

When I was in eighth grade, I was enrolled in the Gifted and Talented program for math students. From that moment on, I was introduced to some of the smartest students in my grade, with whom I would continue to interact even throughout my high school years. To my classmates, teachers, and the administration, the GT math students were the future of our school and the world at large. We were the ones who would graduate high school with honors, matriculate into prestigious colleges, and change the world through our work in the fields of engineering and medicine. But I stopped to wonder about the forgotten geniuses, the ones whose inherent abilities did not reside in the sciences but rather the humanities. I was one of them but somehow found myself on the opposite side of the chasm when I walked the halls of my school and back to the arts when I wrote poetry at a writing organization after the bell rang at 2:30 PM. I lived C.P. Snow's life, constantly splitting my time between "two cultures." As of today, this great divide between the sciences and humanities still prevails at the expense of its students.

In 1959, C.P. Snow shared what he hoped would erase the "distorted image" that intellectuals and scientists have of one another (Snow 4). While both groups are polar opposites, they share one thing in common: their lack of understanding of each other's personalities and societal roles. Literary intellectuals "tend to think of scientists as brash and boastful," whereas "scientists believe that literary intellectuals are totally lacking in foresight, peculiarly unconcerned with their brother men..." (Snow 4-5). Unfortunately, these stereotypes have ingrained themselves into the education system, favoring the scientists' perspective and minimizing the importance of the humanities in schools at the elementary, secondary, and college levels. This divide has evolved into a crisis that Martha C. Nussbaum, a philosopher, named the "silent crisis." As I progressed at the secondary level, my school offered me a rather rigorous education in the sciences. It had a variety of Advanced Placement courses in mathematics,

biology, chemistry, computer science, and many other subjects in the STEM field. However, when it came to the humanities, we were limited to only three advanced placement courses in the humanities: two in English and one in history. Even then, these English courses were not offered every year due to the small number of students who signed up. Most students were like Snow, “scientists by training, and writers by vocation” (Snow 1).

Having a vocation does not necessarily mean that one excels in this field. Many students will acknowledge and go on about the importance of the humanities in the education system and talk about how they wish to be writers on the side, but would never dare to choose a career in the humanities. Although they love the enrichment that the humanities provide, they are not sufficiently trained to turn their vocation into an actual career. They feel the pressure to either fully immerse themselves into the sciences or work toward a degree that society will deem “worthless.” As Jennifer Summit and Blakey Vermeule wrote in their article, “The ‘Two Cultures’ Fallacy,” the divisions between the sciences and humanities “encourage students to perceive their education in bifurcated terms, i.e. ‘techies’ versus ‘fuzzies’.” Educators, however, recognize the detrimental effects of a bifurcated education. Early during my senior year, my chemistry teacher gave our AP class a lecture about how awful our laboratory reports were. They were disorganized, hard to follow, and poorly written. Students who are trained in the sciences are not usually acquainted with the art of answering questions in full sentences and sometimes assume that the grader will know what they tried to communicate. My chemistry teacher then explained how this has been a serious issue with students from our high school and that there had been many complaints about the poor writing skills of past students who had entered college. We could place third in the state at math meets and solve stoichiometry problems with ease, but when it came to writing, we were a shame to our school.

It's difficult to encourage students to explore the humanities with a more open mind when careers in the sciences are known to be more economically rewarding. In "Silent Crisis," Nussbaum gave multiple examples of times when the role of the humanities was minimized in favor of scientific and technical education. One of the reasons behind the education system's backing of the sciences is the profit that results from it. Nussbaum writes that "the profit motive suggests to many concerned leaders that science and technology are of crucial importance for the future health of their nations." In 2006, the president of a prestigious university discarded a discussion on liberal education in favor of a conversation on "the latest achievements in technology and their role in generating profits for business and industry" (Nussbaum 5). It is true that students should have access to an education that gives them in-depth exposure to science and technology. But it is equally true that they also need an education that gives them "the ability to think critically; the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems as a 'citizen of the world'; and finally, the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person" (Nussbaum 7). These skills reside in an education in the humanities. Once nation leaders, students, and educators become aware of the skills they lack by endorsing a bifurcated education, the humanities will receive the recognition that it's due and its degrees will no longer be "worthless."

The time, effort, money, and recognition of the department of education have historically been awarded to the sciences. For many years, this has stripped students of the privilege of being immersed in an education that values learning in its entirety. There are many ways we can attain a complete education. One of them is the introduction and promotion of interdisciplinary fields. Interdisciplinary fields demonstrate to students that they do not need to study science *or* the humanities. It shows them the power of the word "and." They can be scientists *and* literary

intellectuals. They do not need to split themselves between “two cultures” for “attempts to divide anything into two ought to be regarded with much suspicion” (Snow 9). The other way is a mutual understanding of the personalities and roles of scientists and literary intellectuals in society. For too long, we have lived according to the stereotypes and labels that were created over a century ago. We have perpetuated nonsensical rivalries between two fields that are meant to work together for the good of society. As C.P. Snow said in his essay, “the degree of incomprehension on both sides is the kind of joke which has gone sour.” Both sides have been impoverished by their acceptance of the stereotypes associated with the sciences and humanities and their reluctance to learn more about what each has to offer. As a student entering college in just two months, I wish I had had the opportunity to take more classes outside of the STEM bubble. I am hopeful that as years go by, students will be exposed to an education that does not transform them into money-hungry machines but citizens of the world.