

December 21, 2024

Admissions committee at CUNY,

I want to undertake the work of revealing unspoken assumptions and hidden labor, and of challenging hegemonic beliefs about the creation and dissemination of knowledge and wisdom. I want to investigate disparate philosophical traditions and practices. This is a wide-reaching enterprise, and it requires a wide-reaching study. By applying at CUNY, I hope to take advantage of your course offerings and specialties in European and Asian philosophy, aesthetics, and philosophy of mind to further this goal.

I am primarily interested in phenomenology, comparative philosophy, philosophy of mind, and aesthetics. I am also interested in semiotics, semantics, critical theory, and value theory more generally. My interests converge in the study of embodied consciousness with influence from Buddhist conceptions of mind, and through the practice of interactive art.

I have spent several years out of graduate school, and currently work as a software engineer. This career was made possible by my time in undergraduate spent studying mathematics (my other major), logic, computer science, and the philosophy of mathematics. In my senior year I took an independent study which focused on mathematical Platonism and the foundations of mathematics. At the same time, I wrote my senior thesis on the Heidegger-Carnap debate and earned my degree a semester early and with honors. Additionally, I won the Paretsky Award for Creativity, a university-wide competition, for a paper applying the early Heidegger's phenomenological method to the absent qualia problem. In my Junior year I was awarded the departmental Warner Morse Scholarship for excellence in philosophy.

I have a developed interest in Buddhist and Indian philosophy. I find Theravada and Zen Buddhism especially insightful, and I am particularly interested in learning more about the Kyoto School for their emphasis on nihility and the limits of rational thought.

I find phenomenology is a good tool for the exploration of aesthetics and value theory quite generally. To this end I am interested in the work of Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and critical theory. In aesthetics I have been especially focused on the developing field of ludology. I am interested in understanding whether and how alternative media are capable of 'doing' philosophy. Interactive media, as 'lived in' experiences, seem to hold a special potential in this regard.

I hope to spend my time doing a close study of the phenomenological method as a foundation of philosophical and scientific theory. In addition to the traditional forms of essay-writing and pedagogy, I hope to explore alternative media as a

form of philosophical expression.

I hope to take advantage of the inter-school consortium at CUNY to take courses at the NYU Games Center and participate in the thriving independent development community. I am excited about the opportunity to take classes on film, dialectic logic, and Zen philosophy and apply it to my works.

Thank you for taking the time to read my materials, and I hope to meet you soon.

All the best,

Phoenix Mandala