

I wanted to attend the psychology course provided by REACH Cambridge because psychology as a career path has been something I've been toying around with in my head for quite a while, even though I knew close to nothing about it. In fact, it might have been my utter ignorance of the field which drove me to sign up for this psychology course in hopes that I'd be able to absorb at least a fraction of the multitude of lessons which the study of the human mind had to impart to me. Thankfully, I was right. Each lesson I've attended has been nothing short of enthralling and immersive, causing a complete paradigm shift in the way I perceived all sorts of things. Knowledge, for example, was a concept I'd previously regarded as sacrosanct and concrete. Yet yesterday it was proven to be as refutable and inconstant as anything else.

Today was no different in its widening of the scope of my worldviews, through our exploration of the fascinating and controversial field of developmental psychology. We delved into the age-old question of "nature versus nurture" regarding whether or not character traits were intrinsic or extrinsic, fixed or changeable. In pursuit of an answer to that question, we were led through the theories of early psychologist John Watson and his belief that humans are born with a mental blank slate – an empty canvas upon which we have the potential to grow into whatever our environment shapes us into - which was contrasted to Steven Pinker's biological-maturationist theory that posited that biology plays a much more significant role in shaping one's development. It was riveting stuff, to be sure. Though arguably the highlight of my day was visiting the Behavioural and Clinical Neuroscience Institute and being shown a tiny frozen rat brain by Dr Jeff and George the PhD student. Whilst visiting another facility, the Lab for Decision Making and the Brain, I found that it was staffed by academics from surprisingly large and diverse backgrounds. From economists to neural biologists, contributions to the realm of psychology were provided by men from a veritable multitude of academic disciplines who had worked long and hard to hammer away at the eternal enigma that is the human mind and all its facets. The plethora of variegated skills and approaches to psychology presented to us today was truly awe-inspiring.

All in all, I'd count today as one of the most interesting days spent here. My mental horizons were stretched spectacularly and I got to see the petrified neural pathways of a deceased rodent.

This was a good day.

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