

Genetics and Heredity

- *The Blank Slate*
- How to study genetic influences
- Gene-environment interactions
- How genes work

Argument of *The Blank Slate*

- Social scientists have ignored complexity of human behavior
 - Afraid of biology
 - Over-emphasis on environment
- Three harmful metaphors
 - Ghost in the Machine
 - Noble Savage
 - Blank Slate

The Ghost in the Machine

- Doctrine that mind is separate from body
 - And free from material cause
 - Genetics unimportant in creating mind
 - Unconstrained in transforming individuals and society/culture
- However...
 - Mind is dependent on body
 - But this does not eliminate free will

The Noble Savage

- Humans are basically "good" or at least not "bad"
- Anti-social features of behavior are due to corrupt culture
- However...
 - The "bad" is as central to human nature as the "good"
 - Limitations on our abilities to control the "bad"

The "New Look" according to Pinker

- Discarding old and outworn assumptions
- New ways of relating biology and culture
 - Cognitive sciences – science of the mind
 - Brain sciences
 - Genetics
 - Evolution