

**Speaker for Nature:**

Identical twins separated at birth and raised in different families show striking similarities, in IQ, in personality, in political views, in the careers they end up in. The Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart followed dozens of such pairs and found the same pattern again and again. Twins who had never met chose similar professions, married similar partners, and held similar values. The environment was different. The outcomes were similar. The simplest explanation is that the genetics did most of the work.

This is not the only evidence. Heritability estimates for traits like height, intelligence, mental illness, and even political orientation consistently come in between forty and seventy percent. That does not mean environment does not matter. It means genetics matters more than the nurture side of this debate has historically been willing to admit.

The implication is uncomfortable but unavoidable. Many of the outcomes we attribute to upbringing, education, or social environment are partly outcomes of inherited disposition. Acknowledging this does not condemn anyone. It just means our policies and our parenting should account for what genetics already determines.

**Speaker for nurture:**

The twin studies are real and the heritability numbers are real. They also do not say what the nature side claims they say.

Heritability is a population statistic. It tells you how much of the variation in a population is due to genetic variation, given the range of environments in that population. It does not tell you how much of an individual's traits are caused by genes. A trait can have eighty percent heritability and still be enormously responsive to environmental change. Height in many countries has heritability above eighty percent, and yet average height has risen by ten centimetres in seventy years, because nutrition improved. The genes did not change. The environment did. The trait moved a long way.

The same is true of every trait the nature side cites. Intelligence is highly heritable, and average measured intelligence has risen by thirty IQ points across the twentieth century. That cannot be explained by genetics. It can only be explained by environment, schooling, nutrition, the demands modern life makes on cognition.

Identical twins reared apart show similarities, but they also show real differences, in mental health, in life outcomes, in happiness. The similarities are striking only because we expected them to be zero. They are not zero, but they are not everything. The nurture case has never been that the environment is everything. It has been that environment matters in ways the nature case keeps trying to dismiss.