

# **‘The WEIRDest People in the World’ Review: Marriage Story**

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We may think that the culture of a society or civilization grows out of a variety of forces—social, political, historical, even biological. But what if culture is itself a potent force, one that, in part, shapes the others? “Culture,” Joseph Henrich writes, “can and does alter our brains, hormones, and anatomy, along with our perceptions, motivations, personalities, [and] emotions.” He assumes, for instance, a high degree of literacy in his readers and thus confidently describes certain features of their brains: e.g., slight abnormalities in the left ventral occipito-temporal region, part of a structure that favors verbal memory and analytic processing skills. Compared with most people around the world and throughout human history, he notes, these attributes are exceedingly rare.

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