

Institute of Art and Ideas: The culture-genetics conundrum

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From criminality to the love of gossip, many biologists argue that behavior is rooted in our genes. Yet every culture comes with its own set of behaviours, and behavioral differences can often lead to conflict, indicating that the roots of human tendencies are not always shared. So if cultural variation is not explained by evolution, where does it come from? In a recent debate, [Institute of Art and Ideas \(IAI\) TV](#) (UK) explores possible answers to this question, as well as ways in which our ancestral past may shape our future.

In *After Evolution: Is Culture Beyond Genetics* host [Julian Baggini](#) is joined by evolutionary psychologist Oliver Scott Curry, anthropologist Daniel Everett and philosopher Janet Radcliffe-Richards as they grapple with the idea that we may have greatly overestimated the impact of our genes. Curry proposes that our brains are hard-wired to be “flexible,” which explains cultural diversity. Everett contends that evolutionary psychology should not be prioritized over cultural psychology, while Radcliffe Richards argues that we can use evolutionary theory to start asking new questions about culture.

Might culture be beyond the limits of biological explanation? The decision is currently yours, but *After Evolution* provides insights into the phenomenon of cultural diversity from three very different and very powerful perspectives.

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