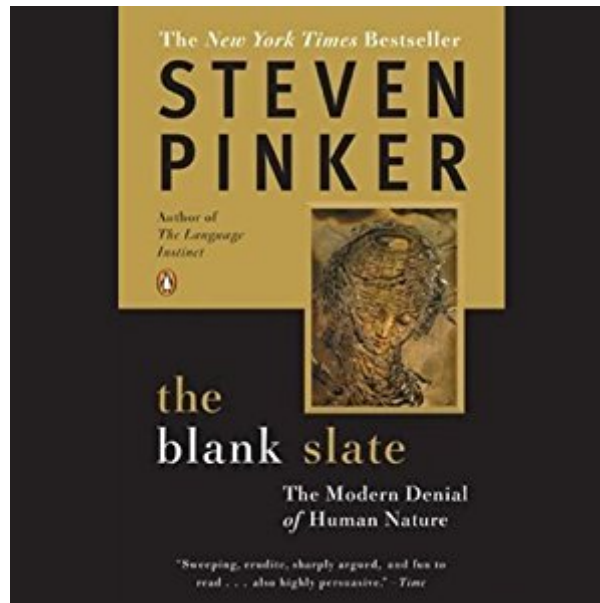


The book was found

The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial Of Human Nature



Synopsis

Our conceptions of human nature affect everything aspect of our lives, from child-rearing to politics to morality to the arts. Yet many fear that scientific discoveries about innate patterns of thinking and feeling may be used to justify inequality, to subvert social change, and to dissolve personal responsibility. In *The Blank Slate*, Steven Pinker explores the idea of human nature and its moral, emotional, and political colorings. He shows how many intellectuals have denied the existence of human nature and instead have embraced three dogmas: The Blank Slate (the mind has no innate traits), The Noble Savage (people are born good and corrupted by society), and The Ghost in the Machine (each of us has a soul that makes choices free from biology). Each dogma carries a moral burden, so their defenders have engaged in desperate tactics to discredit the scientists who are now challenging them. Pinker provides calm in the stormy debate by disentangling the political and moral issues from the scientific ones. He shows that equality, compassion, responsibility, and purpose have nothing to fear from discoveries about an innately organized psyche. Pinker shows that the new sciences of mind, brain, genes, and evolution, far from being dangerous, are complementing observations about the human condition made by millennia of artists and philosophers. All this is done in the style that earned his previous books many prizes and worldwide acclaim: irreverent wit, lucid exposition, and startling insight on matters great and small. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This took me a while to get into but by the middle part of the book I was quite focused and enjoying it. My most valuable takeaway has been how science research has given support to what is legitimate in philosophies of human nature on the left AND the right. And what's wrong in those philosophies is where we spend most of our time being defensive and non-productive. Good science wins!

I recommend this book. There is something to be learned in every chapter. I appreciate how Pinker displays the facts, opinions, philosophies and theories from so many different sources. He really allows you to make up your own mind about Human nature and where it could come from while also giving his own insight on the subject.

Found this book extremely interesting. I suggest that individuals considering buying this book view the author's TED talk first.

It should have won the Pulitzer instead of just being a finalist. Witty, well-thought out, and fully annotated, this touchstone came to me highly recommended after I mentioned other books about human nature like Matt Ridley's THE AGILE GENE. Dr. Pinker himself empathized with those that thought "Oh no, not another book about the nature-nurture conundrum." It's nothing short of a great book with many insights that is best discovered in real time not by a list form a book review, though I can't keep myself from pointing out that Dr. Pinker brought to my attention the list of human universals by Brown (1989). I always wondered what we all had in common, and, now I know... - lc

Most of the chapters outstanding, not all of course. Delicate subject. We have a saying in Iceland " fjordungi bregdur til fosturs". Translation: one quarter of your mental development is due to the environment, the rest is genes (the unique self)

A well written and profound work. Challenging, but also fun to read. It'll take more than one reading to glean everything from this book, but I look forward to re-reading it again soon.

I loved this book! The author, Steven Pinker, might come across as off his rocker at first, but for every claim he makes he provides ample evidence. I don't know if he is right, but if you want to read a book that will get you thinking about the world in a different way, this is it,

I am not an academic, and don't pretend to be, but this book is the most stimulating and interesting read I have encountered in some years. Pinker is brilliant. Some other reviewer called him a "polymath" and he certainly seems that well. He ranges over a very wide territory, some of which may not be his field, and I admire him for this. He raises complicated subject after complicated subject in a very interesting way, reasons with brilliance, and writes like a genius. This is a great book, incredibly intellectually satisfying.

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