Student Sample Kuhn

Synthesis Essay

Success is nothing but a social construct: environmental and economic standing determine future outcome. One may have a congenital advantage, yet innate talent is inexistent and early development defines nothing.

When sized to nurture, nature is negligible. There is no such thing as natural ability, only aptitude brought on by the right conditions. If one is talented in a certain area or practice, chances are he didn’t get to where he is alone or by accident. Malcolm Gladwell recognizes that “[w]e pretend that success is exclusively a matter of individual merit. But there’s nothing in any of the histories we’ve looked at so far to suggest things are that simple.” I challenge you to study the backgrounds of renowned human beings and find one individual who succeeded without the assistance of others. Not even Mozart received his title as a musical prodigy by himself- in fact, “[his] earliest pieces were all probably written down by his father, and perhaps improved in the process.” Had he not been aided by another human being, would the name Wolfgang Mozart feel familiar on our tongues? Though some may argue, the obvious answer is no. There has always been someone or something by the side of each success story, whether it be a parent, teacher or mentor of a sort. Gladwell asserts that “[p]eople don’t rise from nothing. We do owe something to parentage and patronage.” Forthrightly, someone who is born into an environment of poverty and recurring economic strain will not be the next Mark Zuckerberg. The unfortunate child of financial shortcomings’ guardians will not be focused on his achievements but rather if he contributed to what was placed on the dinner table that night. This leads to govern, “[f]or unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance. But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” In other terms: when, where and what one is raised around limits or nourishes his abilities. Persons with greater aptitude for intelligence in poor conditions achieve lesser I.Q. than those in ideal conditions with lesser thresholds for intellect. Potential is dependably outweighed by opportunity.

Early development provides absolutely no notion as to how one will perform in the future, meaningless as anything. A child could show levels of cognitive expertise that surpass any of his peers, yet triumph no further than the same in adulthood. Eric Wargo stresses the insignificance of early acquisition of skills, agreeing with Gladwell in that “[w]e don’t say that someone who learned to walk at four months is a better walker than the rest of us. It’s not really a meaningful category.” Parents like to boast amongst themselves about the complexity of Little Johnny’s first word or Sally’s first grade reading level being off the charts, but the talk will only remain talk, forgotten in five years’ time- something Mom and Dad do not want to hear. I imagine their sureness and pride would waver if told the precociousness of their child meant less than they had conceived. Lewis Terman is the bearer of bad news- even to himself- with the Termite Experiment as “few of his geniuses were nationally known figures. They tended to earn good incomes- but not *that* good.” There is no accuracy in discerning someone’s chances of accomplishment solely based on former successes. In “Most Likely to Succeed,” glitches in the modern day process of determining potential are unveiled as “Chase Daniel’s performance can’t be predicted. The job he’s being groomed for is so particular and specialized that there is no way to know who will succeed at it and who won’t.” There is no direct correlation between college players who are favorites in the eyes of recruiters and NFL favorites of fans on the sidelines ten years after the initial draft. Quite simply, society needs to accept its inability to forecast success.

Multiple factors override any conviction of fate, ridding of the effects of inherited virtuosity. Opportunity and environment, the elements that separate the rich from the poor, the known from the unknown and the successful from the reverse have never changed, nor will they.