of personality. Additionally, genes innate to the individual control the development of the brain and the nervous system, which in turn indirectly control personality development and behavior (McDevitt 545). From the nurture perspective, it is known that

interaction between an individual and the surrounding environment also influences personality development.

As such, it can be argued that genetics and environment work in collaboration to determine personality. Although it seems a difficult task to draw a fine line between personal characteristics believed to be primarily the result of nature and personal characteristics believed to be the result of nurture, it can be said without doubt that my hot-bloodied nature is a result of genetics, while my outgoing nature is a result of environment. This stand has been taken, in part, due to the observed behavioral temperament within my family as well as childhood experiences. My father and my brother, for instance, also exhibit hot-bloodied characteristics, and this observation reinforces my belief that my hot-bloodied nature is as a result of genetics.

In childhood experiences, it can be argued that being raised in an army barrack setup afforded the necessary platform to intermingle and relate with many other children, whose mothers and fathers were also working for the army as was my dad. In other words, the environment afforded the needed platform to sharpen my socialization skills. This can be exhibited in my outgoing nature.

Moving on, it is indeed true that environmental factors influence natural characteristics and genetic factors also influence the nurtured characteristics. In my case, it can be insinuated that my hot-bloodied nature has over the years being influenced by nurtured characteristics. For instance, the predetermined condition inherited from my father has over the years being influenced by environmental factors such as socialization,

schooling, and other situational factors. Through socialization and schooling, issues of aggressiveness and anger largely associated with my hot-bloodied nature have been kept under control within acceptable environmental context as dictated by society. In consequence, it can be argued that genetics only institutes the confines of one’s personality characteristics that can be developed, while “ nurture” factors influence the actual development within the confines (Lupu para. 5). The discussed outgoing characteristic has over the time being influenced by nature.

Literature reveals that the decisive cause of behaviour may more likely be the evolutionary process, which inarguably initiates some genes to be preferred due to particular environmental demands, or which initiates the capacity to learn behaviour to become an adaptive characteristic (Kalat 65). This implies that some genes innate to individuals direct them to engage in various forms of behaviour within the environmental context. Some anatomical variations, which are natural or biological in disposition, also affect nurtured characteristics.

The ascending reticular activating system (ARAS), for instance, has been found to largely influence the ability of an individual to either develop an outgoing or introverted predisposition (Kalat 67). ARAS is part of the brain stem, implying that it is heavily influenced by genetics. In this perspective, my outgoing nature may one day be altered if my ARAS – part of the natural elements – gets physically or organically injured.

Still, some chemical imbalances and altered neurotransmitters, which are genetically predisposed, may indeed impair one’s nurtured characteristics. If

my dopamine (D2) receptors become altered, for instance, my personality is more likely to change from an outgoing nature to pleasure-seeking personality, including engaging in severe alcoholism, drug, abuse, and consistent gambling (Kalat 67). This disclosure demonstrates how nature influences nurtured characteristics.

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