Pursuits and Passions

My intellectual interests have never been limited to a single field. As a child, I relished chess tournaments, math contests and creative writing, enjoying the intricate strategy of one, reassuring certainty of another and the creative liberty of the third.

I honed my skills on the board and became the apprentice that surpassed the master, my father, who had taught me the game. I joined the competitive scene in elementary school, spending hours at tournaments to play five fateful games each. I tasted the nectar of victory and lime of defeat, learned to develop a strategy and adapt it to the opponent. In high school, time became a constraint and although my tournament involvement ceased, my experience meant I was unbeatable in the chess club and represented our school by winning first place at a regional competition in Grade 9. To this day, I play regularly online, reveling in the intellectual stimulation of plotting six, seven, eight steps ahead and watching it all unfold.

My interest in math, though seldom shared among my peers, was one that never waned. In Grade 11 I discovered Calculus. I decided to take the AP exam early, and self-studying the material gave me a new appreciation for the art of decoding unthinkable enigmas into simple arithmetic. Each solution I didn’t understand would be revisited dozens of times, until finally, in a moment of blissful enlightenment, I saw the infallible logic, awed by the potential of this numerical art.

Creative writing is my third, perhaps greatest, intellectual interest. My works first consisted of barely-legible scribbles on rumpled paper, vivid stories of whales, aliens and dolphins that were inevitably marred by a horrendous overuse of 'then'. In Grade 6, I wrote a 20,000 word story. It was fraught with plot holes, awkward transitions, and rambling sentences. But writing thirty-four pages in size-twelve font is no small task for an eleven-year old and accomplishing this task, driven by nothing but passion and desire, revealed I had an undeniable interest in creative writing, perhaps even a shred of talent. Throughout the years, I continued writing and constantly looked to improve. I wrote fiction for online writing communities and managed to land three of my pieces in the school literary magazine.

In my devotion to each intellectual art, I hold dear the trait that inexplicably ties them together – curiosity. I have spread my courses across multiple diverse fields of knowledge, and yet I want to know more. I want to learn psychology and philosophy, to understand the intangible forces which drive us and the world. The most difficult decision is to narrow my studies into one specific field, one I have still never made. I can see my writing blossom under critique and praise in the workshop method of Comparative Literature, my mind baffled and eventually satisfied in the study of Multivariable Calculus. The sheer diversity of quality education that can appease my each and every intellectual craving is what draws me to Cornell’s College of Arts and Sciences.