

One one zero one one zero zero one. Two hundred seventeen in binary, the language of computers. For four years I studied computer science as an undergraduate at Rice University, and for three-and-a-half years I thoroughly enjoyed it. However, at the end of my senior year, I began to see some of the downsides of my chosen discipline. It's very black-and-white, very cut-and-dry, very... binary. I began to yearn for something more abstract, something with additional shades of gray. I began to yearn for philosophy.

I've always known I wanted to go to graduate school and eventually pursue a career as a professor. So, as an undergrad, I spent much of my free time working as a research assistant with several computer science professors (Dr. Devika Subramanian, Dr. Luay Nakhleh, Dr. Vivek Sarkar, and Dr. Swarat Chaudhuri). However, during my senior year, when it came time for me to apply to CS PhD programs, I found that the original reasons I had been drawn to computer science had begun to disappear. I liked how it was logical, systematic, clear, precise, how it could represent things, how it made distinctions, how it could explain things, etc. (Indeed, these are the same reasons I believe I now feel myself being drawn to philosophy!) These qualities, however, were starting to be replaced with cutting-edge research topics like compilers, machine learning, big data, and 'the internet of things'. These are useful and important topics, to be sure, but *I personally* don't find them very interesting. Instead I felt much more drawn to interdisciplinary research questions that fell in the overlap of computer science and other related (or unrelated) fields, 'CS+X' as my Dean used to say. Usually this meant CS + biology (bioinformatics) or CS + physics (modeling) or CS + economics (high frequency trading), but no one was talking about the social sciences or the humanities, no one was talking about the contributions that CS could make to sociology, or gender studies, or philosophy.

So this summer I started CS + philosophy research (with Dr. Timothy Schroeder), and it was a fabulous experience. While our research is unfinished and ongoing, I'm incredibly excited at the prospect of spending my graduate career researching philosophy.

In order to truly do good CS + philosophy research, however, I believe that it would be insufficient for me to stand before such a venn diagram and gaze into it from the vantage point of exclusively one side or the other; rather, I believe that the only way to truly understand this intersection is to be well-versed and well-trained as *both* a computer scientist *and* as a philosopher. I just completed my BS in CS, and I'm incredibly thankful for the training, practical skills, and ways of thinking that my undergraduate major has afforded me, but I don't believe that any additional training in computer science will bring me closer to my goals of understanding the interdisciplinary intersection (that I think would be fun to call Computational Philosophy). Additionally, I don't think that the few undergrad philosophy classes I was able to take qualify me as a philosopher. Rather, I believe that the clear next step in my academic journey is to get additional training as a philosopher by completing a terminal MA program in philosophy.

I want to hone my skills as a philosopher, get a broader understanding of the discipline than my undergraduate coursework in philosophy afforded me, learn to think like a philosopher, learn the protocols of the discipline, improve my skills at reading and writing academically rigorous papers, and get the training I need to be able to work competently and comfortably in the overlapping area between the esoteric and the quantifiable. Besides, who *wouldn't* want to spend two years studying some of the most interesting questions known to mankind? I know I do.