**Brown’s culture fosters a community in which students challenge the ideas of others and have their ideas challenged in return, promoting a deeper and clearer understanding of the complex issues confronting society. This active engagement in dialogue is as present outside the classroom as it is in academic spaces. Tell us about a time you were challenged by a perspective that differed from your own. How did you respond? (200-250 words)**

Science insinuates that any phenomena is reducible into its constituents, their complete explanations eventually necessitating the fundamental forces of physics: rules that govern everything. According to science, the world is a sum of its parts.

As a firm believer of science, I paraded this concept to my peers. Unfortunately, they rarely indulged me. To them it was meaningless blibber-blabber: a universal mechanism they couldn’t be bothered with.

However, one person openly disagreed, insisting that the world is more than subatomic particles and esoteric forces. Night-after-night, new evidence born of personal research would reignite our debates, where rivaling arguments spanning every field of academia matched each other blow-for-blow. It was a learning experience I truly enjoyed; four years later, she remains amongst my closest friends.

Eventually, our debates ventured into philosophy. Particularly, the principle of identity—grains piled together becomes heaps despite “heap-ness” never being added—an interpretation of emergent properties unexplained by science: like consciousness, or the universe. In science where numbers reign supreme, one-plus-one always equals two. But in philosophy grains amount to heaps, neurons into consciousness, and atoms into universes.

I believe adopting this philosophy is the first step in tackling global issues such as climate-change. Calculations show that if someone eliminated their carbon-footprint, they wouldn’t save the world one second—we would need everyone to save the world. It’s in these desperate times that we must remember our collective identity: the world. Perhaps if we saw ourselves as more than a sum of our parts, we could make a difference.