



Nature-Nurture Dynamism and Prospects for Better Child Formation: A Philosophical Appraisal

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Abstract

This paper aims at a philosophical appraisal of nature- nurture arguments and proposing prospects for better child formation. The study applies both expository and analytic methods of research. By expository method, this research uncovers the works of experts in developmental psychology on nature-nurture arguments while analytic method offers opportunity for critical evaluation of the arguments and possibilities of a middle course to the two extremes of nature-nurture arguments. This study adopts Vygotsky theoretical framework which studies the complementarity of child's cognitive development and learning ability as guided and mediated by their social interactions. Nature-nurture here refers to the two extreme arguments that question the extent to which human behavior is a product of either genetically inherited traits or acquired environmental learning influences. This paper rejects the exclusivism of the two extremes of nature-nurture arguments in child formation. It rather proposes a form of inclusivism, interactionism or epigenetics which is recognition of the inter-play of the two extremes of nature and nurture in child formation to guarantee good behavior. This paper recognizes that being well behaved, good, and intelligent, spiritual/holy, social, or classy parents are insufficient conditions to guarantee such behavior in children just by genetic transfer. Such behavior in children is a compliment of both genetic transfer and formation which implies a good understanding of the technicalities regarding upbringing and corresponding parental response to the different stages of child development. The recommendation of this study is that parenting should be a mutual synthesis of the two extremes of nature-nurture arguments which provides sufficient conditions for integral and holistic child formation.

Keywords: nature, nurture, child, formation, interactionism, epigenetics,

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Introduction

Unruly behavior among the youths is a cause for concern in the modern society and across all professions and vocations. In a colloquial presentation, this situation raises some questions though not limited to, ‘why is it that children of nowadays quite unlike the olden days no longer listen to their parents as if they have no ears on their heads but rather develop tails on their buttocks’? Also, “why are some children of good men or women sometimes very naughty and troublesome”? This paper recognizes that being good, spiritual/holy, social, or classy parents are insufficient conditions to guarantee good formation of children. These must be complimented with good understanding of the technicalities regarding upbringing and parental response to the different stages of child development. No doubt, formation is a herculean task. Come to think of what a woman passes through from birth seeing a child grow. Imagine the fullness of joy when such child comes out well polished and the contrasting sorrow when the child is a source of heart break and disgrace to the family.

Thus the concern of this paper is to chart prospects of epigenetics towards better child formation. This is a rescue mission which accesses the instruments of emerging philosophical and psychological discoveries to mitigate the difficulty in child formation. Thus emerging issues in philosophical and psychological discoveries offer us formidable technicalities or tools towards understanding the demands of integral or holistic child formation while adapting nature –nurture arguments. Here, formation is the process of training and disposition towards recreating, improving, stimulating, invigorating, or motivating the quality of character content.

This study accesses expository and analytic methods of research. Thus by the method of exposition, this research accesses the works of experts in developmental psychological discoveries. Developmental psychological discoveries on nature –nurture factors to human development and formation are exhaustively presented in order to understand the chances and paths of child’s formation and causes of deformation. Also, the method of hermeneutics offers an opportunity towards deep philosophical interpretations of developmental psychological discoveries and their application towards better child formation. The implication of this study shows that a mutual synthesis of the two extremes of nature –nurture arguments provides sufficient conditions for integral and holistic child formation.



Emerging Issues on Nature and Nurture Debate on Human Formation

Nature- nurture argument is similar to the philosophical arguments of empiricism and rationalism on the source and authenticity of human knowledge. Just like the philosophical correlates, nature-nurture debate has been an age long disputation minding the influence each makes to human behavior such as personality, cognitive traits, temperament and psychopathology. This debate between nature and nurture questions the extent to which human behavior is a product of either genetically inherited traits or acquired environmental learning influences.

Nature argument is founded on the basis of a method of pre-wiring that is influenced by genetic inheritance and other biological factors. This pre-wiring is the foundation or the determinant of human behavioral tendencies, personality and mental abilities. Directly opposite this claim is the idea of nurture theory. Nurture argument is generally taken as the influence of external factors after conception or birth. The proponents of nurture argument claim that these influences are the determinant factors to human behavioral tendencies, personality, and mental abilities. Rather than genetically inherited traits as claimed by proponents of nature argument, adherents of nurture argument claim that human behavior is the product of environmental exposure, life experiences and learning.

Nevertheless, just like the Kantian compromise and synthesis of the intellectual warfare between the empiricists and rationalists so epigenetics/interactionism is a good mediation to nurture-nature debates. Kant was able to sheet the swords of extremism with his synthetic *a priori* knowledge which is a mediation between the extremes of rationalism and empiricism. Similarly, the intellectual warfare between the nature-nurture theorists is assuaged by epigenetics or interactionism of both extremes. Thus behavioral sciences have try to understand the relative contributions of nature and nurture with regard to specific psychological traits. Instead of defending extreme nativist or nurturist views, this research is interested in investigating how nature and nurture interact in a host of qualitatively different ways. A typical example of this compromise is epigenetics which is an emerging area of research that's tries to understand how environmental influences affect the expression of genes, hence proving the double play of both nurture and nature as determinant factors to human behavioral tendencies, personality, and



mental abilities. This shows that integral child formation MUST be conscious of this double edged sword of nature and nurture.

Nature /Nativism and the Argument on Genetic Inheritance (Rationalist Position)

Nativism means extreme allegiance to nature as highly impactful in human development. Those who adopt this extreme hereditary position as responsible to human behavior are referred as nativists. Nativism is a believe system or behavioral epistemological claim that behavioral tendencies, personalities and mental abilities are determined solely by heredity. This extremism corresponds with the claims of rationalism in Philosophy. Rationalists hold that the content of human knowledge surpasses the information that sense experience alone provides rather upholds the superiority of reason as the source of authentic and indubitable knowledge. This course was championed by the continental rationalists; Descartes, Spinoza, Liebniz, etc (Lawhead, 2015:249).

From the above background, the nativists claim that true knowledge of behavioral tendencies, personalities and mental abilities are sourced from genetic information and inheritance. In the nucleus of each cell in human body are 23 pairs of chromosomes. One of each pair comes from the father, and the other comes from the mother. The chromosomes are made up of strands of the molecule *DNA* (deoxyribonucleic acid), and the DNA is grouped into segments known as *genes*. A gene is *the* basic biological unit that transmits characteristics from one generation to the next. Human cells have about 25,000 genes. Thus the nativists claim that certain physical characteristics are biologically determined by genetic inheritance. This is manifest in the colour of the eyes, straight or curly hair, some pathological dispositions, pigment of the skin, etc. These can be said to be functions of genetic inheritance (McLeod, 2008). This claim draws a corollary and speculations that psychological characteristics such as behavioral tendencies, personality attributes, and mental abilities are also pre-wired as inherited traits.

Similarly, the basic assumption of nativists is that the characteristics of the human species as a whole are a product of evolution and that individual differences are due to each person's unique genetic code (McLeod, 2008). This claim defends the appearance of any particular ability as a result of influence of genetic factors. In his popular essay, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle",



Freud (1987) describes this situation both in his “Life Drives” (eros) and “Death Drives” (thanatos). He describes the theory of aggression as being an innate drive (Smith, 2020). According to Freud, *thanatos* stands in stark contrast to the drive to survive, procreate, and satisfy desires; hence inner drives control external world of behavior and other tendencies, etc. For Freud, human functioning is based upon the interaction of drives and forces within the person, particularly unconscious and between the different structures of the personality (Greenwald & M. R. Banaji, 1995).

Freud (1919) sees human behavior as determined and caused entirely by unconscious factors. Thus unconscious thoughts and feelings can transfer to the conscious mind in the form of parapraxes or Freudian slips. Here parapraxes implies the revelation of our mind content by saying something we don’t really mean to say (Jean and Pontalis, 1988). To buttress this point, Freud describes the tripartite personality as; *id*, *ego* and super *ego*. The *id* is the primitive and instinctive component of human personality which consists of all biologically inherited traits or drives at birth such as; sex (life) instinct, eros (libido) and aggression (death/thanatos) instinct. This is characterized by unreasonable selfish instinct (Fontaine, 2007). Thus the *ego* comes to mediate the conflict between the unrealistic *id* and the external world as the decision making component. Finally the superego tries to incorporate the values and morality as defined in the society and as acquired by parenting and formal education (Freud, 1896).

The great philosopher of language, Chomsky favors the nature position in personality development and formation. In his claim, he believes that much of our language capacity is inborn just as learning to walk is programmed according to biological maturation so children are programmed to babble and talk according to biological developmental factors. For Chomsky, human beings are born with an innate language device which enables human beings as the capacity for learning languages. Behavioral genetic researchers study variations in behavior as warranted by genes. Genes are the units of heredity passed down from parents to offsprings, DNA differences are the major systematic source of psychological differences in human beings. More so beyond just single genetic factor, polygenetic inheritance claim that psychological traits follow a polygenic mode of inheritance; that is, multiple genes contribute to psychological traits



and specific behavior. Typical to this claim is depression which is of a polygenic trait influenced by at least 1000 genes which means that one with less number of genes to this effect has less chances of depression.

Nurture Argument (Empiricism Position)

Just as the nature argument draws an extremist view of the influence of inherited biological conditions as the determinants of behavioral tendencies, personalities and mental abilities, nurture argument replaces this determining factor with environmental variables. This is relational to the epistemological stand of empiricism which is a claim that external senses are the ultimate source and authentication of human knowledge. This epistemological claim was championed by British empiricists such as John Locke, Berkeley, David Hume, etc (Lawhead, 2015). Thus extreme nurture position of empiricists considers human's psychological and behavioral makeup to be entirely the result of sense experiences such as environmental experiences, early childhood, family, social relationship, culture and community factors.

Just like epistemological empiricism, nurture argument proposes that at birth, the human mind is a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) but gradually filled with sense and environmental experiences (Lawhead, 2015). The sense experience here is a component of environmental variables which mold behaviors. Thus proponents of this argument claim that psychological characteristics and behavioral differences that emerge through infancy and childhood are the results of learning and formation. Thus formation or upbringing plays vital role towards the character dynamism of child development while maturation applies only to the biological development. For Einstein, nurture is the sum of the environmental influences and conditions acting on an organism, especially in contrast to heredity. Einstein rejected the Platonic assumptions that ideas, intelligence or character are inborn. Thus for Einstein, nurture has significant impact to our intelligence and behavior. One of Einstein's best known saying is that genius is 1% inspiration, and 99% perspiration. Even for a wise man like Einstein, nurture is more important than nature (Einstein, 1935). This point is made clearer in the popular Bandura's Bobo doll experiment which defines his social learning theory. Thus his social learning theory shows that aggression is learned from the environment through observation and imitation.



Bandura (1986) in his social learning theory emphasizes that observing, modeling and imitating the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reaction of others are perfect models for behavioral formation. This explains how cognitive factors influence human learning and behavior (Bandura, 1986). Thus Bandura (1986) agrees with the behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning.

Similarly, conformity as a social influence is a factor of nurture theory. It accounts for the changes in belief or behaviors in order to fit in with a group. This form of change can either be real with physical presence of others or imagined, implying the pressure of social norms and expectation of group pressure. Conformity is a major influence especially regarding group pressure which can be in the following forms; bullying, persuasion, teasing, criticism, etc. This may be conformity to majority opinion or position caused by desire to fit in or just to identify or conform to a social role (Crutchfield, 1955).

Traditional Models and Implications to Child Formation

The traditional African society is popularly known and respected as have-it-all in matters of formation in morals and ethical values. To say the least, the traditional African society is proudly known as the harbinger of integrity and morals and a great mother in transfer of such values to her children. This is inculcated through various factors and institutions such as the family, peer groups; age grades, cultural dance club, elders forum, *ndiinyom*, local/traditional corporate societies which are formed to support each other in farm works by pulling their resources together, *Amala* (council of elders), *Okpara* system (eldest male), *Umunna* (clan), *Umuada* (female born in a town but married out), age grades, assembly of the people, *Ohanaeze* (assembly of the people and the king), *mmanwu* (masquerade), *agbara* (local deities or oracles) (Ogbunkwu, 2021).

For better clarity in discussion, Igbo traditional society in this context is to be understood in two different epochs; the ancient and modern eras. We note immediately here that this division is more according to ideological changes in Igbo society rather than chronological records of epochs. The ancient herein referred, accounts for the Igbo traditional society before, during and immediately after creation of Nigeria up till the civil war. The later time after the civil war is



here referred as the modern. There is a significant ideological shift in the societal needs of the traditional Igbo society in these epochs. Like Lamarck's law of use and disuse, the needs in the society determine the pattern of living, survival strategies, works, relationship, values (Lamarck, 1914), etc. Generally life was very monotonous in the traditional Igbo society but became less monotonous in the modern times, hence demanding a paradigm shift in methods of child formation.

In the traditional Igbo society, the value of a man was built around his wealth manifest in his family and farm sizes. Thus a man needed many wives so as to have many children to do his farm work and have more produce than his kinsmen. The pattern of living was all about the farm such that everyone went to the farm in the morning and worked till evening when they returned home very weak to rest and have moonlight tales. Thus even the most stubborn person in the ancient times was more appreciated because such persons dissipated excess energy working harder in the farm and had more productivity. Thus a strong man was defined by the amount of energy manifest in farm work to the tune of making about one hundred mounts or hips a day. It was easier to convert the energy of stubborn people to use in the farm work. At the end of the day, such persons only needed to go home and rest, eat and have moonlight tales/play with little or no serious tendencies of mischief. Such persons were called upon when there was war in the community because they were brave and daring. In the traditional society, during war or hunting, the murder of an alien, that is, one who is not one's kinsman was an act of brevity and the traditional society had particular celebrations for such brave citizens. The cohesion in the society was formidable minding communalism and the above mentioned traditional institutions were strong and very active towards keeping societal laws and order (Olorunsola, 1972).

On the other hand, the modern Igbo society has a more complex model of existence and as such referred as heterogeneous living method. There is a shift in standards of living and societal demands. The societal needs and definitions of a man focused more on civilization, acquisition of western education, travelling, and socialization with wider social surface of interactions. A man could grow up in the ancient society and summing up the number of persons he met from his birth to death and may not have more than two thousand persons in his social interaction surface. However, in the modern times, one would have met more than two thousand persons



before the completion of pre-nursery and nursery schools which is about the age of four or five years. In the modern society a child at the age of five, has greater social interaction surface than his grandfather of the ancient times. Beyond the number of persons with diverse cultural backgrounds as encountered in the modern society, new technological experiences and exposures make the society even more complex. This heterogeneous existence diffused the strength of communalism for which the early society was known to socialism where social cohesion/order/law enforcement is now in the hands of the government while our traditional institutions got weakened (Ogbunkwu, 2021).

Why do we refer to these different epochs of societal existence? Thus there is a shift in value appreciation in these two epochs and this shift needs a corresponding shift in formation methods. The inability to recognize this need for change of method is one of the greatest challenges for formation in the present society. The ancient society had a monotonous life style such that besides night rest, 80% times of the day was spent in the farm and upon return from farm, everyone was tired. The modern society has more complex societal demand, hence people walk almost round the clock daily. Thus people work day and night and sleep when convenient while in the ancient society people went to bed because it was night and had done heavy work during the day. Unlike the ancient times, in this era, there is greater need for migration with greater social surface of interaction. These factors make child formation more complex and demanding, hence needing more complex methods.

Unfortunately, there are some ideologies or philosophies of formation which worked in the ancient times but need adjustment in the modern times. Such ideologies include; *oburommaduna-azunwa*, *o buChukwuna-azunwa* (child formation is God's work not human). No doubt, this saying was a defense mechanism to calm questions regarding the outrageous number of children produced in the ancient times. Child upbringing in the ancient time followed the same monotonous life style of training the child in farm work and at adulthood, the child becomes independent and has his own family while the cycle continues. However, the modern society has a shift in paradigm both in societal expectations, life style and methods of formation. Most unfortunate is that this primitive ideology still holds sway in our time and the society is receiving



the brunt of such ideologies manifest in the level of crazy, wild and untamed behaviors in the society, in governance, church, etc.

The ideology of *oburommaduna-azunwa*, *o buChukwuna-azunwa* (child formation is God's work not human) takes the society back to the argument of nature such that behavioral tendencies, personalities and mental abilities are determined solely by inherited traits. With time, we suppose that those who hold this ideology do not also propose that child conception is God's solely without human agent. This ideology is a bastardization of the interaction of nature and nurture argument as discussed above. The implication of this ideology is a colossal failure of parenting in the modern time. This failure results in acculturation in formation where a child is of no culture and suffers the fate of babel (tower of babel) state of confusion. This ideology informs lots of other attitudes that destroy the home and make formation very difficult and almost impossible. It predisposes parents towards *lesser fair* attitude to formation whereas taking a lot of things for granted leading to some careless attitudes in the guise that the fate of the child is already destined just like the fate of Odewale in *The gods are not to Blame* (Rotimi, 1971).

When from the oral and anal stages a child is recklessly scolded by loquacious parents for every little thing and condemned as a "never do well", certainly the same child grows learning never trusting himself, feeling inferior and afraid of everything and everybody. This is because the ego is already beaten down by the parents who are supposed to be the first to lift the child's ego. Experts in developmental psychology have proven that when the husband and wife scold each other and fight before the children at their early ages, the children grow to take sides according to whom they have found love (sometimes determined by Oedipus or electra complex/pressure/instinct) (Ogbunkwu, 2023). Hence if the father, then each time such quarrels begin the child feels that the mother is so disrespectful and wicked to the father not minding the cause of the quarrels and vice versa. Hence the child begins to unconsciously grow with some bits of doubt of love on the mother such that the only way to express this unconscious feeling is by early stubbornness to the mother as a means of revolution and revenge. Unfortunately the child is not consciously aware of these reactions because they are almost instinctive. The child in the absence of the beloved feels insecure in the house and unsafe longing the return of the beloved.



The same is the case in families where the mother has greener pastures and earns more income such that she becomes the bread winner of the family. When this situation makes her complain so much in the house, the children feel so unsafe, unloved and unrelaxed in the house that they begin to see themselves as burdens to the parents and would dream of the day when they would be out of their slave camp (their family). The children would become unnecessarily aggressive at every little provocation because he/she has not been schooled in commitment or patience. According to Liu, Moore and Beekman *et al* (2019), such child grows and learns not to be grateful instead develops the sense of entitlement, anger, selfishness, insensitivity to the plight/pains of others, avaricious, etc.

Such is observed when parents do awful things or tell lies to their children either to cut corners or survive immediate needs such common lies include; “tell the visitor that dad is not around”, change to “miracle centers” for WAEC examinations to enable the child pass exams, “I do not have money” even when the child knows otherwise, tell our visitor “I am sick and can’t come out to see him (especially in matters of debt), etc. Such children grow not to respect the rule of law rather desire the shortcut to every life situations. They cannot endure pains of failure and hardship, hence can do anything dirty to assuage hardship/poverty or pass any exam by crock. Also, they have learnt not to bear pains and inconvenience rather live by the senses such that they lack control to concupiscence leading to laziness, sexual pervasion/abuses, drug abuses, quick to temper (fights with ease), other pervasive attitudes (Liu, Moore and Beekman *et al*, 2019).

When parents are drunks and misbehave afterwards, certainly this situation is a big disadvantage to the children. This is because the children begin to lack the moral courage of association lest they are reminded of their background as children of drunks (Lambert, A. J.; Good, K.; Kirk, I. J. 2009). Even to air their view among their peer would be a challenge for fear of being reminded their background. Except by God’s grace, this affects even the company the children keep from nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Thus he/she keeps similar class of friends who would not remind each other their backgrounds, hence lowers their class of relationship. Definitely in marriage it is almost an impossible task to change the class rather such child



marries from similar class whereas their parents might be praying that their child marries a higher class citizen. Thus such children are already disadvantaged in the society.

The same situation goes where the African traditional masculinity makes the father of the house to impose wild authority on the wife and children such that he becomes very authoritative and autocratic. It must be acknowledged that children do not really respect their parents just for the reason of the biological responsibility of both father and the mother rather such respect **MUST** be earned beyond just the act of child bearing. It is primarily earned by the degree of bonding and love shared between children and parents. Unfortunately, some children grow up to feel no emotional connections to their parents and do not care about their health and wellbeing. Even when the attention of the children is called to this fact, they do not feel any sense of commitment to their parents. This is because there was no bonding from childhood. An adopted son/daughter can bond with the new mother and father such that the child feels higher sense of responsibility to the new parents than the first parents even when the latter are known to the child.

Nature- Nurture Interactionism and Prospects for Better Child Development/Formation

Just as empiricism and rationalism were independently incomprehensive awaiting Kant's moderation to perfect them, hence nature-nurture argument is not complete without this model of interactionism or epigenetics which can be likened to Kantian epistemological mediation. It has been a hot debate between nature (biological) and nurture (behavioral) psychologists. In biological psychology, genetic compositions (brain, nervous system, hormones) are responsible to formation of human behavior while behavioral psychology considers the environment as the factor that conditions behavior.

Thus interactionism becomes a model of mutuality of the two dynamisms responsible for human behavior; nature and nurture arguments. It calls for consciousness on this mutual indwelling of both models in all aspects of human formation. This is co-relational to the traditional question of the chicken and the eggs which one has more meaningful or earliest existence. If the eggs, then who laid the first egg and if one claims that the chicken is the earlier, then from where did the first hen emerge? The puzzle before us is of a mutual relationship between nature and nurture, hence the choice of the word, interactionism.



Typical example to this effect is hybridization of plants and the corresponding environmental effects. Just as hybridization is insufficient for both plants and animals without good environment, so is nature insufficient without the corollary of nurture (Porretta&Canestrelli, 2023). One can bud good specie of orange expecting improved specie in his farm but this is thwarted if the soil and other environmental factors do not enable the hybrid to flourish. This claim is vice versa when there is a good environment upon which very bad specie of fruit is planted. Another example among human beings is human intelligence and the act of reading. Taking the example of how much parents read with their children and how well children learn to read appear to be related. The question that comes to mind is; can children who are daft or with down syndrome, hence genetically indisposed to be competent readers learn to read by just listening to their parents? Thus it becomes obvious that both genetic predisposition and appropriate environmental triggers are necessary conditions for comprehensive formation.

It is obvious that negligence to the various psychological developmental stages of children in the family contribute to a great measure (even to the greatest measure) in the children's high sense of respect or disrespect(Lanjekar, Joshi, *et al*, 2022), responsibility or irresponsibility, independence or dependence, hardworking or laziness, inferiority complex or superiority complex, stubbornness and pigheadedness or cool headedness(Sanvictores and Mendez, 2019). Many a times, parents see their responsibility to their children as merely a financial commitment that begins and ends with feeding, shelter, protection and formal education. Most parents cannot imagine that parents have other functions beyond these.

These stages show that from birth to the age of three, the voice and force of authority is the voice of "mummy and daddy". Ask a child at this stage, "why do that"? The child's response is "mummy or daddy said its right. Even an army general cannot change this response or compel the child to do otherwise. The child would rather accept death than betray the voice of authority in "mummy and daddy". From four to seven years, this force of authority is transferred to "my teacher said". Even when the teacher would have taught wrongly, the child would not accept otherwise not even from "mummy or daddy' anymore. If the teacher says, $1+1=3$; even the greatest mathematician cannot make the child believe that this arithmetics has 2 for answer and not 3. Another turn is experienced from seven years till the peak of adolescence when the child



begins to gain religious experiences, the voice of authority is transferred to God. Thus, the same child no longer shuns evil or upholds good because “my mother said or my teacher said” rather now the child says, “**God**” said it is good or it is bad. From seventeen/eighteen, the child changes the voice of authority again no longer “my mother said, my teacher said or God said” rather child’s answer this time, is “**I** don’t want to do it”.

One of the most significant things about these stages is that once the system of flow is truncated by the first stage of “mummy and daddy”, the child grows not trusting any other voice such that the voice of the teacher or God as other stages are not forceful enough to command behavior. If by the carelessness of the parents, the child learns not to trust especially following the discouraging factors discussed earlier, the child cannot trust the teacher to be very meticulous in academics rather, the child sits on the fence always and lacks commitment to academic engagement. Similarly, the child grows with less religious commitment, not trusting God or obeying divine laws with convictions rather with imperfect constriction. The resultant effect of these serial failures is culminated in the final stage when the child grows not even trusting himself in the stage of “I want ...”. Thus at this stage, the child’s identity is lost to peer group influences/pressures who gives the child a personality definition since he/she has none. At this point, one argues that the peer group does not really destroy a child rather it blossoms who the child has from the family.

The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to both moral, education, human and spiritual formation. Parents have the first responsibility of creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. From infancy, parents should teach their children to subordinate the material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones. The practicality of these values are realizable through quality-shared time in the family. Quality time here implies a good attitudinal disposition towards the family-bonding between husband/wife/children, eating together, praying together, going on picnic together, It is a situation where the father of the house is attitudinally disposed to hear the heart beat of his wife and children. Hearing their smiles even when they



aren't present and hearing their cries even from a distance. It is a situation whereby there exists the power of telepathy among the family members. This is only possible when there is affinity among the members. Nevertheless, when this is achieved; with time husband and wife begin to grow from emotional affinity to phenomenological semblance.

Conclusion

This paper has made a dogged effort towards charting paths for integral formation through philosophical appraisal of nature-nurture dynamism in child formation. It exposed the debate between biological psychology with behavioral psychology which are anchored on the nature-nurture factors to human behavior. While the nurture argument or behaviorist psychologists consider the interaction with the environment as the factor that conditions behavior, nature argument or the biological psychologists consider hereditary factors/genetics as factors that condition behavior. In general, nature looks at the impact of such genetic factors such as neurotransmitters and genome sequencing on child development, while nurture focuses on aspects such as parenting, peer pressure and social influences.

The interplay, mutuality or interactionism of nurture and nature in human development has been discussed as major factors towards success or failure in child formation. This paper has extensively developed the corresponding effect in formation when the parental nurture ratio to nature becomes disproportionate, hence leading to deformation of children. It is worthy of note that the heterogeneous model of living in the modern Igbo society diffused the strength of traditional institutions that supported child formation, social cohesion/order/law enforcement, etc. Thus this situation makes child formation more a herculean task than in the traditional society when societal life was monotonous. Thus parental inability to follow up the corresponding response to different stages of child developmental stages as described earlier creates a yawning gap in formation thereof supplying defiant children to the larger society.

In the midst of these challenges, this paper recommends that parents ought to extend the fecundity of conjugal love to adequate child formation such that the child be schooled in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery. These will help the child learn to subordinate the material and instinctual dimensions of life to interior and spiritual realities of existence. This



paper recognized that even when the family background has highly battered or truncated the process of formation, there is still hope by self-conscious disposition towards reformation. In all, this paper makes it obvious that both genetic predisposition and appropriate environmental triggers are necessary conditions for comprehensive formation.

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