

Nature vs nurture? 'Culture is not a mere moderator of our biology, but a fully fledged cause'

Few scientists today would say that 100% of your attributes are inborn or are learned; the debate tends to be about where to draw the dividing line.

Newer evidence, however, suggests that the dividing line doesn't really exist. Your environment, it turns out, causes certain genes to turn on and off, a process called epigenetics.

You also have genes that regulate how much the environment affects you. Genes and environment are so deeply entwined, like lovers in a fiery tango, that it's fundamentally unhelpful to call them separate names like "nature" and "nurture".

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Culture is not a mere moderator of our biology, then, but a fully fledged cause. I'm not saying that your culture determines your destiny, but then neither do your genes.

Together, your genes and the world you live in make you who you are (for better or for worse). We are therefore all partly responsible for wiring each other's brains, and the brains of the next generation, through our words and actions.

That's the lesson of the latest science: there need be no "versus" in the equation. We simply have the kind of nature that requires nurture, and they are utterly intertwined.

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)