

As a child, I found comfort in numbers' clear logic and absoluteness. Math problems always had definite right or wrong answers. Geometric proofs neatly followed fixed steps to arrive at proven truths. The world of quantitative thinking made sense in its certainties.

But as I grew older, I began questioning whether all beliefs and ideas allowed such clear-cut categorizations. In history class, I grappled with how societies divided people into limiting racial and ethnic boxes that didn't align with my own mixed heritage. While the curriculum separated Rome into rigid categories of "citizens" and "barbarians," I saw how cultures blended over time.

Reviewing historical LGBTQ+ movements further challenged my black-and-white thinking about human identities and sexualities existing along a complex spectrum rather than binary camps. It didn't add up to define people's lives and experiences so narrowly based on simplified sorting techniques, yet that was often the approach.

This dissonance between my growing worldview and the black-and-white belief systems presented in textbooks came to a head in biology. Genetic ancestry reports unveiled a diverse cosmic swirl of ancestry across continents despite racial classifications aiming to draw harsh divisions between populations. Even the simple categorizing of species into "plant" or "animal" kingdoms became murky when examining microorganisms defying easy checklists of traits.

I realized human tendencies to crave righteous certainties and clean categorization didn't always align with the intricate realities of our subtle spectra of experiences and interconnected ancestries across this universe. Perhaps even proving mathematical axioms is an approximation of higher dimensional complexity our finite minds cannot fully comprehend.

Going forward, I've learned to embrace the ambiguities and in-betweens that make us human rather than attempting to sort everything into familiar buckets. While still appreciating mathematics' quantitative insights, I now feel more enriched understanding

life's nuances that can't be reduced to simple dualisms. I aim to hold a both/and perspective - recognizing singular identities and universal connections coexist.