

Chapter 26

Nature, Nurture, Etc

By virtue of our discovery of these inner depths, dynamics, connections and potentials, then the question of nature and nurture takes on new and deeper dimensions. What makes us become what we do become as an adult personality? That of course is yet another mystery which we do not know all the answers to. But, as becomes obvious – experience is the food of life. That is to say experience is all that we have to live and grow by, plus as to what we each do with it and digest of it. However, the question is also as to what is it that is having this experience in the first place; and which these inner experiences directly address; and which psychology does not concentrate on.

Much, if not indeed all of science, is an interpretation of readings, measurements, causes and effects. This does not alter the fact that when understood (to a degree at least) things work: the atom bomb works, light bulbs work, radio and television work, etc. And none of this comes about by accident, for it all requires close observation, thought, experimentation, and whatever else is needed to comply with what we call the scientific methodology. There is no such thing as science independent of this approach to our examining things and sticking to it. It is not science to simply think ‘Oh, I would love to find this or that result’, and thence go looking for it at the expense of all other findings.

The same applies when you or I read a book – and no matter what subject matter the book is about. Pick up any history book for example. Not only has the author had to interpret much of what he or she has also read of history (for he or she was not there to have experienced these events for themselves) but when done, and then you or I read his or her book, then we too have to interpret what the writer is actually saying; and about something which he or she has had to interpret themselves. So, there is a whole kit-bag of interpretation going on here. Moreover, we all know well enough what happens when we read about an historic event from two different sides of the fence do we not. So, when it comes to history for example, what are the absolute facts of this or that past event? There is no way of ever knowing for sure. Also, did the original sources even then know all the absolute facts of the event which they documented whilst alive at the time? No way. All history had its facts, but you and I sure do not have access to those absolute facts today. And what we do have has merely become this or that societies interpretation and understanding of such events. Indeed. Much of it could be wrong – but we do not know for sure. And best not to simply make emotional judgements or assumptions about it and think of that as ‘truth’.

One simply has to say, 'I was not there, so I do not know'. One could go on to say that, 'From what I have read or heard then it does seem to me that such and such might be the case'! And that is fair enough and honest enough. But that still does not make it true of the actual events as they happened in reality at that time. And what, for example, are all the facts of the second world war? Nobody knows now, and nobody knew then. One can only talk of it from ones own experience; and, if honest, they at least are facts (experiential facts) within a far greater framework of millions of facts of that time and duration. And there is now only a small percentage of living human beings who were there even for that amount of first hand experience. And to say nothing about the fact that they all had their own different experiences of it anyway at that time.

When I switch the radio on, it works; and that is a fact. Unless of course the radio itself has gone wrong; or there is a power cut, or they have stopped broadcasting for some reason. And the reason it works is because all the forces and dynamics which allow it to work are there in the nature of things; they operate that way, and we have come to understand much of it by way of close observation and experimentation. No problem – except for the quality of the ensuing programs of course. But, who can deny that it is, or can be, a very useful discovery and thence the invention of radio transmission and receivers. But, like any gadget, implement or artefact, it can be used for different reasons and different effects. We can use a hammer for knocking nails in to something or for knocking somebody's brains out. I guess we could also knock their brains out, or put them to sleep at least, by way of radio too.

What is brain-washing called when it is not of the negative type? Education maybe? nurture maybe? And who decides, and by what criteria, as to which is education or positive nurture as opposed to negative brain washing? Good question. I guess we each do for ourselves, and thence the consensus view becomes the norm or standard criteria. It is without doubt that we have to teach our children things, and to teach them how to do things; for they have to survive in this world. So, we call this education. And the framework in which this is done, and the contacts which the kids each make, and the whole environment in which they are born and grow up into, is their nurture. A name has to point to something, and hence have a meaning. And that one sounds reasonable enough – nurture – for it points to something which exists in our lives, and we come to know it by experience.

But along with this self evident fact there is this other thing which we call 'Nature'. And what exactly is that, and whilst totally independent of nurture? It is said that a human being is a product of the combination of nature and nurture. Well, OK, fine. It is plain enough what nurture is; but what exactly is nature? And, one might also ask, is a person (even a very young child) a product of ONLY these two things? Could there not be a third, fourth or fifth element in the mixture maybe? Why just two? But even if there were only two elements in this mixing bowl then how much of each produced the adult person? And this of course has long been a debating point, and nobody knows the answer. Moreover, we cannot know the answer (even if one is available) until such time that we have defined what we mean by the word nature. Nurture is no problem for getting ones head around, but nature is. And do we know the sum extent and potentials of this 'nature' thing? What IS nature? What does it even mean; and what and how much does it cover and entail?

I would imagine that many people at least look at it in the same way that I do by simply saying that nature is the way things work, function, and interact with other forces, etc; and thence bring about the type of reality which we know, live in, and are. But do we know and understand all that? No way. So, what exactly is this other ingredient in the mixture which produces people and makes us all different – even when undergoing more or less the same nurture and in the same town or village all our life? Mysterious, that indeed is what it is. Moreover, it is the way of things that children bring something into this world with them which is not stuff of this world then even that too would come under the heading ‘the nature of things’, so how many dimensions and layers of nature are classified as nature? One could even classify our local nurture as being in the nature of things and hence there is only nature in the mixing bowl of what makes a human being. Complicated is it not. Nothing is quite as simple as it seems. I suppose if one wanted it to be then nature itself could be a persons ‘god’, and in which case one could probably say that ‘god’ does everything. But given that we are a part of nature then even in that sense we would be a part of this ‘god’ thing. But then there is also our freedom of choice in our actions here.

If you or I were to have lived the identical nurture (and at the same time in the same place) as did Mozart, then would we all be doing what he did – and as good at it? Well, I guess if one believes that the answer to that is yes, then they would believe anything. The answer is no way. Hence to eliminate having to think about it, we can simply say that his brain was wired up different to the rest of us. Would the nature of things find it to be useful and effective if all human beings did nothing except write music? Would anything ever get done? Would civilised society exist? Would humanity continue to exist? Have a think on it. Moreover, who would manufacture, and even play, all the instruments to even play the music? It would never be heard. Who would grow crops, and who would distribute them? Society could not function, nor even exist, if there were not a wide range of talents and motivations to drive us on to do this or that thing. You and I do not decide to become a great composer, or a great musician, or a great scientist or doctor, or train driver or whatever. We can only really do what we can each really do, and that is it.

True, I could decide to be a musician or a composer, and then merely play at it. But who would ever want to listen to the music that I turned out – for I am not one at all, it just ain’t there within me. So, I do not even bother to try. But there are a few things which I can do which are at least reasonable enough, such as cleaning toilets or painting fences, kind of thing; and society needs those things to be done – so I do them instead. And in so doing earn a kind of a living (as they say; for we need money in this man made world to exist here), and the family all eat just about enough to stay alive too, and one day then turns into the next day etc. And so it goes. Moreover, in doing all this, I still reap the benefit and reward of all the time and effort of the worlds great composers and musicians – and instrument makers, and piano tuners, and road sweepers, and fishermen, and nurses, and... et al. It is the way that it is and the way that it has to be in order for it all to work and hang together. And I judge it to be good. Human society is a wonderful, complex, mysterious and amazing thing – well, it could be a good thing anyway, when and if we ever get the whole of the act together of course; and without all the unnecessary hostility, arguments, fighting, and alienation.

There is nothing like discord to spoil a bit of music is there, or a society. Why should anybody want to play some wrong notes, or a whole series of wrong notes and chords, or get the timing wrong, in a great orchestral symphony? I doubt if anyone would indeed ever want to. True, one or two of the players could get it wrong occasionally – but, with a little practice, they soon seem to get it right. And the product of course is both a sight and a sound to behold; and very moving and inspirational too; and a job of work and love well done for all concerned: both the players and audience. Great stuff, and worth living for. We cannot do that in the ground of being. So, whichever way we look at it, or whatever we decide to call it, and irrespective of as to how deep we like to think that it all goes, or as to where it all starts and ends, it is plain enough that there is stuff inside people – and not just on the outside of them; and it sure does not all come from outside, or put in there by nurture and education.

It does not seem to be taken into account by many, nor even some educational systems it seems, that education is not simply about pumping information into kids (which has to be done true enough) but also about bringing out some of that stuff and potentials which is already in there within them – and waiting to be liberated and used. Not all the geniuses and all the wisest teachers that ever existed combined could ever turn me into a great musical composer or musician. For the stuff to do it that well just ain't there within me. If it were then I would have found it by now – I seem to have found near on everything else in there; he says laughing.

True, I could learn to play an instrument to a degree, (and I have done – self taught only though) but it would not be absolutely natural for me and thence flow like it does in some. I could also learn some bits and tips about writing a song or a tune, or a symphony. But in all truth, and no beating about the proverbial bush, it would all be rubbish and a waste of good time when I could be doing other things a little better and which came more natural to me. I could indeed WANT to be a good musician. But a good musician is not what he or she IS because they want to be – but because they ARE IT. And indeed they are needed here. Who would want to live in a world with no music in it. Well, not me anyway. My first words in this life were 'More music please' – so I am told anyway, for I do not remember it. But sound and rhythm play a vital part in our being and becoming. So, I guess that is what most of us are calling nature, our nature, that part which is within us and a part of our package which does not come about by way of local or national nurture. But nurture of course is still needed to help this or that person bring out that which is within them anyway. A musician or composer still has to learn the scales, the chords, and practice this or that instrument. There would be little point in the nature of reality bringing forth a Mozart in the times when we lived in caves and with no musical instruments etc. If it did then that person would live a totally frustrated life – and whilst waiting for all those instruments to be invented and all the musicians to come along to play it. Life is not stupid is it. We are products of or about our time here, by both nature and nurture working in harmony together. Fascinating and mysterious.

As stated, it is easy enough to define what nurture is, for we are all very well acquainted with it on a regular daily basis. But what of this thing called nature then? What is that exactly? And what is the sum of it? And how deep and how wide is it? We cannot see it, we cannot touch it with the hands, we cannot smell it, and we cannot hear it with our ears (well, not all of it anyway). So what is it exactly?

Our physical senses are of course acquainted (on a daily basis) with that which the physical senses can detect of the physical reality of nature locally – but not the rest of it. As I and others have said many times, the physical senses are the periscopes above the waves of time and space and they only detect the physical aspects or life and the nature of our local environment. But what is below them? And what mysterious package of stuff comes into this world with each new child? And how did it get there? What is it for? What IS the true sum of this thing which we call nature? Does anyone know? For sure? And if, like me and many others, that you admit that you do not know, then by virtue of that you are confronted with a mystery. What do priestcraft have to say about all this? You had best ask them yourself; for I have given up even trying to communicate with them by now.

Now, we come to crunch point. As it is indoctrinated into many, and believed by many, that the interpretation of ‘nature’ (because we cannot see it all, and science has to interpret data from instruments) is purely material stuff (and whatever that really means by their definition and interpretation of that word) then we are nought but the product of nurture and material energies; hence materialism. And meaning the stuff of life and all things is derived ONLY from the stuff of the physical universe which we can detect with the five external senses; aided, (if that is what aided is) by telescopes, oscilloscopes, microscopes and little dishes with germs and bacteria in them. They do not put consciousness itself into that little jar and study it too well do they. And many other things besides – here, cop hold of this little idea and look at with a magnifying glass and tell me what you see.

Some choose to believe that only Mind exists, and hence Idealism. And that all material energies which produce a physical world and physical universe are an illusion of the mind. But, if an atom bomb is an illusion, and all the lives it takes and suffering it causes is an illusion, then it is an illusion which works well, and thus good enough to be called real; and we are all suffering from the same illusion anyway.

Others of course, and I am one of them, do not accept either of these scenarios to be the truth of it. And we find, by experience (which is all we ever have anyway) is that both material and non material things exist all within one package of emanation – both the soft stuff and the hard stuff. But this does not create a duality of mind and matter, for it is all a gradual gradation of one primordial energy and all operating at its own levels within one creation, or one Cosmos of being – and the physical universe which the physical senses detect is only a part of it all – a dimension of it all; a level of it all; and manifestation of it all. It is consciousness itself which brings forth the only duality – the observer of it all, and that which is observed. Even fifty dimensions of reality (if such a thing existed) would still not comprise a duality; for they would all be floors within one building. Self consciousness generates the perception of duality. There is no duality without conscious experience of things.

However, if the term ‘nature’ was restricted to the physical forces as known in the outer world and universe, then people such as myself would have to say that we are not the sum of just nature and nurture, for there is more – another ingredient in the mixing bowl – the stuff that comes here with us and to which we are always connected to below the physical level of emanation. But, as I say, this would depend on as to what one is using the word ‘nature’ to mean exactly, and what restrictions one is placing upon it.

Personally I am quite happy and at home (and including experience of a few things) to say that yes, that here on earth we each are indeed a product of two things – nature and nurture. But are we all talking about the same parameters to these two things? It seems not. Why so then? Why do we not all agree? Well, that is an easy one to work out is it not – the relativity of experience so far. And we each digest that which we have each encountered thus far in our journey through all this stuff.

So my own meaning of the terms nature and nurture would be that nature is the way things are and how they work, and that nurture is the degree of learning about it all that we have each done so far, and under our own experiential circumstances. And, one has to take into account the truth of the fact that NOT all learning (nurture) comes from other people or from the outside world. So it would seem that my own definitions of both nature and nurture are much the same as most peoples understanding of it also, except that I see far wider a deeper aspects to both of these things than perhaps some folk do. Indeed some say that there is nature, nurture and our spiritual being. But the fact is that what they are calling the spiritual dimension of the sum of our whole system is still our nature – what we are and what we are made of. We do not need two or three or ten words for the same thing – one will do. Hence, the nature of our selves and what we come to learn and understand of it all.

I and others do not say this because of beliefs, indoctrination, wishes, or imagination – but just by finding the stuff there. It is not for me to prove that the things that life reveals to people are true and truly exist to be known, for I do not care much as to what people decide to believe or not; it is what they do with the things which they decide to believe in which causes the problems. And neither could I prove it even if I wanted to. But, if they say, and teach to the kids (and without knowing such things) that the things which I and others have found are not true, then it is for them to prove that they are not true. And, what when they come to find them for themselves – what then? Will they tell all the kids whom they brainwashed that they were wrong? That'll be the day will it not, for honesty and integrity is not in their nature as yet. Well, not in their awareness yet shall we say.

Another interesting topic related to this is the saying that he or she has changed their mind. Now, given that we are Mind, then of course one cannot change that. But what it really means by saying that is that they have changed their understanding or views of something. It is often said by men (as a derogatory statement) that woman are always changing their mind. Well we know what they mean right enough and there is some truth in that – changing whims would be more to the point in that instant. Anyway, we all do that. More to do with the existing mood than anything else; and we all get mood swings.

However, we all come to understand things a little different as we grow through life – and hence we all change our ‘mind’ (understanding of things) on a number of occasions throughout our life. If we never changed our mind (if one must say it that way) throughout life then it indicates that we have learned nothing at all; digested nothing of daily experience (or any experience). This would be the ultimate case of depotentiation. It is not possible to live here for between fifty and a hundred years without learning anything – and hence changing our mind about this or that by virtue of it. In order to do that one would need to be born in a dark cupboard and stay in it for as long as one could live that way – and that would not be very long.

Indeed, one idiot tried it once (so I read somewhere anyway). It is claimed that this medieval Count or some such fancied himself as a bit of a scientist (can't remember all the so called facts alas). However, he took a couple of new born kids (both boys if I recall) and kept them locked up in a room with no human communication. All they got given to them was sufficient food, water and clothing; but nothing else. It is said that these kids developed a language of their own which they could both understand (seems natural enough does it not). But what did they have to talk about one wonders. What did they have to think about one wonders? Apart from their own company and the necessary food and drink, they were, for all intent and purpose, living a life of sensory deprivation. It is said that by about the age of seven they just rolled over and died. And who can wonder at that. What the hell did they have to live for. One can hardly imagine a worse scenario can one. Some nurture indeed.

Even after all the magic and mysteries of both nature and nurture is on the scene, all done, all attended to; a person still has to have something to live for – a reason for existing and wanting to live on. I guess we simply call it the will to live. We also know well enough that some folk come to lose that will to live (for whatever reasons) and kill themselves. But I guess also that many die 'naturally' simply because they have lost the will to live on any longer, – or should one say the lack of reasons to live. There is an old saying – he or she died of a broken heart. Well, that may well be a very simplistic answer to it, but, in the final analysis it is probably just that. But these things certainly tell us something about ourselves do they not. And the answers to them are not obvious and not as solid to get at as stones and tree trunks. And you will not find the answers with telescopes or microscopes.

So, we cannot change our mind exactly but our mindful awareness and understanding is in fact changing and growing all the time (personal evolution); and by way of what I mentioned in the chapter on communication; and interaction with life of course. And that is summed up in the word *experience*. And what else is there? What else do we have but experience? Nothing. What was lacking in those two kids lives? Experience and interaction with life – they had all the food and drink which they needed; and shelter. And of course, the main thing that was missing was a reason for living – no communication with the outer world and life forms - *nurture*. Nothing to learn from, integrate into, and dance with. Experience is not only the food of life but we would not be consciously existing without it. If I were to make a mere guess at the percentage of the mixture between nature and nurture (and that is all it would be for I do not know) then I would say, from hindsight of a few things, that our existence as an adult on earth is ninety nine percent nature and one percent nurture – but without that one percent nurture, and of a fitting kind for a being of their times here on earth, then one would lose the will to live. True enough, we say that our local nurture is a big thing in our lives – and it is indeed; and of vital importance. But then that ninety nine percent nature would just go to show how complex and deeply rooted in creation we are. And one percent of a hell of a lot, is itself a lot. So, as I see it, our nurture is the icing on the cake – but it is enough to make the difference between wanting to live here, or not. Just another little thing which is worth thinking about – if ever one get the time of course – or makes the time for it.

* * *