



Nature Versus Nurture

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In February 2001 it was announced that the genome contains not 100,000 genes as originally expected but only 30,000. This startling revision led some scientists to conclude that there are simply not enough human genes to account for all the different ways people behave: we must be made by nurture, not nature. Matt Ridley argues that the emerging truth is far more interesting than this myth. Nurture depends on genes, too, and genes need nurture. Genes not only predetermine the broad structure of the brain; they also absorb formative experiences, react to social cues and even run memory. They are consequences as well as causes of the will. Nurture chronicles a new revolution in our understanding of genes. Ridley recounts the hundred years' war between the partisans of nature and nurture to explain how this paradoxical creature, the human being, can be simultaneously free-willed and motivated by instinct and culture. Nature via Nurture is an enthralling, up-to-the-minute account of how genes build brains to absorb experience.