



Research Paper

Human Nature and Psychological Insights

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ABSTRACT: Work always involves humans. Humans are complex beings and their behavior and their mental attitude is the result of interaction within and between their internal biological, psychological and social systems and their physical and social environment. This chapter outlines elements of psychology relevant to Human nature, God, Powerful Psychological Insights About Human Nature. Although the discipline is influenced by many different schools of thought, modern psychological practice employs scientific methods. Particularly relevant human nature are behavioural psychology (the foundation of behaviour-based safety) and cognitive psychology (which highlights the cognitive capacities of workers, and errors that can occur in decision making). Also, this chapter describes the physiological bases of some psychological phenomena to be considered when improving and also bad phenomena of human nature, and provides basic information about personality psychology and mental disorders.

KEYWORD : Behavior, Human nature, God, psychological disorder.

Received 11 January, 2019; Accepted 26 January, 2019 © the Author(S) 2019.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Despite the widespread rejection of Creationism and Intelligent Design in our society, most of us continue to believe that humanity is “the Crown of Creation.” Even though brought about by an impersonal force, such as Nature or Evolution, we consider ourselves superior to all other living beings, incomparably more intelligent and capable of loftier, more noble, emotions, and for this reason of our cognitive and emotional superiority, fully justified in making whatever use of them we may decide upon to improve our quality of life. If the very same logic were applied to differences between human beings and it were suggested that the more intelligent people with more developed emotional life can use people who are less intelligent and less developed emotionally in whatever way that suits the former to make their lives better, many of us would be appalled. But, if asked to explain this reaction, we would have to resort to the claim of cognitive and emotional superiority again. It is clear that we have the ability to use (that is in various ways exploit, kill for food, convenience, or sport, take over the resources they need to survive, impose conditions that turn their lives into torture) other animals, while they do not have the ability to use us. So, obviously, they are not our equals. But this is not because they are all naturally less intelligent than we are, or because our emotional capacities are naturally better developed.

What drastically separates us from all other animals does not have anything to do with our biological nature at all. As a biological species we are not that different from others: apparently, there is only 2% of difference in genetic material between us and some other great apes, such as chimpanzees, and these 2% account for all of our differences--forms of our feet and legs, genitalia, body and facial hair, posture, weight and height, etc., etc.--so it is unclear how much of this is left to account for the difference between their and our brains, presumably responsible for our superior mental capacities. Moreover, capacities can be observed empirically only in their effects, only if a person writes a book, for instance, can we say that s/he has the capacity to write a book. (Well, one may counter in this context, no animal has ever written a book: ergo, we are smarter than they are. But an overwhelming majority of us have never written a book either. Does that mean that cognitive capacities of the overwhelming majority of people are no different than those of other animals?) As to other achievements, every day now brings more evidence about the great intelligence, cognitive and emotional, of animals (innate--not, like ours, which often learned). See, for instance, “.”

Definition of Human Nature :

When you look in the mirror, you are checking how you appear, what you seem to be, and whether it matches how you feel inside. Thinking about human nature is the equivalent of our whole species looking in the mirror to check its identity. Just as we all react differently to our own reflections in the mirror, the reflection we call human nature is also often disputed.

By definition, human nature includes the core characteristics (feelings, psychology, behaviors) shared by all people. We all have different experiences of the humans in our life, and this is where the disputes begin. Some people will tell you humans are 'good' or 'bad', or 'predators' or 'capable of great kindness.' These views are colored by the influence of the people we know and what our culture and subcultures tell us. The group you are born into will pass on its particular ideas about what makes humans 'human.'

About Human Nature :

Philosophers and scholars tend to talk human nature based on major schools of thought from human history. Some religion scholars argue that spiritual or religious natures are the key trait in human nature. For example, Judeo-Christian belief presents humans as creations of God that have free will, which provides them both dignity and ethical dangers. Buddhists think that to be human is to be aware (conscious) and to desire.

More broadly, in Western cultures, the discussions usually begin with Plato and Aristotle in classical Greece. Plato thought that humans were rational, social animals, and he connected our nature with our souls and ability to reason rather than our bodies. Aristotle differed primarily in his belief that both body and soul contributed to our human identity. These theories are not mutually exclusive, but have been built upon each other and adapted over time.

Other ideas about human nature have been discussed by historically important figures including Rene Descartes, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud. The following items represent changes in theories from the 1500s to the 20th century.

Descartes (1596-1650) expanded Plato's ideas, describing people as thinking spirits. He was later critiqued by Gilbert Ryle, who, like Aristotle, could not completely separate human mental processes from physical ones. By way of example, Aristotle and Ryle would agree that the action of hammering a nail when building a house inherently weaves mind and body together.

According to Darwin (1809-1882) and the logic of evolution, humans are described as another form of primate. Human life, like any animal's, is experienced as a series of problems to be addressed and resolved. Darwinian thinkers do not raise humans above other animals, but recognize that human characteristics are a product of nature, developed through circumstance and physical characteristics that affect behavior.

Marx (1818-1883) believed that human nature is revealed through the natural progression of history. He believed that history's natural progress could lead humans to true freedom as they recognized the cultural and social factors that alienated them from their natural identity. Like Darwin, Marx took the stance that humans are characterized by their species' traits more than divine influence or a spiritual character.

God, Human Nature, and Psychology :

Modern psychology has a relatively short history, yet it is rooted in the longer history of philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences. Human nature has been described and defined by psychologists since the late 19th century, beginning with a focus on sensory perception; moving toward a view that saw all behavior resulting from external stimuli; then into a more mental or cognitive view of behaving and learning; and more recently an emphasis on the humanistic view of humankind. Each of these paradigms is based on a distinct view of human nature that often excludes God and his sovereignty.

The primary object of the science of psychology is human nature and how it is expressed in thoughts, actions, and feelings. God created humans to think, act, and feel and to be in relationship with other humans. God created humans to think, act, and feel and to be in relationship with other humans. Adam and Eve forfeited God's perfect human creation by giving in to Satan's temptations. Therefore, all humanity has been marred and flawed by this sinful nature. Even though modern psychology often does not and will not acknowledge our sinful state, psychology has been busy studying human nature through the lens of positivism and naturalism.

To be active in psychology means that we are active agents in God's kingdom, as His image-bearers. Some of the areas of inquiry in psychology and human nature that would reflect this kingdom work lie in the biological, psychological, and social realms. What does this look like in psychology today?

In the biological realm of human nature, psychology can and does explore brain activity and specifically neurotransmitters that affect mood, memory, learning, sleep, and many other human functions. As God's image-bearers who carry the burden of sin, humans also respond to stressful life events with predictable thoughts and behaviors. Our perception of the stressor as being a threat or a challenge begins the process. Then we determine if we have the resources (past experience or current knowledge) to cope with the stressor. And

finally, we make a decision to positively respond to the stressor or choose to avoid the stressor. This “fight or flight response” was first described by physiologist Walter Cannon in the 1920s. Another example of a biological inquiry would be dementia and its direct impact on the person with dementia as well as the impact on family members and caregivers. The issue of dementia cuts across the biological, psychological, and social realms. The issue of dementia cuts across the biological, psychological, and social realms.

In the psychological realm of human nature, we can explore and research the various mental disorders that impact millions around the world. As Christians, we need to know how to diagnose and treat these disorders to restore the person to physical, psychological, and spiritual health. Persons who are depressed often feel distant from God or even feel judged by God for their depressive symptoms. God’s true essence of love and grace doesn’t change, but our feelings can lead us to a distorted perception of God and his presence in our lives.

Other psychological areas to explore could be the emotional response to trauma and loss. Loss is a common theme and experience in human development and living before the face of God. Death is inevitable, and when and how death enters into our experience largely determines the emotional impact. For example, losing your 3-year-old child to leukemia is a much different experience than having your 85-year-old grandma die of cancer. In this realm as well is psychology, which can also explore the positive impact of physical exercise on mood or the impact of bullying on the lives of young children and adolescents.

In the social realm of human nature, we can study and examine the effects of our cultural background and how this is reflected in our actions, traditions, families. In my Dutch heritage, a common means of expressing love and appreciation is shown through preparing and sharing food with family and friends. A common means of expressing love and appreciation is shown through preparing and sharing food with family and friends. Saying the words “I love you” may have been less likely or frequent than showing “I love you” through cooking and other acts of kindness.

Another area that gets much attention in psychology is racial diversity and awareness. Sin has a grip on all areas of creation and humanity, especially in the way in which we view our own ethnicity as well as how we think about and treat those of a different race. Psychology can inform us in regards to how prejudice can be influenced by in-group bias, out-group bias, family socialization, and many other social and cognitive factors. Despite the seemingly positive progression in racial awareness, citizens of our culture and many other cultures around the world continue to exhibit prejudice in their attitudes and behaviors, which lead to greater separation, rather than reconciliation, among races.

Psychology continues to explore the complexity of human nature. As Christians, we can enter into this exploration with an eye toward discovering the wonder and awe of God’s created order. Eric Johnson gives a helpful reminder about our work as Christians when he says, “Psychology, then, in the Christian framework, is not an independent activity that operates apart from God; it is dependent upon God’s mercy to illuminate human understanding and reveal things about human nature through human reflection, research, and creative insight.” May our reflection, research, and insight lead us to a greater knowledge of God.

30 Powerful Psychological Insights About Human Nature :

All patients come to psychiatrists with basically the same problem: the sense of helplessness, the fear and inner conviction of being unable to cope and change things.

One of the roots of this sense of impotence is some desire to partially or totally escape the pain of confronting problems because this continual battle of confronting and solving problems is a painful one, indeed. Fearing the pain involved, almost all of us, to a greater or lesser degree, attempt to avoid them like the plague. Its human, it’s understandable, and to some extent quite natural...but it is definitely not beneficial. This tendency of avoidance and the emotional suffering inherent in it is the primary basis of all human mental illness. Keeping this in mind, it is safe to say that almost all of us lack complete mental health—including psychologists themselves.

That’s why psychotherapy is very helpful to anyone and everyone. It is a legitimate and courageous path to personal growth and freedom which bestows people with a lot of opportunities to become stronger and healthier than average. It helps bring forth the darkest and brightest parts of one’s own self in an atmosphere of utter honesty and non-judgment.

Here’s a list of insights that really changed my thought processes, understanding of human nature, and way of living:

1. Mental health is an ongoing process of dedication to reality at all costs.

2. Midlife crisis, quarter-life crisis, depression, depressive episodes...are all terms associated with the reluctance to give up cherished notions and old ways of doing and looking at things. Many people are either unwilling or unable to suffer the pain of giving up the outgrown which needs to be forsaken. Consequently they cling to their old patterns of thinking and behaving, thus failing to negotiate any crisis, to truly grow up and to experience the joyful sense of rebirth that accompanies the successful transition into greater maturity. It is in the giving up of self that human beings can find the most ecstatic and lasting, solid, durable joy of life.

3. “There are three musts that hold us back: I must do well. You must treat me well. And the world must be easy.”
—Albert Ellis
4. Your conditions for self-acceptance are entirely up to you.
5. “Stop shoulding on yourself” —Albert Ellis
6. Insight alone rarely enables people to undo their emotional disturbances. They may feel better when they know or think they know how they became disturbed, because insights can feel useful and curative, but they help you very little.
7. It is unlikely that people will actually get better and stay better unless they fully understand that there is usually no way to get better and stay better except by continual work and practice in looking for and finding one’s core irrational beliefs, then actively, energetically, and scientifically disputing them.
8. If you are abused, you have a choice about what to tell yourself about the abuse.
9. We are not directly affected by things but by the view we take of them. Things are not terrible, horrible, or amazing inherently—it’s the meaning/inference we attach to them that gives them importance.
10. Disturbed human emotions do not exist in their own right. Anger, resentment, shame, anxiety, depression—these are all SUSTAINED emotional disturbances created by irrational beliefs which do nothing but sabotage one’s goals of survival and joyfulness.
11. Resist overgeneralization, black and white, either/or thinking. Once you stop doing such things, your mind will open up to a world of possibilities.
12. The essential ingredient that makes psychotherapy successful and effective is not through magical words, postures or techniques, but LOVE. It is the willingness of the therapist to truly involve oneself at an emotional level in the relationship, to actually struggle with the patient and with oneself that constitutes deep and meaningful psychotherapy. An aloof and detached psychoanalyst never helped anyone.
13. Mutual loving confrontation is a significant part of all successful and human relationships. Without it the relationship is either unsuccessful or shallow.
14. If you have ever fallen victim or been the perpetrator of “I’ll desert you before you desert me” syndrome, it is because of a significant lack of commitment and love from your parents during childhood.
15. As long as one marries, enters a career, or has children to satisfy one’s parents or the expectations of even society as a whole, the commitment by its very nature will be a shallow one. The highest forms of love are inevitably totally free choices and not acts of conformity.
16. It is very common to confuse love with the feeling of love; it is easy and not at all unpleasant to find evidence of love in one’s feelings. But it is quite difficult and painful to search for evidence of love in one’s actions.
17. True love is not a feeling by which we are overwhelmed. It is a committed, thoughtful decision.
18. You are the only one responsible for your emotional disturbances. The weather is not making you depressed; that coworker isn’t making your life hell. It’s your beliefs about these events that are causing you to be stressed. Instead of saying, “She annoys me” ... “It angers me” ... “I am hurt because of you,” try saying, “I make myself angry about it” or “I felt hurt when you acted that way.”
19. There is something called healthy negative emotions. Irritation is healthy but anger is not; regret is sometimes healthy but guilt is definitely not. We can’t erase all negative emotions ever. We just learn how to deal with them in a healthy manner.
20. People often tend to act out their wishes and desires as if they were needs and musts. They frequently elevate their personal goals and expectations into rigid and irrational rules that everyone MUST OBEY. This is a living death.
21. Try to minimize all should, musts, and oughts from your life. Replace them with rational beliefs that will increase the likelihood of reaching your goals and keeping you disturbance-free.
22. You will have to work at keeping the threshold of tolerating frustration high so that the world doesn’t swallow you whole.
23. Don’t create secondary disturbances about your primary disturbances. For example, don’t worry that you worry too much. Instead of that, focus on what you can do about the primary problem.
24. Whenever you are faced with a difficult situation in life, you always have the choice to choose your course of action and thoughts. Helplessness is an unnecessary demon stopping you from reaching your truest potential.
25. The law of attraction is at best controversial and at worst a huge farce. Tread cautiously. Your life is not determined by what you are attracting but through the quality of your thoughts and beliefs.
26. When it comes to love, understand that everybody’s definition of it is different. And it does not happen according to one’s rigid rules of what constitutes love and what doesn’t.
27. I DEFINE IT. IT DOES NOT DEFINE ME. Something does not bring value to your life. You assign value to it.
28. Want to get rid of the endless what-if’s? Drill this mantra into your head: There is a probability for everything and certainty for nothing. Learn to live with probabilities and be functional in spite of it.

29. People act as if there is a universal rulebook for marriage/love and how everybody has to adhere by it. The endless romantic books and movies are all testament to this. This is nothing but a perfect recipe for being miserable in love. Understand that it is stupid to believe that the nature of love won't change. It will. The only way you can really appreciate, receive, or accept love is by not subscribing to a stringent definition of it.

30. Self-esteem is a myth. Work toward unconditional self-acceptance. Keep this as your new rational belief: "I would like to work on correcting behaviors that are harmful and maintaining the ones that are helpful. But I accept myself as a fallible person capable of both kinds of behavior."

The bad news on human nature, in 10 findings from psychology :

It's a question that's reverberated through the ages – are humans, though imperfect, essentially kind, sensible, good-natured creatures? Or are we, deep down, wired to be bad, blinkered, idle, vain, vengeful and selfish? There are no easy answers, and there's clearly a lot of variation between individuals, but here we shine some evidence-based light on the matter through 10 dispiriting findings that reveal the darker and less impressive aspects of human nature:

We view minorities and the vulnerable as less than human:

One striking example of this blatant dehumanization came from a brain-scan study that found a small group of students exhibited less neural activity associated with thinking about people when they looked at pictures of the homeless or of drug addicts, as compared with higher-status individuals. Another study showed that people who are opposed to Arab immigration tended to rate Arabs and Muslims as literally less evolved than average. Among other examples, there's also evidence that young people dehumanize older people; and that men and women alike dehumanize drunk women. What's more, the inclination to dehumanize starts early – children as young as five view out-group faces (of people from a different city or a different gender to the child) as less human than in-group faces.

We experience Schadenfreude (pleasure at another person's distress) by the age of four:

according to a study from 2013. That sense is heightened if the child perceives that the person deserves the distress. A more recent study found that, by age six, children will pay to watch an antisocial puppet being hit, rather than spending the money on stickers.

We believe in karma – assuming that the downtrodden of the world deserve their fate:

The unfortunate consequences of such beliefs were first demonstrated in the now classic research from 1966 by the American psychologists Melvin Lerner and Carolyn Simmons. In their experiment, in which a female learner was punished with electric shocks for wrong answers, women participants subsequently rated her as less likeable and admirable when they heard that they would be seeing her suffer again, and especially if they felt powerless to minimise this suffering. Since then, research has shown our willingness to blame the poor, rape victims, AIDS patients and others for their fate, so as to preserve our belief in a just world. By extension, the same or similar processes are likely responsible for our subconscious rose-tinted view of rich people.

We are blinkered and dogmatic:

If people were rational and open-minded, then the straightforward way to correct someone's false beliefs would be to present them with some relevant facts. However a classic study from 1979 showed the futility of this approach – participants who believed strongly for or against the death penalty completely ignored facts that undermined their position, actually doubling-down on their initial view. This seems to occur in part because we see opposing facts as undermining our sense of identity. It doesn't help that many of us are overconfident about how much we understand things and that, when we believe our opinions are superior to others, this deters us from seeking out further relevant knowledge.

We would rather electrocute ourselves than spend time in our own thoughts:

This was demonstrated in a controversial 2014 study in which 67 per cent of male participants and 25 per cent of female participants opted to give themselves unpleasant electric shocks rather than spend 15 minutes in peaceful contemplation.

We are vain and overconfident:

Our irrationality and dogmatism might not be so bad were they married to some humility and self-insight, but most of us walk about with inflated views of our abilities and qualities, such as our driving skills, intelligence and attractiveness – a phenomenon that's been dubbed the Lake Wobegon Effect after the fictional town where 'all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average'. Ironically, the least skilled among us are the most prone to overconfidence (the so-called

Dunning-Kruger effect). This vain self-enhancement seems to be most extreme and irrational in the case of our morality, such as in how principled and fair we think we are. In fact, even jailed criminals think they are kinder, more trustworthy and honest than the average member of the public.

We are moral hypocrites:

It pays to be wary of those who are the quickest and loudest in condemning the moral failings of others – the chances are that moral preachers are as guilty themselves, but take a far lighter view of their own transgressions. In one study, researchers found that people rated the exact same selfish behaviour (giving themselves the quicker and easier of two experimental tasks on offer) as being far less fair when perpetrated by others. Similarly, there is a long-studied phenomenon known as actor-observer asymmetry, which in part describes our tendency to attribute other people's bad deeds, such as our partner's infidelities, to their character, while attributing the same deeds performed by ourselves to the situation at hand. These self-serving double standards could even explain the common feeling that incivility is on the increase – recent research shows that we view the same acts of rudeness far more harshly when they are committed by strangers than by our friends or ourselves.

We are all potential trolls:

As anyone who has found themselves in a spat on Twitter will attest, social media might be magnifying some of the worst aspects of human nature, in part due to the online disinhibition effect, and the fact that anonymity (easy to achieve online) is known to increase our inclinations for immorality. While research has suggested that people who are prone to everyday sadism (a worryingly high proportion of us) are especially inclined to online trolling, a study published last year revealed how being in a bad mood, and being exposed to trolling by others, double the likelihood of a person engaging in trolling themselves. In fact, initial trolling by a few can cause a snowball of increasing negativity, which is exactly what researchers found when they studied reader discussion on CNN.com, with the 'proportion of flagged posts and proportion of users with flagged posts ... rising over time'.

We favour ineffective leaders with psychopathic traits:

The American personality psychologist Dan McAdams recently concluded that the US President Donald Trump's overt aggression and insults have a 'primal appeal', and that his 'incendiary Tweets' are like the 'charging displays' of an alpha male chimp, 'designed to intimidate'. If McAdams's assessment is true, it would fit into a wider pattern – the finding that psychopathic traits are more common than average among leaders. Take the survey of financial leaders in New York that found they scored highly on psychopathic traits but lower than average in emotional intelligence. A meta-analysis published this summer concluded that there is indeed a modest but significant link between higher trait psychopathy and gaining leadership positions, which is important since psychopathy also correlates with poorer leadership.

We are sexually attracted to people with dark personality traits:

Not only do we elect people with psychopathic traits to become our leaders, evidence suggests that men and women are sexually attracted, at least in the short term, to people displaying the so-called 'dark triad' of traits – narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism – thus risking further propagating these traits. One study found that a man's physical attractiveness to women was increased when he was described as self-interested, manipulative and insensitive. One theory is that the dark traits successfully communicate 'mate quality' in terms of confidence and the willingness to take risks. Does this matter for the future of our species?

Don't get too down – these findings say nothing of the success that some of us have had in overcoming our baser instincts. In fact, it is arguably by acknowledging and understanding our shortcomings that we can more successfully overcome them, and so cultivate the better angels of our nature.

II. CONCLUSION:

It is humbling to realize that of these three elements only larynx is unique to the human species. This means that, had the larynx of the wolf, the chimpanzee, or the dolphin— to name only the best recognized competitors of the so called homo sapiens for the palm of superiority in brain power—been structured and positioned like ours is, they and not we might conceivably be the rulers of the earth today. Can we really know how sapiens the obviously wily canis lupus, who does not talk to us, is? The larynx gives us the mechanical ability to speak, namely to articulate sound, which no other animal possesses to anywhere near the same degree. But it goes without saying that it is not this mechanical ability which has created Hamlet, the theory of evolution, or free markets. Such creativity is peculiar to man. Yet, on logical examination, there could possibly be no evidence that the brains of a wolf or a dolphin would not be able to support it, had they been given the chance.

Although culture could not exist without its organic (biological) conditions, it is not reducible to them: it is an autonomous reality, meaning that it has laws of its own kind and cannot be explained in biological terms.

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Md. Rezwanul Kabir" Human Nature and Psychological Insights" Quest Journals Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science , vol. 07, no. 1, 2019, pp. 23-30