Personal History Statement

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https://bik1111.github.io/

Through the process of transforming past wounds into opportunities for growth, I realized that my journey has been converging toward a single goal: achieving the dream of alleviating technological inequalities in society and enhancing the quality of life.

I grew up in a household where emotional conflicts frequently arose due to my father's violent nature. My father often resorted to verbal and physical violence, breaking household items, which made it difficult for me to feel a sense of peace during my childhood. Additionally, during high school, I found joy in expressing myself by dancing to songs by female artists. However, in a society that enforces rigid gender roles, my peers saw me as different, and these experiences left me feeling isolated and stripped of confidence during a crucial period of my growth.

One day, I happened to come across actors on screen who transformed their emotions into artistic expression, and this changed my perspective. Their uninhibited emotional expression deeply resonated with me and inspired me to pursue acting. I enrolled in an acting academy, where I staged plays and collaborated with peers from diverse backgrounds. This experience taught me the value of individuality, creativity, and teamwork. Fueled by this passion, I decided to major in Theater at university. However, the rigid hierarchical system within the university left me disappointed, and to seize greater opportunities for growth, I decided to leave the university and immerse myself in the more dynamic theater scene in Daehakro, Seoul.

Participating in the theater community provided me with the opportunity to freely express myself and collaborate with diverse individuals to create meaningful performances. Performing the works of Anton Chekhov and Shakespeare and receiving applause from the audience, I realized that true happiness lies in making a positive impact on others. However, the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly halted all theatrical activities, leaving me directionless and deeply frustrated for nearly a year. During this time, I witnessed the innovative impact of a COVID-19 contact tracing app developed by a university student, which corrected misinformation, alleviated public anxiety, and had a profound influence on society. This experience instilled in me a sense of awe for the impact technology can have on society and sparked a dedicated passion for this field. Ultimately, this experience became the turning point that led me to transition to the field of computer science.

Transitioning into the field of computer science was not easy. My mathematical background, which barely extended beyond basic arithmetic, posed significant challenges in learning foundational college mathematics. However, my dream of becoming a software engineer capable of making meaningful contributions drove me to study diligently every day for a year. This effort earned me admission to one of Korea's top 10 universities, where I taught myself software development, honed my technical skills, and won awards in hackathons. My dedication was further recognized with the SW Ownership award for excellence in software projects and through mentoring first-year students, a milestone in my personal growth.

My interest in cloud computing began when I deployed my software on cloud platforms and received positive feedback from my peers. This experience led me to join cloud-related clubs, where I shared knowledge about cloud services and organized events. While these activities were fulfilling, they also fueled my curiosity to explore fundamental and foundational problems in cloud computing.

I found the direction in intelligent cloud systems. Initially, I merely utilized cloud services, but during a research internship, I summarized previous research findings and reported them to my advisor, gaining a deep understanding of the potential of cloud computing. In particular, I was highly motivated by the crucial role that cloud technology plays in achieving the performance goals of AI-based future services. This experience inspired me to aspire to become an engineer who leverages cloud systems capable of meeting massive computational demands to address technological inequalities in society and enhance the quality of life.

In fact, one of the first papers I studied focused on reinforcement learning for adaptive scaling, providing profound insights into the ability of intelligent systems to solve complex real-world problems. Unlike the theoretical academic research I had engaged in during my undergraduate years, I found great motivation in solving real-world problems that could bring about meaningful change. As I continued my research, I became increasingly interested in dynamic resource allocation, adaptive scaling, and achieving Quality of Experience (QoE) in cloud systems.

Confucius once said, "A true gentleman is not a tool" (君子不器), highlighting the importance of versatility and diverse perspectives. Transitioning from the arts to computer science was challenging, but this journey, blending creativity with analytical thinking, embodies the spirit of an era where technology converges with philosophy and science with the humanities.

My experience, combining the creativity of an artist with the analytical thinking of an engineer, symbolically demonstrates the importance of diversity and adaptability in today's world. I have learned to turn adversity and challenges into opportunities for growth and collaboration, and through interactions with people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, I have gained deeper insights. This experience has helped me realize that the harmony of different talents and viewpoints can enable social progress. Building on these experiences, I now aspire to embark on a journey to bridge the gap of technological inequality in society and improve the quality of life through technology.