The British writer and scientist C.P. Snow wrote that there is “a gulf of incomprehension” separating the sciences and the humanities. On November 17, Professor Banu Subramanian spoke about this widening gap in the academic world and the need to narrow it.

In her Pizza & Prof presentation, “The Sciences and the Humanities: The Two Cultures Debate Revisited,” Subramanian made the case that all knowledge is historically and culturally specific, and not completely objective. Hundreds of years ago, scientists widely hypothesized that women had smaller brains than men, for example. Similar culture-science overlaps still exist. Subramanian explained that today we impose our binary ideas about sex and gender on the scientific world, labeling everything from plant species to the International Space Station as either “male” or “female.”

Subramanian provided many examples of how culture and science influence one another. “At every level we see parallels about how we talk about science and how we
"talk about humans," she said. Therefore, there is a case to be made against compartmentalizing education into specific tracks, which can limit the complexity of study. She stressed the importance of interdisciplinary education to bridge the gap between the sciences and humanities. With a broader range of studies, people will have the capacity to work with more nuance in whichever field they choose.

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