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The speaker Shankar Vedantam delves into debates over nature vs. nurture in this encore episode from The Edge of Gender in the podcast Hidden Brain and encounters various individuals with different expertise to tackle it. The episode teaches us about the nature and nurture of gender and society in the world that we live in. How much of the world's gender disparities can be described by chromosomes and genes, and how much is attributable to the environment and the culture.

Gender debates quickly devolve into bitterness, rage, and disdain. People who believe gender is determined by biology to shrug their eyes at others who think gender is influenced by culture. Culture supporters accuse biology believers of being sexist. Nature has never had any boundaries. Humans want to believe a distinct line separating one species from the next, one gender from the next, and one season from the next. However, these classifications become ambiguous when examined closely, particularly at the intersection of categories A and B.

The information was presented by the experiences and studies of different individuals from different expertise. Wherein they have discussed the evolving debates about gender in nurture versus nature. These professionals were either found inside the academe or acquainted in the field of neuroscience. First is Dr. Debra Soh, a neuroscientist with a doctorate from York University. Next are Jo Paoletti and Lise Eliot, both of them are professors from the University of Maryland and Rosalind Franklin University, respectively. Lastly, Jami Shupe, the first “nonbinary individual” acknowledged in the U.S. These individuals were treated as relevant sources of information as all of them utilized the chance to discuss the systems that they used to analyze and perceive gender from their personal experiences and environment in academe.

The perspectives of the storytellers are exceptionally fascinating because they all have a point to ponder. One of the points considered by Dr. Soh is the ratio of testosterone found in the

mother's womb. Biologically female individuals who were supplied with a significant level of testosterone tends to deviate from the usual behavior and expectation of their parents. These individuals normally consider consuming “boy-typical” toys and neglect “girl-typical” toys even with the presence of a reward system to acknowledge their linear behavior in being a female. This only highlights the importance of biology regarding an individual’s gender preferences and identity, as these factors were not easily impacted by socialization. On average, the size of the human male brain is significantly larger than its counterpart, and variations found in the brain’s white matter do exist. Additionally, connective tissues which support the brain were more numerous in biological male individuals while, whereas women have more pathways in the right or left hemisphere, which may explain the difference of both genders that manifests throughout adulthood. The simple truth, according to Debra, the women and men are not the same. The connotation that “*gender is a social construct*” does bother her since the distinctions between the two genders are very clear. Variations regarding the human physique, biological males being taller than females, and the distinctions between the structure and utilization of our reproductive organs. These are few biological and physiological features which heavily differentiates male to female. With this, the differences in the human brain regarding gender was deemed acceptable since the brain can be considered as an organ that was responsible for the organ and growth disparities which we equivalently receive.

On the other hand, Paoletti considered that the practices and methods of individuals in society were all affected by customs, culture, and event marketing. The prevalence of navy and maroon-colored clothes which was used by students as uniform in school in the 1950s were also induced by culture. These dark-colored outfits were utilized to illustrate the difference between schooling and other occasions. Pastel-colored garments were supposed to be reserved for special occasions such as Easter or formal settings. But, over time, the boundary between boys' and girls' clothing began to blur for a variety of reasons, one of which was financial. American households were having fewer children by the 1970s. Families with fewer children required fewer clothes. Fewer garments sold meant significantly lower profit for businesses. That did not sit well with them. As a result, they devised a novel strategy for increasing sales. With this, they developed a strategy to group a specific gender with a specified color. Thus, the correlation between female to pink and male to blue was established. Marketing was not the only motivating force at work. Prejudices of society came into play, allowing girls to wear blue on occasion but making it

difficult for men to wear pink at all. What is intriguing about Jo's statement is that it demonstrates that what may appear to be individual gender choices today are influenced by a variety of hidden variables such as money, marketing, homophobia, and sexism. Does this imply that biology does not influence how boys and girls, men and women behave? To answer this, the notion of rejecting biological influences and the presence of unequal ratios of hormones does signify that these concepts explain everything.

For Eliot, gender is undoubtedly an essential aspect of people's identity. It is, without a doubt, the first property that infants learn to distinguish. Though babies are clueless about their gender, they can distinguish the difference between both the auditory qualities and visual elements of both males and females in the early stages of life. This is because they are trying to absorb gender identification cues. Eliot is not dismissing biology's power, but she believes that many of us are blind to what neuroscientists know. The social world not only shapes the brain, but it also has to shape it. The common perception regarding the difference between the two genders was that males cling strongly to consuming goods specified for males and females were attracted to specific goods such as dolls. However, Eliot believes that biologically, the brain can be considered as an organ having no gender which only grows in response to the physiological effects of hormones on individuals.

To destroy the ideology of the "duality" of gender, Shupe demonstrated that such restrictions were non-evident towards his condition, as he was recognized as the first "nonbinary individual" in the U.S. By having a physique equivalent to males and the behavior and characteristics of females, he was qualified as such. Shupe was also romantically attracted to both males and girls. All the restrictions were lifted due to the judge's decision to recognize Jamie's gender fluidity. No more hiding; no more pretending to be A or B; no more appearing to be this or that. Jamie characterizes his current mental state as "water." It is unavoidable.

Many gender debates boil down to this. They are essentially arguing that the classifications I believe and see are superior to the things you see and think. If we are going to make development on these issues, we must all need to become more accepting of ambiguity. People should be able to live their life as they see fit, despite what a lot of the world believes.